

LONDON BRIDGE.

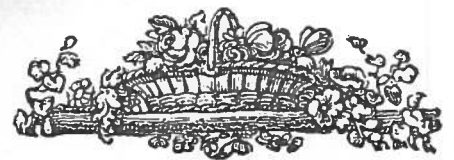
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JOHN CHAS. WHITAKER, M.D.

LONDON

As Seen and Described
by Famous Writers

Edited and Translated by
ESTHER SINGLETON
Author of "Turrets, Towers and Temples,"
"Great Pictures," and "A Guide to the
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WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS



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shiny day, for instance, there is one portion which is picturesque, animated to a degree, and worthy of a painter. Standing in the street and looking down towards the Monument and the point where King William and other streets converge towards London Bridge, the buildings and warehouses and churches all rise and cross each other at various angles, catching the light in different ways. There is the steeple, such as it is; the elegant steeple of the church in Thames Street; the glimpse of the bridge and the river; the enormous busy traffic; and the effective Monument itself. Then going on, we look down on the picturesque Thames Street, passing under the arch, and which is as it might have looked two centuries ago. Here is the picturesque of trade. The London merchants and their men are carried on business centuries ago. Then the river itself, "noble" certainly—with the vessels and steamers crowded in rows at the wharf sides, and the huge landing warehouses—seen from the middle of the bridge, is a wonderful sight to behold.

ASPECTS OF A MODERN SUNDAY

G. W. STEEVENS

I WAS privileged the other day to see a Frenchman land in London for the first time at Holborn Station in the middle of a Sunday afternoon. Laden with hand luggage, he struggled out on to the Viaduct; of course, there was no cab. He looked eagerly for his first sight of London—then checked and, with blank and open mouth. It was plain that he half-wondered whether he had not gone mad. Well he might. He had probably heard stories of the roaring rush and energy of London which strikes a Parisian much as a Londoner is struck by New York. And he saw a desolation. Nothing but the blind shop-windows, the silent house-fronts, the empty asphalt of Holborn Viaduct. Not a face at a window, not an open door, not a footstep along the street. The one dwindling omnibus towards the Circus might be the last vehicle carrying away the last inhabitants of London. The City might have been utterly empty—only lifeless buildings left standing, and all population fled dead.

The City on Sunday had never struck me as strange before. But a moment from the foreigner's point of view and you see that it is among the wonders of the world. There is nothing in the least like it in this hemisphere. Go into any other capital on Sunday—even at the height of the summer's suburban excursions—and it is fuller, brighter, livelier than in the week. Go into the heart of

London, and it is like a city stricken with a pestilence. Yesterday and to-morrow the street would be jammed tight with traffic of men and goods; every shop and office implied a procession of comers and goers, the pavements vomited torrents of people, heads forward, eyes strained, intent only on the one business. The City roared and quivered and maddened with life. To-morrow it will be so again. To-day, in the centre of the greatest city in the world, you cannot buy food or drink: you cannot even find a cab or train to take you away from it. You might be in a desert. In a street that focusses the business of the world you stare at closed doors and still windows where only paper-clad boxes of samples look over the whitened lower half at the intruder. You can stand without a single living thing in sight, and bend your ears in vain to catch the lightest sound. When you walk, your boots thud and ring like a steamer's engines; when you halt, you could hear the flower drop out of your button-hole.

I had often heard that Sunday was the only day on which you can see London, and going up one morning to look for any bits of antiquity I might encounter, I found it was so indeed. On Sunday London takes on a new perspective. Its most prominent features—as in duty bound—are the churches. On week-days you pass them without knowing they are there; on Sunday, even though they are shut, you note them as landmarks of the time when people lived in the City. On Sunday you observe that there is a statue of William IV. opposite London Bridge, and experience an unfamiliar prompting to go up the Monument. You had always looked on the Tower as a bit of somewhere else that had somehow strayed on to ground that might have been profitably bestowed on offices and warehouses and wine-cellars; to-day its green-shadowed terrace, the rhu-



barb growing in the moat, the fat old guns that grin benevolently on the Dutch steamer swinging to the tide—today you can look at them without fellow-citizens on your feet and in your stomach, seeming, sure enough, to be the principal things to look at.

Over the Tower Bridge comes a loose but unceasing string of foot-passengers. Not going out of London, like the rest of the world, they pour steadily into the emptiness which yet is never a whit fuller. You noticed the same at London Bridge: while half the town is heading out, the other half—the neckerchiefed and feather-flying half—heads in. Towards what? You fall in with them along the Minories, which is full of people, though twenty yards away Vine Street and America Square are dumb as a sacked village in an invaded country. At Aldgate the crowd parts—half turn east, the other half go on down Houndsditch. A dozen steps after them and you realize that London is not so dead as it seemed. Half the shops are wide open; the predatory beaks of Jews peer out from the doors; the street is full of a vaguely promenading crowd. As you go on it thickens about the old-clothes shops; seeing a yet thicker crowd, you turn off to the right, in the hopes of at least a Punch and Judy show. You emerge into Middlesex Street, with Wentworth Street beyond. And—good Lord!—

Good Lord! who said London was empty on Sunday! Here are two streets wedged quite tight with men and women. Here is a combination of the rush for pit seats on a Gaiety first night, a race meeting, and an Easter bazaar. You cannot move for the people clogging your elbow; you cannot hear for the yells of auctioneers and barrows; you can hardly see for the dazzle of colour. Half a mile away is the still deserted City—and here

Between the two rows of barrows the thousands of market-ers just move: they are in no hurry, and can keep watchful eyes and ears clamped on the chances of bargaining. Without exaggeration—the reality of the astounding scene sends Exaggeration reeling—there is everything here that retail sellers can sell. Everything cheap, everything good. Every kind of garment and fabric is here, and towels and brushes and combs and jewelry and hair-pins. Trousers festoon the streets in hundreds of pairs. “’Ere y’ are!” yells a man from a box on top of a stall: “this pair—noo—two bob, eighteen pence, fourteen, thirteen, one and a ’alf, shillin’—’ere y’ are!”—and, as he flings them to a pale-eyed gawk in the street, a heavy-fringed, aproned girl leaps after them to get the money. The boy holds them over his stomach and looks vaguely towards his toes: thus are they tried on, paid for, and taken away. He stops next where two rival salesmen in their shirts are yelling each other down. Frantically they catch up waistcoats and jackets from below: furiously they drag them on. Then, standing in the very article—“’Ere y’ are—’alf a soot—’alf-a-crown, two bob for ’alf a soot—blanky noo—two bob for the blanky ’alf soot, and yer can’t get it for blanky less.” Next door a merchant not less energetic appeals only to butchers. Over his clothes he is adorned in a blue jean smock and apron, which he will strip off and sell for a dollar and a ’alf. Every one roars like a book-maker. The rasping yells fling out in sudden gusts, mingle and jar like a saw on a nail, and rebound from house to house like missiles.

Here you can buy harness, you can buy oil-paintings, you can buy books, lemonade, annotated copies of the Workmen’s Compensation Bill, vegetable marrows four a-penny all boiled in vinegar, herrings from the barrel, pine-

apple from the tin, and—chase me for my feathers!—millinery. You can be weighed at Somebody’s Guarantee Grand National Scales and probe the wonders of the cinematophone. In the very middle of the jammed road totter an old gentleman with a tray full of shirt studs; a burly fellow genially cleaves the press by waving a bullock-liver.

Yes, beyond mistake you have found London on Sunday and also you have found what you never expected—more than a hint of the East. Look up along the line of plain and grimy house-fronts, the windows black and opaque with generations of soot, with only the broken panes transparent. Here and there is a house completely fronted with hanging finery, petticoats, shirts, children’s frocks in scarlet and orange and ultramarine. Surely those flaring colours are not of England, nor yet this town in the open. Not yet half the people—curved noses and deep lustrous eyes and hairy bunches of features protruding from humped shoulders. Half the people are bargaining over the stall in a lingo you do not know. The Jew has brought his own Orient along with him into black-skied London.

Also you have found what you believed not to exist—the open-air life of London. It is not confined to the Jew: all the eastward streets are full of Londoners. The working-man in collar and tie, the working-man in silk neckerchief, the working-man in his working corduroy—he is everywhere, taking his pipe and his ease in the street. A few of the wives are about too—in rusty black bonnets and shawls, with worn bodies and pale faces; observe that the men and the women take their social intercourse quite apart. Only among the young do you see the sexes walking together; for whom else is Bishopsgate Street Without studded with flower-girls? Among the dingy crowd fl

like butterflies the gorgeous children of the not-quite-poor. In azure or cherry-coloured satin frocks, white silk stockings, and white satin shoes, these amazing bunches of finery mince to and fro through refuse and sun themselves from dust-bins.

But the open-air life of London has its strict limit. The veins of strollers, you observe, begin to clot into groups. The groups seem to correspond with the frequent public-houses, and you observe on the broad-faced church clock that it is eight minutes to one. Here is the true emotional moment of London's Sunday. Each little knot sorts itself—cigars and white skirts and stockings opposite the saloon bar, clays and shawls and Jack and Tommy opposite the public, jugs and bottles in their appointed place. The long hand crawls slowly over the five minutes mark; now it is more than half-way to the hour. The loll of elaborate unconsciousness which first screened the waiters gives place to the tense pose of listening. A footstep inside and the raising of a bolt—the door rolls back with a glimpse of somebody in white shirt-sleeves. There is no affectation of uncertainty: every man goes straight forward inside, as ships glide into port. In a twinkling the houses are all full, and before the last man is well in the first comes out wiping his lips with the back of his hand.

THE GUILDHALL

AUGUSTUS J. C. HARE

THE *Guildhall* was originally built in the time of Henry IV. (1411), but it has been so much altered that though the walls were not much injured by the Fire and only had to be reroofed, very little can be seen to remain visible of that time except the crypt. The front, by *George Dance*, is a miserable work of 1789.

Here it was that, after the death of Edward IV., when his sons were in the Tower, on June 22, 1483, the Duke of Buckingham addressed the people, and after cunningly dwelling on the exactions of the late king's reign, denying his legitimacy, and, affirming that the Duke of Gloucester was the only true son of the Duke of York, demanded that he should be acknowledged as king.

In 1546 the Guildhall was used for the trial of Anne, daughter of Sir William Askew of Kelsey in Lincolnshire, who had been turned out of doors by her husband (of Kyme) because she had become a Protestant. Coming to London, to sue for a separation, she had been kindly received by Queen Katherine Parr, and was found to have distributed Protestant tracts amongst the court ladies. At the Guildhall she was tried for heresy, and on being asked by the Lord Mayor why she refused to believe that a priest could make the body of Christ, gave her famous answer—"I have heard that God made man, but that man can make God I have never heard." She was afterwards cruelly tortured on the rack to extort evidence against the

beyond. And blossoming hawthorn. And especially no houses. I felt like Stanley emerging from darkest Africa. Epping Forest, and no more London!

It had taken over four hours and a half of actual walking, from which I infer that the distance was a little short of twenty miles. It took me, by tram-car, omnibus, train, cab, train, and omnibus, three hours to get back again.

IN PRAISE OF LONDON FOG

M. H. DZIEWICKI

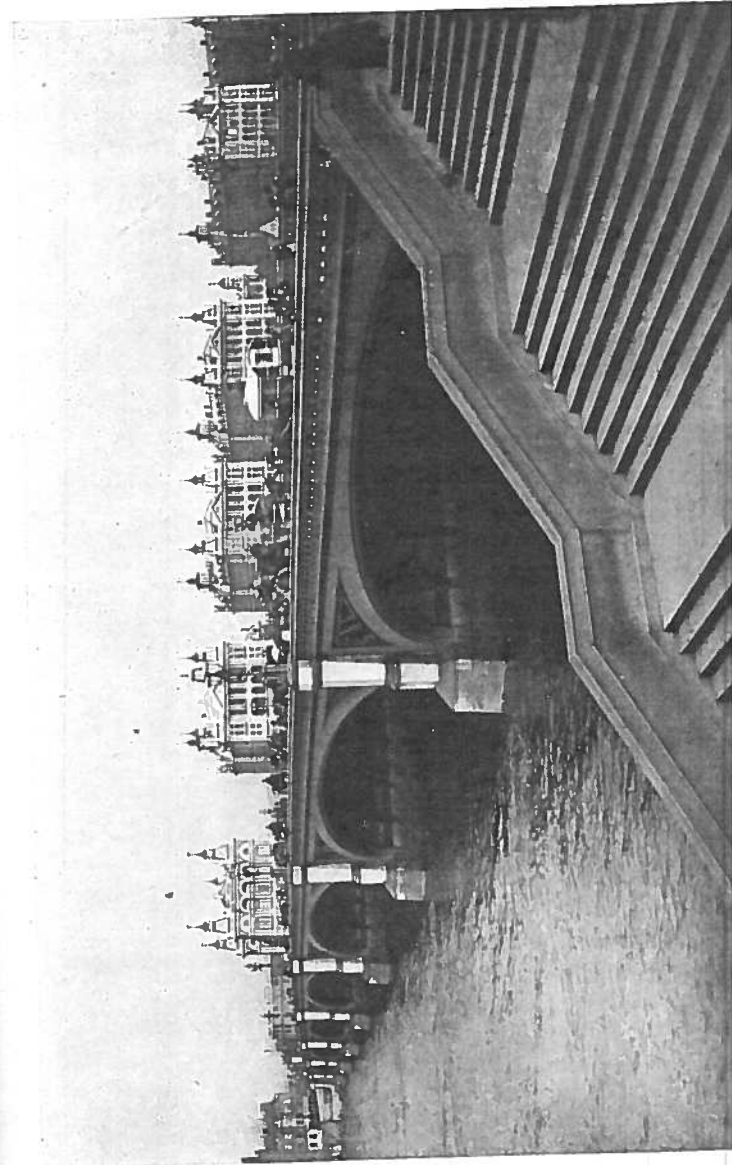
IN many respects, London has no advantage over other cities; in several points, it is even inferior to some. The good taste shown in the architecture of its palaces and public buildings is not unfrequently questionable, to say the least. The West End itself contains few mansions that would not find their equals in Paris, Vienna, or Berlin. The old monuments, scattered here and there about the town, are hardly more curious than those of most other nations, and sink into complete insignificance when we remember those of Rome. The public gardens and parks, trim and well-kept as they are, exhibit nothing that to a greater or less extent, is not to be found in every wealthy capital of Europe. But that which can be seen nowhere but in London—that which gives it its peculiar stamp and its special beauty—is its night and its fog. Night in London!

Stand upon Westminster Bridge, and gaze at the innumerable glories reflected back by the Thames; the avenues of gas lights and rows of illuminated windows, repeated in the heaving waters, and trembling and undulating as the waters heave; the solitary electric lamp that shine out from the immense station of Charing Cross; the red blue and emerald green lanterns on the railway bridge far away, and the long cloud of white smoke that iris-like takes the colour of each lantern over which it rolls, while it marks the passage of a fiery messenger along the rails

the lights of the swift, graceful steamboats below, plying upwards against the tide, or downwards with it, and making the brown waters foam and sparkle; the factories on the south side of the river, all ablaze with a thousand radiances; the long straight line of lamps, that stretches as far as the eye can see above Westminster Bridge, where Lambeth Hospital faces, not unworthily, the great Houses of Parliament: and with all these splendours surrounding you, and in the midst of this whirlpool movement ever more and more rapid, ever louder and louder, as the great city swells to vaster dimensions year by year—go and talk nonsense about the stars and the light of the moon! Prate about cornfields and green grass, sheep and oxen, when you see, streaming past you over the bridge—out of the darkness, into the darkness—thousands of living fellow-creatures, all of them thinking and willing, many of them loving and hating, some of them like unto holy angels, and some like fiends from hell! Oh, the dread intensity, the wonderful meaning, the turbulent grandeur of the scene! Starlight and moonlight may indeed embellish it; the towers of Westminster, silvered with celestial radiance, may indeed look more splendid than when they loom, black and solemn, out of the lamp-light and starless obscurity; still, to my mind, these occasional interferences add but little to the scenery, and their absence does not matter much. What would the fairest of capitals—Venice, for instance—be at night, without those lamps of Heaven? Only London gives out enough light to be, like the Medusa, beautiful by its own phosphorescence.

London by night, from Westminster Bridge, is darkly picturesque; in Drury Lane, wildly picturesque. It now remains for us to see London weirdly picturesque.

I was crossing the narrow bridge for foot-passengers that



runs by the side of the Charing Cross railway bridge. It was broad daylight—that is, as broad daylight as we got all that day. And yet I could see neither whence I came nor whither I was going. Men and women, like shadows, some passing one way, some the other, came out of invisible regions, and vanished into regions invisible. I looked downwards: I could just see the turbid waves below me, and their uneasy undulations to and fro. I looked upwards: a faint, hazy, bluish tint told me that there was sky overhead. But in all the broad expanse before me, I could not tell where the dark-brown hue of the Thames melted into the pale azure of the firmament. Nothing could be distinguished—absolutely nothing. The nearest bridge above and below, the houses on either side, Cleopatra's gigantic Needle, the boats and coal-barges—if, indeed any were then moored upon the river—were completely out of sight. I was suspended in the air between the dimly-seen sky and the dimly-seen waters, on a bridge that neither ended nor began, or rather, of which the beginning and the end were a few yards off from me on either side. A dozen feet or so of railing, right and left; trains constantly whizzing by, with thundering noise and exploding fog-signals; human beings, indistinct in the near distance, distinct for a moment while they pass, and then again once indistinct and swallowed up in the cloud; a most perfect gradation from the seen to the unseen, through all possible varieties and shades—would not such a sight be eminently worthy of a great painter's pencil, or a great writer's pen?

Or take another point of view: Waterloo Bridge on a foggy evening; not, however, when the vapours are densest, but when they just begin to thicken, rising from the Thames. How the eye plunges down the long vista o

lights—some fixed, some mobile—in the vain endeavour to distinguish Blackfriars Bridge, otherwise than by the stream of sparks that flit backwards and forwards upon it! And the eddying mists—now thicker, now thinner, as the wind's direction changes—make the lights twinkle like the stars of heaven, and more than they; some appear all but extinguished and then again revive suddenly, while the accumulated fog is driven hither and thither, up or down the stream. To use a homely comparison, the vanishings and reappearances of the lamps in the uncertain distance are not unlike the train of scintillations that we see running on the black and shrivelled surface of paper which has just been burnt.

And has not a foggy morning its beauties too? I was not long ago journeying from Clapham to Westminster on the top of an omnibus, while a thick mist, curling and shifting about, alternately hid from view and partially revealed the rows of houses that glided past us like grey spectres. Above their roofs, but scarcely above them, the red sun peeped, or rather bounded along to keep pace with us—which he did. Sometimes he was for an instant concealed behind chimney-stacks, steeples, or public edifices, and then he again showed his fiery orb, broad and brilliant. And, as we pass before Kennington Park, the skeleton trees one after another cover the golden globe with a delicate, black, ever-changing network of branches—a sight not to be despised. Now we turn away: our direction has changed, and the sun disappears. Shall we no more see him beaming jovially and genially into our faces—not a god too bright to be gazed at, but the familiar companion of our journey? Yes, there he is again!—again, though but for a short time, we see him bounding along the horizon, as if to bid us farewell.

Now all that effect is owing to the fog. Say what you will against it, I still maintain that no one can truthfully deny the picturesque beauty obtained by the agent that, instead of letting you shut your eyes from the dazzling sunbeams, brings the great Giver of light himself into the landscape, and contrasts his living, burning globe of flame with the cold angular outlines of the grey shrouded houses and the dead leafless boughs of the desolate trees. Is not this contrast beautiful? Yet nobody notices it, because it is at our doors. . . . In the weird indistinctness that it sheds upon everything in this world of London—clothing the Houses of Parliament with phantom drapery, effacing the hands on the dial of the Clock Tower, and annihilating to the eye the mighty dome of St. Paul's, while leaving its foundations and walls intact—the fog throws the glamour of mystery over all, and thus gives a touch of poetry to a wilderness of buildings that would by themselves be too prosaical, too matter-of-fact.

But it may be said that I plead for the fog in general not for the London fog. What is there of the beautiful in this dingy yellowish monster, shedding flakes of black snow all round, and almost stifling you in the thick fold of its close embrace? I own that this dinginess, this jaundice hue, this combination of smoke and mist that gives the very sun a "sickly glare" and extinguishes the electric light at a hundred yards, seems to be, and is, repulsive. But take away the idea of mere annoyance, of trifling inconvenience, which the fog suggests, and try to substitute that of a terrible calamity of which it might be either the cause or the accompaniment; you will no longer say that the fog's appearance is "horrid" or "disgusting," but rather confess it to be fearful and grand in the extreme. When you see at the end of a long interminable street a thick

volume of fog settling down and rolling onwards in triumph, fancy that it is the plague-cloud, conveying deadly germs into every household that it reaches; or imagine that London, besieged by the enemy, is burning, and that the fog-signals are the detonations of shells from hostile batteries; or think that Vesuvius, when about to overwhelm Pompeii, began by rolling forth such a cloud down its sides. You will soon find it terribly picturesque. And, therefore, if the fog is not so, that arises only from our associations, disagreeable indeed, but without the element of grandeur that might attach to them.

London, the metropolis of the world, is unique; it is meet that its beauties should be unique also. At the hour when the charms of Nature vanish from sight, or only come forth if the heavens lend their aid, London, all the year round, spreads before all beholders a constant panorama of splendour and of brilliancy. In the lowest depths, in the mud-abysses of this ocean of humanity, we often and often perceive wild glimpses of rude and savage, but joyful and exuberant life. And at those seasons when the enchantment of verdure ceases in the groves, when the magic of sunlight loses its power in meadow and field, the enchantment of another magic lends to the buildings and the streets of London a mysterious charm for him who has eyes to see.

SLEEPLESS LONDON

G. W. STEEVENS

THE hardest-worked of London's thoroughfares is Fleet Street; its bedtime is from one to three. These are the hours men seize upon to wash it by the time the last suburban home-goers have reached Ludgate Hill the vestry men are out with their hose to sluice the poor tired thing down. It is almost empty. A hansom or two lies in wait for the infrequent editor. The policeman stands in a reverie to read the bill of fare of the long-cold restaurant, and haply wonders what "choux fleurs au gratin" might be.

You go back at three—when the rest of London has gone soundly to its nest—and Fleet Street, hardly dry from its morning tub, is in the flush of its morning's work. A dull grinding roar runs surf-like along its two shores—the sound of many printing machines. Carts are moving through winding alleys out of gas-lit stables. Piles of newspapers grow up on its pavements, and presently on by one the carts clatter away. The muffled shriek of whistles and the clang of distant buffers remind you that the railway stations—they also—never sleep.

Clatter and whistle and clank—yet with it all Fleet Street is unearthly still. You miss the background—the roar, that orchestration of the London streets which in the daytime accompanies and harmonizes all the leading notes. At night the roar is gone; a cart comes round a corner with a crash that almost startles. It is the same with sight

ences concerning the suicides for which the bridge was then in high fashion. "The Bridge," as the toll-man informed him, was originally named the Strand Bridge, but had received its present name at the suggestion of the proprietors when Parliament resolved to vote three hundred thousand pounds for the erection of a monument in honour of the victory. Parliament took the hint," said Waterloo, with the least flavour of misanthropy, "and saved the money." Of course the Duke of Wellington was the first passenger, and of course he paid his coin, and of course he preserved it ever more.

THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

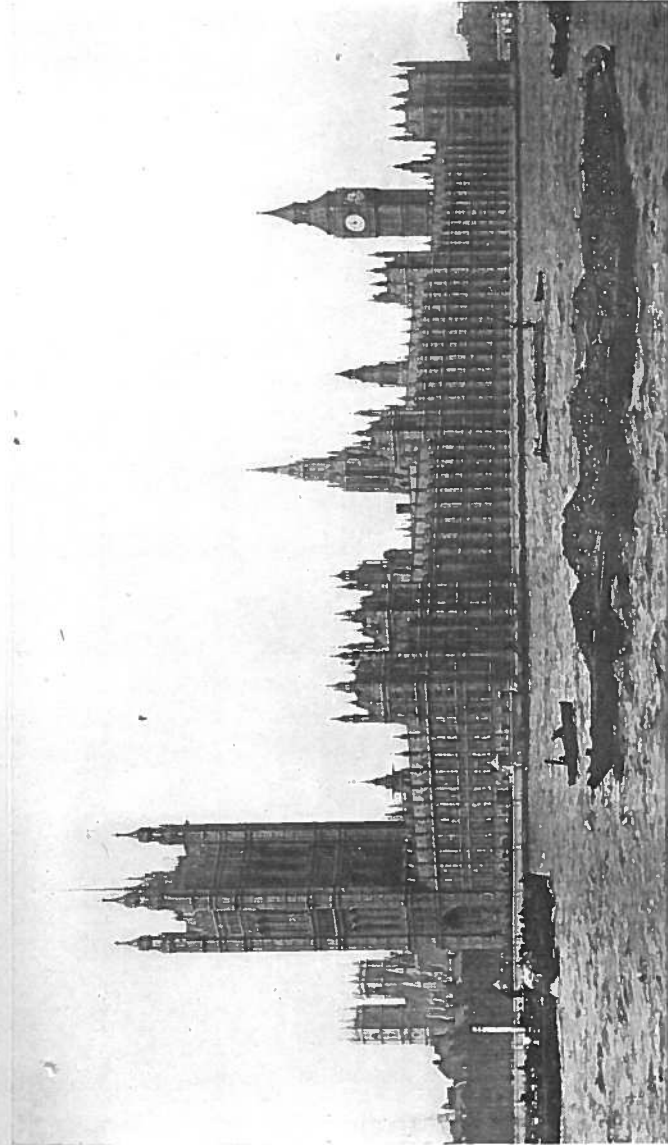
PERCY FITZGERALD

PEOPLE often lament that the old Cathedrals, both in England and abroad, are so crowded up, and incrustured by mean buildings and streets; but do they gain when these are cleared away? One of the most picturesque glimpses of the Abbey is to be obtained from a point *vis à vis* to the Peers' entrance, near the equestrian statue. There is a perfect old-world charm over this little corner, at the end of which the great arched buttress of the Chapter House—a happy bit of restoration—shows itself. The air of repose and tranquillity is extraordinary. You would think you were in an old rural town.

We are so familiar with the great Westminster group of buildings, the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Hall, that we scarcely can appreciate the imposing magnificence of the site and disposition. But foreigners are often struck with astonishment and admiration at the vast elaborate workmanship and detail; and certainly for a modern work the Parliament House is singularly successful in the effort to reproduce the old Gothic. The irregularity and originality of the treatment of the two towers, the *flèche*, etc., is worthy of all praise. Of course faults may be detected, and it is said there is a monotony in the repetition of the panelling, which suggests wood-carving, as though wrought by machinery. When the plans were discussed, it was proposed to raise the platform on the river side to the full level of the ground in Palace Square, or rather to that of the

Bridge, and this would certainly have had an imposing effect. But the difficulty was what to do with Westminster Hall. There was an angry controversy between Pugin and Sir Charles Barry, and between those who represented them, as to their respective shares in the design, a point which the impartial spectator will have little difficulty in deciding. Pugin's spirit is to be recognized everywhere and in all the details, and it was impossible that so pervading an influence should not have its effect in the constructive portions also. Barry's other works offer nothing like this—nothing so free or fanciful. The luxuriance of florid details is indeed extraordinary, and the lavish profusion of ornament seems to belong to some gem of a private chapel rather than to the surfaces of so vast a building. But it is melancholy to note the evidence of decay, and this delicate tracery, though apparently preserving its shape and form is mouldering away. Any "undercutting" in this climate is doomed. The *general* decay of the main stone-work which caused such alarm many years ago has happily been arrested; a vast quantity of the decayed material has been cut out and renewed. But there is a constant repair going on, and little "crow's nests" are to be always seen crusted round one or other of the delicate "finials."

Some palpable mistakes, due to economy, can be detected at once. The intention of the architects in designing so long and so low a structure was to relieve it by the two Towers, which were to "carry up" the eye—like spires. The great Victoria Tower, whose enormous proportions can only be appreciated when we are close to it, seems as vast and massive as the Tower of the Town Hall at Ypres—that wonder of the world. Yet the whole idea of its imposing height has been sacrificed: it is indeed difficult to



believe that it is as high as the dome of St. Paul's. As Fergusson says "the Victoria Tower partly dwarfs the portion of the building near it. Yet in the original design it was intended to be six stories in height, which increase would have lessened the sense of breadth, making it more airy. Unfortunately the architect had the weakness of often changing his original purpose, consequently the entrance, instead of being only of the height of two stories of the building as at first proposed, now runs through and makes the adjacent House of Lords ridiculous. If the size of the gate is appropriate, the Lords are pigmies. Worse than this, at the back of the great arch is a little one, one fourth its height through which everything must pass. The counterpart of all this is the House, which looks much smaller than it really is."

The fact is, that when the Tower was approaching completion the House of Commons in a fit of economy, interposed and refused to allow it to be carried its proper height. It is now therefore some thirty or forty feet too short. Its proportions seem clumsy and stinted, and it is really unpleasant to contemplate. The *flèche* that rises from the centre of the building is really beautiful and elegant, covering (which few would suspect) the great central Hall, and, with these various towers and spires forms a charming assemblage, to which the Abbey unhappily does not contribute, for its central tower ought to be furnished with a *flèche*, or an octagonal lantern, like the one at St. Ouen at Rouen. Wren, it is known, prepared a design, which however was laid aside.

As we look up at the Clock Tower, it suggests some curious recollections—first, associated with the "Big Ben" within, which has its history. Few may recollect that it was—so named after Sir Benjamin Hall, then Commissioner

of Works. Unnoticed too, perhaps, by the incurious is the fact that "Big Ben" has long been cracked, but has done his work effectively for years. Yet the hoarse, rather jarring tone betrays this damage hourly. Forgotten also that it was designed by a bell amateur, Mr. Becket Denison, and that there was a controversy and discussion which long raged fiercely about the bell. It could not be even settled what note it uttered. It is astonishing to think that the large hand of the clock is over fourteen feet long. From the elaborate open-work character of the "cap," or head of the clock-tower, as well as from its function of holding a number of bells large and small, for which there is no room save in the body of the tower itself, it was intended that the whole should be pierced, and have an airy, open treatment like a church spire. This was actually the architect's design, as will be seen from the slits that run all the way up. These, however, he was forced to "glaze," and fill in with windows, which gives the whole a heavy, clumsy air, instead of a lightness and elegance. The system of lighting the dials is elaborate, and the cost enormous. There is quite a fire-chamber behind. Offenders against Parliamentary discipline have been consigned to the Clock Tower for custody; and, as may be imagined, the chief portion of their sufferings, night and day, must have been the alarming booming of the bells, which were quite close to their ears.

The great embarrassment for the architect of the Houses of Parliament was Westminster Hall, which stood in the way and seemed really irreconcilable. If left detached, with a space between it and the new building, there would be little room for the latter between it and the river; if combined with it, it was incongruous, being of a totally different style. The latter course was adopted, and it was

turned into a sort of vestibule or entrance hall to the Houses. On æsthetic grounds this was a blunder, for it has lost its significance as a separate work, and has always been in protest, as it were, against its degradation. From the outside every one may conclude that here are two distinct buildings, yet on entering it is found to be mere passage or approach for the other. Barry was so sensible of this that he determined to hide or screen it altogether and he left designs for a building to be carried in front, which was to go round the whole yard. There was to be a grand imposing tower, with arched entrance gate at corner, facing Parliament Street. This costly scheme was never carried out, and instead, the Hall has been taken in hand by Mr. Pearson, fitted with a cloister and battlements, etc., after his own style. This of course conveys a more general discrepancy, for its general plainness and rudeness of treatment make the details of the new building appear trivial; while in return their minuteness and delicacy causes the Westminster Hall to appear more rude and rough.

What shall be said of the magnificent interior of Westminster Hall, its unique open and bewildering roof, a marvel of construction, with its history and traditions and trials? It is curious, as we walk through it, to see how completely the effect has been destroyed. By opening out the end and adding ascending steps, with a passage beyond, its purpose has been changed, and the sense of space and size annihilated. You merely pass through it, instead of entering and staying there. It is no longer a great chamber. There is a handsome stained glass window seen beyond the style called "Perpendicular," a portion of which is strange to say, is cut off by the beams of the roof. It was however, Barry's intention to raise the roof all through

hydraulic machinery—an intention that never will be carried out, and so the blunder or eyesore remains.

It is curious what uncertainty exists as to the roof of this fine Hall. It is generally supposed to be made of Irish oak, as stated by Macaulay in his account of the trial of Warren Hastings. Others maintain that it is of Normandy chestnut, others again that the roof alone is of chestnut and the ribs of oak.

Every one is familiar with the two Chambers, with their fine and gorgeous decorations, enriched brass and iron work, carvings, paintings, etc. The House of Commons originally had an elegant open roof, elaborate to a degree, and furnishing the leading "note" of the chamber. It was found at once that the speeches were inaudible, and the architect was allotted the ungrateful office of destroying his own work—having to set up a flat panelled ceiling many feet below his tracery and Gothic work. This has answered perfectly, and the space between is utilized for lighting purposes. It may be added that when it was determined not to proceed further with Barry's designs, the Palace was completed by his son, a low colonnade being added, the ornamental details of the Clock Tower being continued to the ground. The *grilles* and railings which were also added seem like the colonnade, but have not the same elegance as the building, and offer a different treatment.

The Gothic clock-face caused the architect a vast deal of thought, and it was only after many experiments that the existing mode of attaching it to the tower was devised. It is considered very successful. Prince Albert, it is said, insisted that the whole upper portion should be of metal. The tower has, within the last few years, been turned into a sort of beacon or gigantic lamp-post—not, indeed, to give

light or a warning of danger—but to announce to whom it may concern that the House is *not* up. This acts as a malicious schoolmaster, and insensibly preaches what is right and degrading. The tower was a useful and fair servant, "Big Ben" booming out—albeit a little hoarse and cracked—the hours by day, the huge illuminated dial telling the hour by night. But a gap was made in the fretwork over the dial, and an ugly semicircular lantern thrust through which gives out a fierce glare while the House is sitting. The handsome Clock Tower is now present to our eyes as a sort of gigantic candlestick, with the association of smoke, fierce heat, flare, and glare. The light is not sent out from the tower beaconwise, but the tower itself is a beacon.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

WASHINGTON IRVING

When I behold, with deep astonishment,
To famous Westminster how there resorte,
Living in brasse or stony monument,
The princes and the worthies of all sorte ;
Doe not I see reformde nobilitie,
Without contempt, or pride, or ostentation,
And looke upon offenseless majesty,
Naked of pomp or earthly domination ?
And how a play-game of a painted stone
Contents the quiet now and silent sprites,
Whome all the world which late they stood upon,
Could not content nor quench their appetites.

Life is a frost of cold felicitie,
And death the thaw of all our vanitie.

Christolero's Epigrams, by T. B., 1598.

ON one of those sober and rather melancholy days, in the latter part of autumn, when the shadows of morning and evening almost mingle together, and throw a gloom over the decline of the year, I passed several hours in rambling about Westminster Abbey. There was something congenial to the season in the mournful magnificence of the old pile; and as I passed its threshold, it seemed like stepping back into the regions of antiquity, and losing myself among the shades of former ages.

I entered from the inner court of Westminster school, through a long, low, vaulted passage, that had an almost



WESTMINSTER ABBEY (interior).

subterranean look, being dimly lighted in one part by circular perforations in the massive walls. Through this avenue I had a distant view of the cloisters, with the figure of an old verger, in his black gown, moving along the shadowy vaults, and seeming like a spectre from one of the neighbouring tombs. The approach to the abbey through these gloomy monastic remains prepares the mind for solemn contemplation. The cloisters still retain somewhat of the quiet and seclusion of former days. The grey vaults are discoloured by damps, and crumbling with age; a carpet of hoary moss has gathered over the inscriptions of mural monuments, and obscured the death's heads, and other funeral emblems. The sharp touches of the carvings are gone from the rich tracery of the arches; the foliage which adorned the key-stones have lost their leafy beauty, and everything bears marks of the gradual dilapidations of time, which yet has something touching and pleasing in its decay.

The sun was pouring down a yellow autumnal ray upon the square of the cloisters; beaming upon a scanty patch of grass in the centre, and lighting up an angle of the vaulted passage with a kind of dusty splendour. From beneath the arcades, the eye glanced up to a bit of blue sky, a passing cloud; and beheld the sun-gilt pinnacles of the abbey towering into the azure heaven.

As I paced the cloisters, sometimes contemplating the mingled picture of glory and decay, and sometimes endeavouring to decipher the inscriptions on the tombstones which formed the pavement beneath my feet, my eyes were attracted to three figures, rudely carved in relief, but worn away by the footsteps of many generations. They were the effigies of three of the early abbots; the effigies were entirely effaced; the names alone remained, having

doubt been renewed in later times; (Vitalis. Abbas. 1082, and Gislebertus Crispinus. Abbas. 1114, and Laurentius. Abbas. 1176.) I remained some little while, musing over these casual relics of antiquity, thus left like wrecks upon his distant shore of time, telling no tale but that such beings had been and had perished; teaching no moral but the futility of that pride which hopes still to exact homage in its ashes, and to live in an inscription. A little longer, and even these faint records will be obliterated, and the monument will cease to be a memorial. Whilst I was yet looking down upon the gravestones, I was roused by the sound of the abbey clock, reverberating from buttress to buttress, and echoing among the cloisters. It is almost startling to hear this warning of departed time sounding among the tombs, and telling the lapse of the hour, which, like a billow, has rolled us onward towards the grave.

I pursued my walk to an arched door opening to the interior of the abbey. On entering here, the magnitude of the building breaks fully upon the mind, contrasted with the vaults of the cloisters. The eye gazes with wonder at clustered columns of gigantic dimensions, with arches springing from them to such an amazing height; and man wandering about their bases, shrunk into insignificance in comparison with his own handiwork. The spaciousness and gloom of this vast edifice produce a profound and mysterious awe. We step cautiously and softly about, as if fearful of disturbing the hallowed silence of the tomb; while every footfall whispers along the walls, and chatters among the sepulchres, making us more sensible of the quiet we have interrupted.

It seems as if the awful nature of the place presses down upon the soul, and hushes the beholder into noiseless reverence. We feel that we are surrounded by the congregated

bones of the great men of past times, who have filled history with their deeds, and the earth with their renown.

And yet it almost provokes a smile at the vanity of human ambition, to see how they are crowded together, jostled in the dust; what parsimony is observed in dole out a scanty nook, a gloomy corner, a little portion of earth to those whom, when alive, kingdoms could not satisfy; and how many shapes, and forms, and artifices, are devised to catch the casual notice of the passenger, and save from forgetfulness, for a few short years, a name which could have aspired to occupy ages of the world's thought and admiration.

I passed some time in Poet's Corner, which occupies the end of one of the transepts or cross aisles of the abbey. The monuments are generally simple; for the lives of literary men afford no striking themes for the sculptor. Shakespeare and Addison have statues erected to their memories; but the greater part have busts, medallions, sometimes mere inscriptions. Notwithstanding the simplicity of these memorials, I have always observed that visitors to the abbey remain longest about them. A kind and fonder feeling takes place of that cold curiosity and vague admiration with which they gaze on the splendid monuments of the great and the heroic. They look upon these as about the tombs of friends and companions; for indeed there is something of companionship between the author and the reader. Other men are known to posterity only through the medium of history, which is continually growing faint and obscure; but the intercourse between the author and his fellow-men is ever new, active, and immediate. He has lived for them more than for himself; he has sacrificed surrounding enjoyments, and shut himself up from the delights of social life, that he might the more

intimately commune with distant minds and distant ages. Well may the world cherish his renown; for it has been purchased, not by deeds of violence and blood, but by the diligent dispensation of pleasure. Well may posterity be grateful to his memory; for he has left it an inheritance, not of empty names and sounding actions, but whole treasures of wisdom, bright gems of thought, and golden veins of language.

From Poet's Corner I continued my stroll towards that part of the abbey which contains the sepulchres of the kings. I wandered among what once were chapels, but which are now occupied by the tombs and monuments of the great. At every turn, I met with some illustrious name, or the cognizance of some powerful house renowned in history. As the eye darts into these dusky chambers of death, it catches glimpses of quaint effigies: some kneeling in niches, as if in devotion; others stretched upon the tombs, with hands piously pressed together; warriors in armour, as if reposing after battle; prelates, with crosiers and mitres; and nobles in robes and coronets, lying as if were in state. In glancing over this scene, so strangely populous, yet where every form is so still and silent, it seems almost as if we were treading a mansion of that fabled city, where every being had been suddenly transmuted into stone.

I paused to contemplate a tomb on which lay the effigy of a knight in complete armour. A large buckler was on one arm; the hands were pressed together in supplication upon the breast; the face was almost covered by the morion; the legs were crossed in token of the warrior's having been engaged in the holy war. It was the tomb of a crusader; of one of those military enthusiasts, who so strangely mingled religion and romance, and whose exploits form the connecting link between fact and fiction—between

the history and the fairy tale. There is something extremely picturesque in the tombs of these adventurers decorated as they are with rude armorial bearings and Gothic sculpture. They comport with the antiquated chapels in which they are generally found; and in considering them, the imagination is apt to kindle with the legendary associations, the romantic fiction, the chivalrous pomp and pageantry, which poetry has spread over the wars for the Sepulchre of Christ. They are the relics of times utterly gone by; of beings passed from recollection; of customs and manners with which ours have no affinity. They are like objects from some strange and distant land, of which we have no certain knowledge, and about which all our conceptions are vague and visionary. There is something extremely solemn and awful in those effigies on Gothic tombs, extended as if in the sleep of death, or in the supplication of the dying hour. They have an effect infinitely more impressive on my feelings than the fanciful attitude of the overwrought conceits, and allegorical groups, which abound on modern monuments. I have been struck, also, with the superiority of many of the old sepulchral inscriptions. There was a noble way, in former times, of saying things simply, and yet saying them proudly: and do not know an epitaph that breathes a loftier consciousness of family worth and honourable lineage, than one which affirms, of a noble house, that "all the brothers were brave, and all the sisters virtuous."

While wandering about these gloomy vaults and silent aisles, studying the records of the dead, the sound of busy existence from without occasionally reaches the ear;—the rumbling of the passing equipage; the murmur of the multitude; or perhaps the light laugh of pleasure. The contrast is striking with the death-like repose around; and

it has a strange effect upon the feelings, thus to hear the surges of active life hurrying along and beating against the very walls of the sepulchre.

I continued in this way to move from tomb to tomb, and from chapel to chapel. The day was gradually wearing away; the distant tread of loiterers about the abbey grew less and less frequent; the sweet-tongued bell was summoning to evening prayers; and I saw at a distance the choristers, in their white surplices, crossing the aisle and entering the choir. I stood before the entrance to Henry the Seventh's chapel. A flight of steps leads up to it, through a deep and gloomy, but magnificent arch. Great gates of brass, richly and delicately wrought, turn heavily upon their hinges, as if proudly reluctant to admit the feet of common mortals into this most gorgeous of sepulchres.

On entering, the eye is astonished by the pomp of architecture, and the elaborate beauty of sculptured detail. The very walls are wrought into universal ornament, encrusted with tracery, and scooped into niches, crowded with the statues of saints and martyrs. Stone seems, by the cunning labour of the chisel, to have been robbed of its weight and density, suspended aloft, as if by magic, and the fretted roof achieved with the wonderful minuteness and airy security of a cobweb.

Along the sides of the chapel are the lofty stalls of the Knights of the Bath, richly carved of oak, though with the grotesque decorations of Gothic architecture. On the pinnacles of the stalls are affixed the helmets and crests of the knights, with their scarfs and swords; and above them are suspended their banners, emblazoned with armorial bearings, and contrasting the splendour of gold and purple and crimson, with the cold grey fretwork of the roof. In the midst of this grand mausoleum stands the sepulchre of its

founder,—his effigy, with that of his queen, extended on a sumptuous tomb, and the whole surrounded by a superb wrought brazen railing.

There is a sad dreariness in this magnificence; a strange mixture of tombs and trophies; these emblems of living and aspiring ambition, close beside mementos which show the dust and oblivion in which all must sooner or later terminate. Nothing impresses the mind with a deeper feeling of loneliness, than to tread the silent and deserted scene of former throng and pageant. On looking round on the vacant stalls of the knights and their esquires, and on the rows of dusty but gorgeous banners that were once before them, my imagination conjured up the scene which this hall was bright with the valour and beauty of the last day; glittering with the splendour of jewelled rank and military array; alive with the tread of many feet, and the hum of an admiring multitude. All had passed away; the silence of death had settled again upon the place; interrupted only by the casual chirping of birds, which had found their way into the chapel, and built their nests among its friezes and pendants—sure signs of solitariness and desertion. When I read the names inscribed on the banners, they were the names of men scattered far and wide about the world; some sailing upon distant seas; some under arms in distant lands, some mingling in the busy intrigues of courts and cabinets, all seeking to deserve one more distinction in this man's life of shadowy honours—the melancholy reward of a moment.

Two small aisles on each side of this chapel present a touching instance of the equality of the grave, which brings down the oppressor to a level with the oppressed, and mingles the dust of the bitterest enemies together. In the first is the sepulchre of the haughty Elizabeth; in the other

that of her victim, the lovely and unfortunate Mary. Not an hour in the day, but some ejaculation of pity is uttered over the fate of the latter, mingled with indignation at her oppressor. The walls of Elizabeth's sepulchre continually echo with the sighs of sympathy heaved at the grave of her rival.

A peculiar melancholy reigns over the aisle where Mary lies buried. The light struggles dimly through windows darkened by dust. The greater part of the place is in deep shadow, and the walls are stained and tinted by time and weather. A marble figure of Mary is stretched upon the tomb, round which is an iron railing, much corroded, bearing her national emblem—the thistle. I was weary with wandering, and sat down to rest myself by the monument, revolving in my mind the chequered and disastrous story of poor Mary.

The sound of casual footsteps had ceased from the abbey. I could only hear, now and then, the distant voice of the priest repeating the evening service, and the faint responses of the choir; these paused for a time, and all was hushed. The stillness, the desertion and obscurity that were gradually prevailing around, gave a deeper and more solemn interest to the place :

For in the silent grave no conversation,
No joyful tread of friends, no voice of lovers,
No careful father's counsel—nothing's heard,
For nothing is, but all oblivion,
Dust, and an endless darkness.

Suddenly the notes of the deep-labouring organ burst upon the ear, falling with doubled and redoubled intensity, and rolling, as it were, huge billows of sound. How well do their volume and grandeur accord with this mighty build-

ing! With what pomp do they swell through its vaults, and breathe their awful harmony through these ca- of death, and make the silent sepulchre vocal!—And r they rise in triumphant acclamation, heaving higher higher their accordant notes, and piling sound on sound. And now they pause, and the soft voices of the choir br out into sweet gushes of melody; they soar aloft, warble along the roof, and seem to play about these lo vaults like the pure airs of heaven. Again the peal organ heaves its thrilling thunders, compressing air i music, and rolling it forth upon the soul. What lo drawn cadences! What solemn sweeping concords! grows more and more dense and powerful—it fills the v pile, and seems to jar the very walls—the ear is stunned the senses are overwhelmed. And now it is winding up full jubilee—it is rising from the earth to heaven—the v soul seems rapt away, and floated upwards on this swell tide of harmony!

I sat for some time lost in that kind of reverie which strain of music is apt sometimes to inspire: the shade of evening were gradually thickening around me; monuments began to cast deeper and deeper gloom; the distant clock again gave token of the slowly waning day.

I arose, and prepared to leave the abbey. As I descended the flight of steps which lead into the body of the building my eye was caught by the shrine of Edward the Confessor, and I ascended the small staircase that conducts to it, to take from thence a general survey of this wilderness of tombs. The shrine is elevated upon a kind of platform, and close around it are the sepulchres of various kings and queens. From this eminence the eye looks down between the pillars and funeral trophies to the chapels and chambers

low, crowded with tombs; where warriors, prelates, courtiers, and statesmen, lie mouldering in "their beds of darkness." Close by me stood the great chair of coronation, rudely carved of oak, in the barbarous taste of a remote and Gothic age. The scene seemed almost as if contrived, with theatrical artifice, to produce an effect upon the beholder. Here was a type of the beginning and the end of human pomp and power; here it was literally but a step from the throne to the sepulchre. Would not one think that these incongruous mementos had been gathered together as a lesson to living greatness?—to show it, even in the moment of its proudest exaltation, the neglect and dishonour to which it must soon arrive? how soon that crown which encircles its brow must pass away; and it must lie down in the dust and disgraces of the tomb, and be trampled upon by the feet of the meanest of the multitude? For, strange to tell, even the grave is here no longer a sanctuary. There is a shocking levity in some natures, which leads them to sport with awful and hallowed things; and there are base minds, which delight to revenge on the illustrious dead the abject homage and grovelling servility which they pay to the living. The coffin of Edward the Confessor has been broken open, and his remains despoiled of their funeral ornaments; the sceptre has been stolen from the hand of the imperious Elizabeth, and the effigy of Henry the Fifth lies headless. Not a royal monument but bears some proof how false and fugitive is the homage of mankind. Some are plundered; some mutilated; some covered with ribaldry and insult—all more or less outraged and dishonoured!

The last beams of day were now faintly streaming through the painted windows in the high vaults above me: the lower parts of the abbey were already wrapped in the

obscurity of twilight. The chapels and aisles grew dim and darker. The effigies of the kings faded into shadow; the marble figures of the monuments assumed strange shapes in the uncertain light; the evening breeze came through the aisles like the cold breath of the grave; even the distant footfall of a verger, traversing the Far Corner, had something strange and dreary in its sound. I slowly retraced my morning's walk, and as I passed close to the portal of the cloisters, the door, closing with a jangle of noise behind me, filled the whole building with echoes.

Through the long Strand together let us stray.
 With thee conversing, I forget the way.
 Behold that narrow street which steep descends,
 Whose building to the slimy shore extends;
 Here Arundel's famed structure rear'd its frame,
 The street alone retains the empty name.
 Where Titian's glowing paint the canvas warm'd,
 And Raphael's fair design with judgment charm'd,
 Now hangs the bellman's song, and pasted here
 The colour'd prints of Overton appear.
 Where statues breath'd, the works of Phidias' hands,
 A wooden pump, or lonely watchhouse stands.
 There Essex' stately pile adorn'd the shore,
 There Cecil's, Bedford's, Villiers's—now no more."

COVENT GARDEN

MONTAGU WILLIAMS

"ALL a-growing and a-blowing!" Of all sounds that reach my ears during the year, gives me greater pleasure than this, the c the flower sellers. It brings glad tidings of sunshine an assurance that fogs are a thing of the past, and i you watch for the coming of the swallow.

To the hard-working professional man the adve spring brings new life, and its first pulsations are induced by the sight of the daffodil on the street barro

It may not be generally known that the flower ha are an extremely industrious class. Their day comm at the earliest dawn, or even before, in Covent G Market, or one of the other centres whither the g consigns his produce.

In my early days it was no uncommon thing for gentlemen, after passing the night in a somewhat dissi manner, to wend their way, in the small hours o morning, to Covent Garden Market, in order to have of coffee at the stall by the church, and, as they exp it, "to see life with the costers."

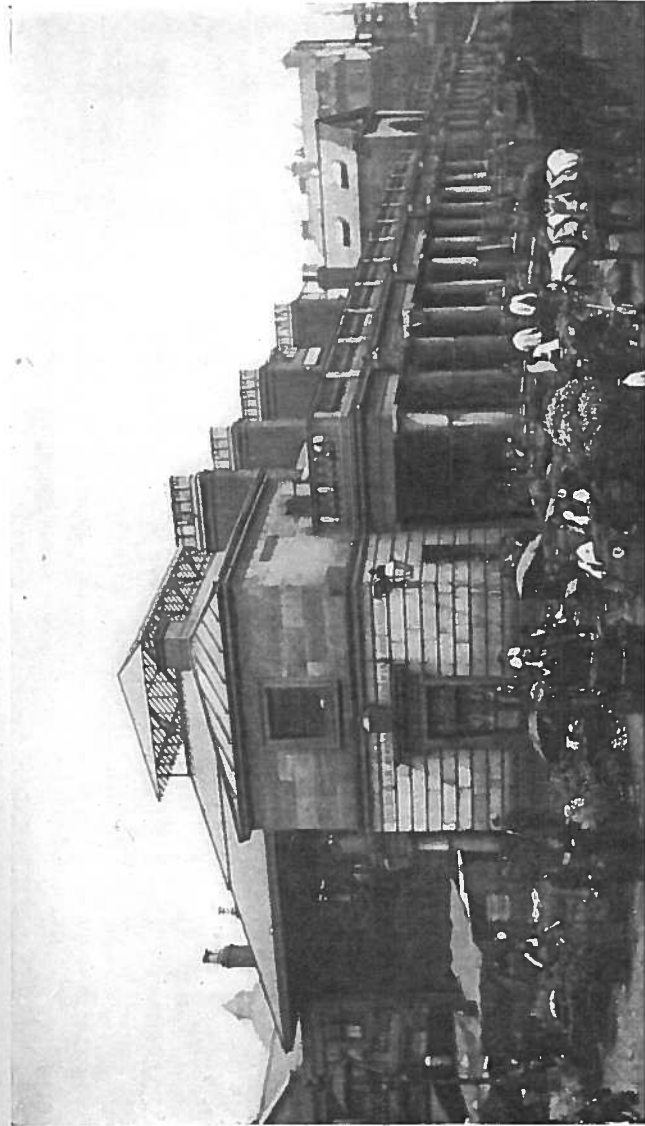
It has been said, and with a good deal of truth, th district known as Covent Garden has more literary indeed, human interest than any other spot in mode ancient London.

"Covent Garden" is, as everyone knows, a corru of "Convent Garden." Some six hundred years ag

ground covered by the present market and the surrounding buildings was an enclosure belonging to the Abbots of Westminster. One part of the area was used by them as a kitchen garden, and another part as a place of burial. At the dissolution of the religious houses—so we learn from Thornbury—the property passed into the hands of the Duke of Somerset, on whose attainder in 1552 it was given by the crown to John Russell, Earl of Bedford, under the description of “Covent Garden, lying in the parish of St. Martin’s in the Fields, next Charing Cross, with seven acres called Long Acre, of the yearly value of six pounds, six shillings and eight pence.” The value of the land, I am informed, has since increased.

In 1630, or thereabouts, the large square was laid out, from the designs of Inigo Jones, by Francis, fourth Earl of Bedford. On the north was the Piazza that still exists, on the east another that has long since been destroyed by fire, on the south the blank wall bounding the garden of Bedford House, and on the west the church of St. Paul, which was also designed by Inigo Jones, and which is a familiar building in the present day. Along the southern wall stood a number of trees, and it was beneath their foliage that the fruit and vegetable market had its first beginnings. In 1689 Strype wrote: “The south side of Covent Garden Square lieth open to Bedford Garden, where there is a small grotto of trees, most pleasant in the summer season; and on this side is kept a market for fruits, herbs, roots, and flowers every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday—which is grown to a considerable account—and well served with choice goods, which makes it much resorted to.”

I may be forgiven for quoting another writer in reference to the change that time wrought on this spot. Walter Savage Landor put the matter thus: “The garden formal



COVENT GARDEN

and quiet, where a salad was cut for a lady abbot; flowers were gathered to adorn images, became a noisy and full of life, distributing thousands of flowers to a vicious population."

The market gradually developed, and in 1671 formerly established under a charter granted by the Earl of Bedford. Wooden stalls and sheds, and makeshift erections, met the requirements of the men and women for a long time, and it was not until 1831 the present market was erected. It was built by the sixth Duke of Bedford, the architect being Mr. V. Fowler; and an interesting circumstance in connection with its construction was that, while excavating for the foundations, some navvies came upon a quantity of human remains, which no doubt dated from the time when the Abbots used the ground as their place of burial.

In days gone by, Covent Garden was a very fashionable quarter. We read that, between 1666 and 1700, following, among other distinguished persons resided in the Piazzas: Lord Hollis, Lord Brownlow, the Bishop of Exeter, Lord Southampton, Lord Newport, the Duke of Richmond, Lord the Earl of Oxford, Sir Godfrey Kneller, Sir Francis Digby, the Marquis of Winchester, Benjamin Wren, and Sir Peter Lely. King Street, Henrietta Street, and the thoroughfares in the immediate neighbourhood, were crowded with "persons of quality," as the phrase runs.

Many and various are the memories that cling to Covent Garden. Looking back through a long vista of years we can see, with the mind's eye, two monster conflagrations separated by an interval of some five decades, in which the former Covent Garden Theatres were totally destroyed. Again, to go still further back in the distance of years, we were reminded of the Piazzas that Powell set up his famous

how, to which, a wit of the period declared, large congregations were attracted by the ringing of the bell at the neighbouring church.

At one end of the existing Piazza stood the Bedford Coffee Tavern, an establishment with which are intimately associated the names of Garrick, Foote, Quin, and many other notabilities; and in the immediate vicinity was Sheridan's resort, the "Piazza Hotel." Then, too, at the north-west corner of Covent Garden was Evans's, that famous meeting-place for men of wit and fashion, where, before clubs were known, it is stated that as many as nine winks have dined on one evening.

The Strand and its environments never seem to go to bed. The stream of traffic flows on without intermission throughout every hour in the twenty-four, and it would be very difficult to say when the work of the night ends and the work of the day commences. The omnibuses of course stop running at a given hour; but before all the other passenger conveyances have vanished from the streets, vans laden with fruit, vegetables, hay, and other spoils from the country, come lumbering along. Early rising is the rule with labouring London.

Any of my readers who may visit Covent Garden Market in the small hours of the morning will see very much the same sights as those that were to be witnessed twenty or thirty years ago. On entering Wellington Street from the Strand you find the roadway choked with vans, carts of all shapes and sizes, and barrows. Every other street leading to the market is in the same congested condition. Who could have thought the world contained so many cabbages and potatoes as are to be seen here? Men bearing baskets and cases on their heads pass hither and thither, dodging each other with a dexterity born of long experience.

The shouts and oaths so freely exchanged are respected for a deal of the prevailing din; but other than the throats contribute to it largely. I refer to those costers' donkeys. One of these animals, elated it may be meeting so many fellow-creatures, gives utterance to a longed and well-executed bray. Others at once raise their voices in response, and in a moment all the donkeys in the street are exercising those vocal powers with which Providence, in its inscrutable wisdom, has seen fit to endow them. One cannot help feeling very sorry for such occupants of the neighbouring houses as desire to sleep.

The manner in which the vegetables are packed into the huge market carts is extraordinary. You see loads of cabbages and cabbages ten feet high, roped and netted down so tightly that, when unloosened, you marvel how so much could have been pressed into the space.

The market itself is, of course, the scene of incessant industry. For incessant industry it is a veritable bee-hive. You are disposed to stand about and watch what is going on; you must have a care for your head and your shins. The buyers, salesmen, and porters are no respecters of persons. With them it is work first and politeness afterwards.

If it is summer-time, the air is loaded with the fragrance of flowers, and the market is made beautiful with all sorts of colours.

"Now then for your dollars," shouts the eager coster; "we come here to sell, so make your choice and be quick about it."

You turn to see by whom these words are spoken, and thump! you are nearly knocked off your feet by a perspiring porter bending under a load of cauliflowers. "Why don't yer git out of the blooming way?" is the substitute for an apology.

There are plenty of beggars and loafers standing about, and, oddly enough, a little group of Sisters of Mercy and hospital nurses. What on earth are they doing here at such an hour? The answer is very simple—they are buying flowers, at market prices, to gladden the hearts of poor sufferers laid on beds of sickness.

Who is that individual in blue, standing in the middle of the avenue? He looks like a butcher—but no; what could a butcher be doing there? Well, absurd as it may seem at first sight, the supposition is correct. There he stands, steel on belt, with a basket of steaks and other pieces of meat. He shouts: “Buy! buy! buy!” On drawing closer you will find that the good man is doing a very brisk trade, and rapidly disposing of his stock. The market habitués, it appears, buy his meat and take it to neighbouring coffee-shops and public-houses, where they either have it cooked for them or perform the operation themselves.

Not the least interesting among those who every morning flock to Covent Garden are the women who sell buttonholes and nosegays in the street. Theirs is a most laborious life. They have to rise in time to attend the early morning market, and it sometimes takes them the whole of the day to dispose of their stock. While they are laying out their few shillings on roses, carnations, geraniums and maidenhair, they have to beware of the market thieves, who are always ready to pounce down upon goods that are left unguarded. When the women and girl flower sellers return to their lodgings after attending the market, they proceed to sort their stock and make up their buttonholes. It is extraordinary with what quickness and ability the latter operation is performed. A few flowers are placed together so as to form a dainty little spray, and they are then nimbly bound together with wire.

Strangely enough, the flower seller, as a rule, has no taste for flowers. She knows that her customers like them, but where the attraction lies, she herself cannot understand. How do you see a flower girl wearing a flower! The male associates should be insensible to the charm of goods is less surprising. Probably the only personal coster ever made of a flower was to put the stalk in his mouth and chew it.

The number of male and female street flower sellers in London is very large. Several will often congregate at a street corner, competing for the patronage of the public with great good nature. The women are nearly all dressed alike, with the same sort of hat and feathered shawls, short cotton dresses, and high-lace-up boots, and the same kind of gold ear-rings.

Taking them as a whole, the flower sellers—men and women alike—are a very worthy class.