



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

All The Year Round
Non-Fiction by Wilkie Collins (II)

The Bachelor Bedroom
The Dead Lock in Italy
Suggestions from a Maniac

Introduction © Paul Lewis 2012

The Wilkie Collins Society
September 2012

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Introduction

The Buckingham University project Dickens Journals Online has digitised *All The Year Round* – and Dickens’s other Journals – and published them with free access online at www.djo.org.uk. The project, under its Director John Drew, is now moving on to assigning authors to the two thirds of the articles whose authorship is unknown using computer analysis of style and word frequency.

That work raises the exciting possibility of new tentative attributions of works by Wilkie Collins. In *All The Year Round Non-fiction by Wilkie Collins (I)* (Wilkie Collins Society April 2011) I examined the 23 items of non-fiction in *All The Year Round* which had previously been attributed to Collins in published sources.

Three clearly were by Collins as he reprinted them in his collection of essays *My Miscellanies*, published in 1863 to fill a fallow period of novel writing due to illness. Four others were tied to Collins through letters written by Charles Dickens. Of the remaining 16 most were clearly not by Collins. Some had been definitely attributed to others and three of them seem certain to be by his brother Charles. Four were rejected partly for timing reasons as they were published when Collins was working flat out writing *The Woman in White* and was most unlikely to be writing non-fiction for *All The Year Round*. Two remained unattributed with no evidence of any sort that Collins wrote them or was linked to them. That left three pieces which I concluded were by Collins on grounds of timing, style, and subject matter.

All The Year Round Non-fiction by Wilkie Collins (I) published two pieces from that latter group and another tied to Collins by a Dickens letter.

This follow-up publication contains the final work attributed by me to Collins together with a piece tied to him by a Dickens letter, and one of the pieces which was reprinted in *My Miscellanies*.

All three are taken from the original *ATYR* text and are published here for the first time since then in their original form including any apparent misprints. They are numbered below following the numbering in *All The Year Round Non-fiction by Wilkie Collins (I)*.

The three reproduced pieces

3. 'The Bachelor Bedroom.' (*ATYR* vol. I, 6 August 1859 pp. 355-360) is of interest to scholars of both Dickens and Hans Christian Andersen. It describes a series of four bachelor guests staying at Dickens's home Gad's Hill. Collins himself is the second bachelor, parodied as 'Jollins' – though he changed the name to 'Jeremy' when the piece was later republished.

Andersen was the fourth bachelor, thinly disguised as a German poet Herr von Müffe. Andersen stayed from 11 June to 15 July 1857, a visit that Dickens found too long and too trying. For details and references see *The Letters of Charles Dickens* vol. VIII p. 372 n. 6.

The other two bachelor guests of Dickens remain unidentified.

The piece was re-published in *My Miscellanies* 1863, vol. II, pp. 30-54, with very minor amendments and the change of name from 'Jollins' to 'Jeremy'.

5. 'The Dead Lock in Italy' (*ATYR* vol. XVI, 8 December 1866 pp. 510-514) is a rare example of Collins setting out his views on a matter of politics – in this case the prospects for a united Italy free of the influence of the Vatican.

The clear evidence for his authorship is in a letter from Dickens to James Birtles, of Whitings the printer of *All The Year Round*, dated 25 November 1866 (Pilgrim XI p. 277)

"In yesterday's make-up, there is an article by Mr. Wilkie Collins, called the Dead Lock in Italy. Since I went over it, I remember a passage that I wish to take out. I purpose being at the office tomorrow (Monday) at a quarter before one. If you will bring me, or send me, the proof, I will strike out the passage while the proof is waited for.

Even today some of Collins's views of Italy will strike a chord with modern prejudices and, of course, the division between the north and the south remains strong in politics today.

23. 'Suggestions from a Maniac' (*ATYR* vol. XI, 13 February 1864 pp. 9-13) was originally attributed to Collins in the *New Cambridge Bibliography of*

English Literature (1969). That is supported by the opening paragraphs which refers to the person identifying and by implication writing the account as 'Thomas Idle'. That was the persona adopted by Collins in *The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices* written with Dickens and published in *Household Words* in 1857.

'Suggestions' is a typical piece of Collins's humorous commentary on the way society is organised. See for example 'Sure to be Healthy Wealthy and Wise' (*ATYR* 30 April 1859) and 'New View of Society' (*ATYR* 20 August 1859) both reproduced in *All The Year Round Non-fiction by Wilkie Collins (I)*. Previous pieces in *Household Words* – firmly attributed to Collins by the periodical's Office Book – are similar. For example, 'Deep Design on Society' (2 January 1858), 'Give Us Room!' (13 February 1858), and 'A Breach of British Privilege' (19 March 1859).

Paul Lewis
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THE BACHELOR BEDROOM.

THE great merit of this subject is that it starts itself. The Bachelor Bedroom is familiar to everybody who owns a country house, and to everybody who has stayed in a country house. It is the one especial sleeping apartment, in all civilized residences used for the reception of company, which preserves a character of its own. Married people and young ladies may be shifted about from bedroom to bedroom as their own caprice or the domestic convenience of the host may suggest. But the bachelor guest, when he has once had his room set apart for him, contrives to dedicate it to the perpetual occupation of single men from that moment. Who else is to have the room afterwards, when the very atmosphere of it is altered by tobacco-smoke? Who can venture to throw it open to nervous spinsters, or respectable married couples, when the footman is certain, from mere force of habit, to make his appearance at the door, with contraband bottles and glasses, after the rest of the family have retired for the night? Where, even if these difficulties could be got over, is any second sleeping apartment to be found, in any house of ordinary construction, isolated enough to secure the soberly reposing portion of the guests from being disturbed by the regular midnight party which the bachelor persists in giving in his bedroom? Dining-rooms and breakfast-rooms may change places; double-bedded rooms and single-bedded rooms may shift their respective characters backwards and forwards amicably among each other—but the Bachelor Bedroom remains immovably in its own place; sticks immutably to its own bad character; stands out victoriously whether the house is full, or whether the house is empty, the one hospitable institution that no repentant after-thoughts of host or hostess can ever alter.

Such a social phenomenon as this, taken with its surrounding circumstances, deserves more notice than it has yet obtained. The bachelor has been profusely served up on all sorts of literary tables; but, the presentation of him has been hitherto remarkable for a singularly monotonous flavour of matrimonial sauce. We have heard of his loneliness, and its remedy; of his solitary position in illness, and its remedy; of the miserable neglect of his linen, and its remedy. But what have we heard of him in connexion with his remarkable bedroom, at those periods of his existence when he, like the rest of the world, is a visitor at his friend's country house? Who has presented him, in his relation to married society, under those peculiar circumstances of his life, when he is away from his solitary chambers, and is thrown straight into the sacred centre of that home circle from which his ordinary habits are so universally supposed to

exclude him? Here, surely, is a new aspect of the bachelor still left to be presented; and here is a new subject for worn-out readers of the nineteenth century whose fountain of literary novelty has become exhausted at the source.

Let me sketch the history—in anticipation of a large and serious work which I intend to produce, one of these days, on the same subject—of the Bachelor Bedroom, in a certain comfortable country house, whose hospitable doors fly open to me with the beginning of summer, and close no more until the autumn is ended. I must beg permission to treat this interesting topic from the purely human point of view. In other words, I propose describing, not the Bedroom itself, but the succession of remarkable bachelors who have passed through it in my time.

The hospitable country seat to which I refer is Coolcup House, the residence of that enterprising gentleman-farmer and respected chairman of Quarter Sessions, Sir John Giles. Sir John's Bachelor Bedroom has been wisely fitted up on the ground floor. It is the one solitary sleeping apartment in that part of the house. Fidgety bachelors can jump out on to the lawn, at night, through the bow-window, without troubling anybody to unlock the front door; and can communicate with the presiding genius of the cellar by merely crossing the hall. For the rest, the room is delightfully airy and spacious, and fitted up with all possible luxury. It started in life, under Sir John's careful auspices, the perfection of neatness and tidiness. But the Bachelors have corrupted it long since. However carefully the servants may clean, and alter, and arrange it, the room loses its respectability again, and gets slovenly and unpresentable the moment their backs are turned. Sir John himself, the tidiest man in existence, has given up all hope of reforming it. He peeps in occasionally, and sighs and shakes his head, and puts a chair in its place, and straightens a print on the wall, and looks about him at the general litter and confusion, and gives it up and goes out again. He is a rigid man and a resolute in the matter of order, and has his way all over the rest of the house—but the Bachelor Bedroom is too much for him.

The first bachelor who inhabited the room when I began to be a guest at Coolcup House, was Mr. Bigg. Mr. Bigg is, in the strictest sense of the word, what you call a fine man. He stands over six feet, is rather more than stout enough for his height, holds his head up nobly, and dresses in a style of mingled gayety and grandeur which impresses everybody. The morning shirts of Mr. Bigg are of so large a pattern that nobody but his haberdasher knows what that pattern really is. You see a bit of it on one side of his collar which looks square, and a bit of it on the other side which looks round. It goes up his arm on one of his wristbands, and down his arm

on the other. Men who have seen his shirts off (if such a statement may be permitted), and scattered loosely, to Sir John's horror, over all the chairs in the Bedroom, have been questioned, and have not been found able to state that their eyes ever followed out the patterns of any one of them fairly to the end. In the matter of beautiful and expensive clothing for the neck Mr. Bigg is simply inexhaustible. Every morning he appears at breakfast in a fresh scarf, and taps his egg magnificently with a daily blaze of new color glowing on his capacious chest to charm the eyes of the young ladies who sit opposite to him. All the other component parts of Mr. Bigg's costume are of an equally grand and attractive kind, and are set off by Mr. Bigg's enviable figure to equal advantage. Outside the Bachelor Bedroom, he is altogether an irreproachable character in the article of dress. Outside the Bachelor Bedroom he is essentially a man of the world, who can be thoroughly depended on to perform any part allotted to him in any society assembled at Coolcup House; who has lived among all ranks and sorts of people; who has filled a public situation with great breadth and dignity, and has sat at table with crowned heads, and played his part there with distinction; who can talk of these experiences, and of others akin to them, with curious fluency and ease, and can shift about to other subjects, and pass the bottle, and carve, and draw out modest people, and take all other social responsibilities on his own shoulders complacently, at the largest and dreariest county dinner party that Sir John, to his own great discomfiture, can be obliged to give. Such is Mr. Bigg in the society of the house, when the door of the Bachelor Bedroom has closed behind him. But what is Mr. Bigg, when he has courteously wished the ladies good-night, when he has secretly summoned the footman with the surreptitious tray, and when he has deluded the unprincipled married men of the party into having half an hour's cozy chat with him before they go up-stairs? Another being—a being unknown to the ladies, and unsuspected by the respectable guests. Inside the Bedroom, the outward aspect of Mr. Bigg changes as if by magic; and a kind of gorgeous slovenliness pervades him from top to toe. Buttons which have rigidly restrained him within distinct physical boundaries, slip exhausted out of their button-holes; and the figure of Mr. Bigg suddenly expands and asserts itself for the first time as a protuberant fact. His neckcloth flies on to the nearest chair, his rigid shirt-collar yawns open, his wiry under-whiskers ooze multitudinously into view, his coat, waistcoat, and braces drop off his shoulders. If the two young ladies who sleep in the room above, and who most unreasonably complain of the ceaseless nocturnal croaking and growling of voices in the Bachelor Bedroom, could look down through the ceiling now, they would not know

Mr. Bigg again, and would suspect that a dissipated artisan had intruded himself into Sir John's house.

In the same way, the company who have sat in Mr. Bigg's neighbourhood at the dinner-table at six o'clock, would find it impossible to recognize his conversation at midnight. Outside the Bachelor Bedroom, if his talk has shown him to be anything at all, it has shown him to be the exact reverse of an enthusiast. Inside the Bachelor Bedroom, after all due attention has been paid to the cigar-box and the footman's tray, it becomes unaccountably manifest to everybody that Mr. Bigg is, after all, a fanatical character, a man possessed of one fixed idea. Then, and then only, does he mysteriously confide to his fellow revellers that he is the one remarkable man in Great Britain who has discovered the real authorship of Junius's Letters. In the general society of the house, nobody ever hears him refer to the subject; nobody ever suspects that he takes more than the most ordinary interest in literary matters. In the select society of the Bedroom, inspired by the surreptitious tray and the midnight secrecy, wrapped in clouds of tobacco smoke, and freed from the restraint of his own magnificent garments, the truth flies out of Mr. Bigg, and the authorship of Junius's Letters becomes the one dreary subject which this otherwise variously gifted man persists in dilating on for hours together. But for the Bachelor Bedroom nobody alive would ever have discovered that the true key to unlock Mr. Bigg's character is Junius. If the subject is referred to the next day by his companions of the night, he declines to notice it; but, once in the Bedroom again, he takes it up briskly, as if the attempted reference to it had been made but the moment before. The last time I saw him was in the Bachelor Bedroom. It was three o'clock in the morning; two tumblers were broken; half a lemon was in the soap-dish, and the soap itself was on the chimney-piece; restless married rakes, who were desperately afraid of waking up their wives when they left us, were walking to and fro absently, and crunching knobs of loaf-sugar under foot at every step; Mr. Bigg was standing, with his fourth cigar in his mouth, before the fire; one of his hands was in the tumbled bosom of his shirt, the other was grasping mine, while he pathetically appointed me his literary executor, and generously bequeathed to me his great discovery of the authorship of Junius's Letters. Upon the whole, Mr. Bigg is the most incorrigible bachelor on record in the annals of the Bedroom; he has consumed more candles, ordered more footmen's trays, seen more early daylight, and produced more pale faces among and the gentlemen at breakfast-time than any other single visitor at Coolcup House.

The next bachelor in the order of succession, and the completest contrast conceivable to Mr. Bigg, is Mr. Jollins. He is, perhaps, the most

miserable-looking little man that ever tottered under the form of humanity. Wear what clothes he may, he invariably looks shabby in them. He is the victim of perpetual accidents and perpetual ill-health; and the Bachelor Bedroom, when he inhabits it, is turned into a doctor's shop, and bristles all over with bottles and pills. Mr. Jollins's personal tribute to the hospitalities of Coolcup House is always paid in the same singularly unsatisfactory manner to his host. On one day in the week, he gorges himself gaily with food and drink, and soars into the seventh heaven of convivial beatitude. On the other six, he is invariably ill in consequence, is reduced to the utmost rigours of starvation and physic, sinks into the lowest depths of depression, and takes the bitterest imaginable views of human life. Hardly a single accident has happened at Coolcup House in which he has not been personally and chiefly concerned; hardly a single malady can occur to the human frame the ravages of which he has not practically exemplified in his own person under Sir John's roof. If any one guest, in the fruit season, terrifies the rest by writhing under the internal penalties in such cases made and provided by the laws of Nature, it is Mr. Jollins. If any one tumbles up-stairs, or down-stairs, or off a horse, or out of a dog-cart, it is Mr. Jollins. If you want a case of sprained ankle, a case of suppressed gout, a case of complicated earache, toothache, headache, and sore-throat, all in one, a case of liver, a case of chest, a case of nerves, or a case of low fever, go to Coolcup House while Mr. Jollins is staying there, and he will supply you, on demand, at the shortest notice and to any extent. It is conjectured by the intimate friends of this extremely wretched bachelor, that he has but two sources of consolation to draw on, as a set-off against his innumerable troubles. The first is the luxury of twisting his nose on one side, and stopping up his air passages and Eustachian tubes with inconceivably large quantities of strong snuff. The second is the oleaginous gratification of incessantly anointing his miserable little beard and mustachios with cheap-bear's grease, which always turns rancid on the premises before he has half done with it. When Mr. Jollins gives a party in the Bachelor Bedroom, his guests have the unexpected pleasure of seeing him take his physic, and hearing him describe his maladies and recount his accidents. In other respects, the moral influence of the Bedroom over the characters of those who occupy it, which exhibits Mr. Bigg in the unexpected literary aspect of a commentator on Junius, is found to tempt Mr. Jollins into betraying a horrible triumph and interest in the maladies of others, of which nobody would suspect him in the general society of the house.

"I noticed you, after dinner to-day," says this invalid bachelor, on such occasions, to any one of the Bedroom guests who may be rash enough

to complain of the slightest uneasiness in his presence; "I saw the corners of your mouth get green, and the whites of your eyes look yellow. You have got a pain here," says Mr. Jollins, gaily indicating the place to which he refers on his own shattered frame, with an appearance of extreme relish—"a pain here, and a sensation like having a cannon-ball inside you, there. You will be parched with thirst and racked with fidgets all to-night; and to-morrow morning you will get up with a splitting headache, and a dark brown tongue, and another cannon-ball in your inside. My dear fellow, I'm a veteran at this sort of thing; and I know exactly the state you will be in next week, and the week after, and when you will have to try the sea-side, and how many pounds' weight you will lose, to a dead certainty, before you can expect to get over this attack. He's congested, you know" continues Mr. Jollins, addressing himself confidentially to the company in general, "congested—I mean as to his poor unfortunate liver. A nasty thing, gentlemen—ah, yes, yes, yes, a long, tiresome, wearing, nasty thing, I can tell you."

Thus, while Mr. Bigg always astonishes the Bedroom guests on the subject of Junius, Mr. Jollins always alarms them on the subject of themselves. Mr. Smart, the next, and third bachelor, placed in a similar situation, displays himself under a more agreeable aspect, and makes the convivial society that surrounds him, for the night at least, supremely happy.

On the first day of his arrival at Coolcup House, Mr. Smart deceived us all. When he was first presented to us, we were deeply impressed by the serene solemnity of this gentleman's voice, look, manner, and costume. He was as carefully dressed as Mr. Bigg himself, but on totally different principles. Mr. Smart was fearfully and wonderfully gentlemanly in his avoidance of anything approaching to bright colour on any part of his body. Quakerish drabs and greys clothed him in the morning. Dismal black, unrelieved by an atom of jewellery, undisturbed even by so much as a flower in his button-hole, encased him grimly in the evening. He moved about the room and the garden with a ghostly and solemn stalk. When the ladies got brilliant in their conversation, he smiled upon them with a deferential modesty and polite Grandisonian admiration that froze the blood of "us youth" in our veins. When he spoke it was like reading a passage from an elegant moral writer—the words were so beautifully arranged, the sentences were turned so musically, the sentiment conveyed was so delightfully well regulated, so virtuously appropriate to nothing in particular. At such times he always spoke in a slow, deep, and gentle drawl, with a thrillingly clear emphasis on every individual syllable. His speech sounded occasionally like a kind of highly-

bred foreign English, spoken by a distinguished stranger who had mastered the language to such an extent that he had got beyond the natives altogether. We watched enviously all day for any signs of human infirmity in this surprising individual. The men detected him in nothing. Even the sharper eyes of the women only discovered that he was addicted to looking at himself affectionately in every glass in the house, when he thought that nobody was noticing him. At dinner-time we all pinned our faith on Sir John's excellent wine, and waited anxiously for its legitimate effect on the superb and icy stranger. Nothing came of it; Mr. Smart was as carefully guarded with the bottle as he was with the English language. All through the evening, he behaved himself so dreadfully well that we quite began to hate him. When the company parted for the night, and when Mr. Smart (who was just mortal enough to be a bachelor) invited us to a cigar in the Bedroom, his highly-bred foreign English was still in full perfection; his drawl had reached its elocutionary climax of rich and gentle slowness; and his Grandisonian smile was more exasperatingly settled and composed than ever.

The Bedroom door closed on us. We took off our coats, tore open our waistcoats, rushed in a body on the new bachelor's cigar-box, and summoned the evil genius of the footman's tray.

At the first round of the tumblers, the false Mr. Smart began to disappear, and the true Mr. Smart approached, as it were, from a visionary distance, and took his place among us. He chuckled—Grandison chuckled—within the hearing of every man in the room! We were surprised at that, but what were our sensations when, in less than ten minutes afterwards, the highly-bred English and the gentle drawl mysteriously disappeared, and there came bursting out upon us, from the ambush of Mr. Smart's previous elocution, the jolliest, broadest, and richest Irish brogue we had ever heard in our lives! The mystery was explained now. Mr. Smart had a coat of the smoothest English varnish laid over him, for highly-bred county society, which nothing mortal could peel off but bachelor company and whisky-and-water. He slipped out of his close-fitting English envelope, in the loose atmosphere of the Bachelor Bedroom, as glibly as a tightly-laced young lady slips out of her stays when the admiring eyes of the world are off her waist for the night. Never was man so changed as Mr. Smart was now. His moral sentiments melted like the sugar in his grog; his grammar disappeared with his white cravat. Wild and lavish generosity suddenly became the leading characteristic of this once reticent man. We tried all sorts of subjects, and were obliged to drop every one of them, because Mr. Smart would promise to make us a present of whatever we talked about. The family mansion in Ireland

contained everything that this world can supply; and Mr. Smart was resolved to dissipate that priceless store in gifts distributed to the much-esteemed company. He promised me a schooner yacht, and made a memorandum of the exact tonnage in his pocket-book. He promised my neighbour, on one side, a horse, and, on the other, a unique autograph letter of Shakespeare's. We had all three been talking respectively of sailing, hunting, and the British Drama; and we now held our tongues for fear of getting new presents if we tried new subjects. Other members of the festive assembly took up the ball of conversation, and were prostrated forthwith by showers of presents for their pains. When we all parted in the dewy morning, we left Mr. Smart with dishevelled hair, checking off his voluminous memoranda of gifts with an unsteady pencil, and piteously entreating us, in the richest Irish-English, to correct him instantly if we detected the slightest omission anywhere.

The next morning, at breakfast, we rather wondered which nation our friend would turn out to belong to. He set all doubts at rest the moment he opened the door, by entering the room with the old majestic stalk, saluting the ladies with the serene Grandison smile, trusting we had all rested well during the night, in a succession of elegantly-turned sentences, and enunciating the highly-bred English with the imperturbably-gentle drawl which we all imagined, the night before, that we had lost forever. He stayed more than a fortnight at Coolcup House; and, in all that time, nobody ever knew the true Mr. Smart except the guests in the Bachelor Bedroom.

The fourth Bachelor on the list deserves especial consideration and attention. In the first place, because he presents himself to the reader, in the character of a distinguished foreigner. In the second place, because he contrived, in the most amiable manner imaginable, to upset all the established arrangements of Coolcup House—inside the Bachelor Bedroom, as well as outside it—from the moment when he entered its doors, to the moment when he left them behind him on his auspicious return to his native country. This, ladies and gentlemen, is a rare, probably a unique, species of bachelor; and Mr. Bigg, Mr. Jollins, and Mr. Smart have no claim whatever to stand in the faintest light of comparison with him.

When I mention that the distinguished guest now introduced to notice is Herr von Müffe, it will be unnecessary for me to add that I refer to the distinguished German poet, whose far-famed Songs Without Sense have aided so immeasurably in thickening the lyric obscurities of his country's harp. On his arrival in London, Herr von Müffe forwarded his

letter of introduction to Sir John by post, and immediately received, in return, the usual hospitable invitation to Coolcup House.

The eminent poet arrived barely in time to dress for dinner; and made his first appearance in our circle while we were waiting in the drawing-room, for the welcome signal of the bell. He waddled in among us softly and suddenly, in the form of a very short, puffy, florid, roundabout old gentleman, with flowing gray hair and a pair of huge circular spectacles. The extreme shabbiness and dinginess of his costume was so singularly set off by the quantity of foreign orders of merit which he wore all over the upper part of it, that a sarcastic literary gentleman among the guests defined him to me, in a whisper, as a compound of "decorations and dirt." Sir John advanced to greet his distinguished guest, with friendly right hand extended as usual. Herr von Müffe, without saying a word, took the hand carefully in both his own, and expressed affectionate recognition of English hospitality, by transferring it forthwith to that vacant space between his shirt and his waistcoat which extended over the region of the heart. Sir John turned scarlet, and tried vainly to extricate his hand from the poet's too affectionate bosom. The dinner-bell rang, but Herr von Müffe still held fast. The principal lady in the company half rose, and looked perplexedly at her host—Sir John made another and a desperate effort to escape—failed again—and was marched into the dining-room, in full view of his servants and his guests, with his hand sentimentally imprisoned in his foreign visitor's waistcoat.

After this romantic beginning, Herr von Müffe rather surprised us by showing that he was decidedly the reverse of a sentimentalist in the matter of eating and drinking. Neither dish nor bottle passed him, without paying heavy tribute, all through the repast. He mixed his liquors, especially, with the most sovereign contempt for all sanitary considerations; drinking Champagne and beer, the sweetest Constantia and the tawniest port, all together, with every appearance of the extremest relish. Conversation with Herr von Müffe, both at dinner, and all through the evening, was found to be next to impossible, in consequence of his knowing all languages (his own included) equally incorrectly. His German was pronounced to be a dialect never heard before; his French was inscrutable; his English was a philological riddle which all of us guessed at and none of us found out. He talked, in spite of these difficulties, incessantly; and, seeing that he shed tears several times in the course of the evening, the ladies assumed that his topics were mostly of a pathetic nature, while the coarser men compared notes with each other, and all agreed that the poet was drunk. When the time came for retiring, we had to invite ourselves into the Bachelor Bedroom; Herr von Müffe having no

suspicion of our customary midnight orgies, and apparently feeling no desire to entertain us, until we informed him of the institution of the footman's tray—when he became hospitable on a sudden, and unreasonably fond of his gay young English friends.

While we were settling ourselves in our places round the bed, a member of the company kicked over one of the poet's capacious Wellington boots. To the astonishment of every one, there instantly ensued a tinkling of coin, and some sovereigns and shillings rolled surprisingly out on the floor from the innermost recesses of the boot. On receiving his money back, Herr von Müffe informed us, without the slightest appearance of embarrassment, that he had not had time, before dinner, to take more than his watch, rings, and decorations, out of his boots. Seeing us all stare at this incomprehensible explanation, our distinguished friend kindly endeavoured to enlighten us further by a long personal statement in his own polyglot language. From what we could understand of this narrative (which was not much), we gathered that Herr von Müffe had started at noon that day, as a total stranger in our metropolis, to reach the London-bridge station in a cab; and that the driver had taken him, as usual, across Waterloo-bridge. On going through the Borough, the narrow streets, miserable houses, and squalid population had struck the lively imagination of Herr von Müffe, and had started in his mind a horrible suspicion that the cabman was driving him into a low neighbourhood, with the object of murdering a helpless foreign fare, in perfect security, for the sake of the valuables he carried on his person. Chilled to the very marrow of his bones by this idea, the poet raised the ends of his trousers stealthily in the cab, slipped his watch, rings, orders, and money into the legs of his Wellington boots, arrived at the station quaking with mortal terror, and screamed "Help!" at the top of his voice, when the railway policeman opened the cab door. The immediate starting of the train had left him no time to alter the singular travelling arrangements he had made in the Borough; and he arrived at Coolcup House, the only individual who had ever yet entered that mansion with his property in his boots.

Amusing as it was in itself, this anecdote failed a little in its effect on us at the time, in consequence of the stifling atmosphere in which we were condemned to hear it. Although it was then the sultry middle of summer, and we were all smoking, Herr von Müffe insisted on keeping the windows of the Bachelor Bedroom fast closed, because it was one of his peculiarities to distrust the cooling effect of the night air. We were more than half inclined to go, under these circumstances; and we were altogether determined to remove, when the tray came in, and when we found our German friend madly mixing his liquors again by pouring gin

and sherry together into the same tumbler. We warned him, with a shuddering prevision of consequences, that he was mistaking gin for water; and he blandly assured us in return that he was doing nothing of the kind. "It is good for My——" said Herr von Müffe, supplying his ignorance of the word stomach by laying his chubby forefinger on the organ in question, with a sentimental smile. "It is bad for Our——" retorted the wag of the party, imitating the poet's action, and turning quickly to the door. We all followed him—and, for the first time in the annals of Coolcup House, the Bachelor Bedroom was emptied of company before midnight.

Early the next morning, one of Sir John's younger sons burst into my room in a state of violent excitement.

"I say, what's to be done with Müffe?" inquired the young gentleman, with wildly staring eyes.

"Open his windows, and fetch the doctor," I answered, inspired by the recollections of the past night.

"Doctor!" cried the boy; "the doctor won't do—it's the barber."

"Barber?" I repeated.

"He's been asking me *to shave him!*" roared my young friend, with vehement comic indignation. "He rang his bell, and asked for the 'Son of the House'—and they made me go; and there he was, grinning in the big arm-chair, with his mangy little shaving-brush in his hand, and a towel over his shoulder. 'Good morning, my dear. Can you shave My——' says he, and taps his quivering old double chin with his infernal shaving-brush. Curse his impudence! What's to be done with him?"

I arranged to explain to Herr von Müffe, at the first convenient opportunity, that it was not the custom in England, whatever it might be in Germany, for "the Son of the House" to shave his father's guests; and undertook, at the same time, to direct the poet to the residence of the village barber. When the German guest joined us at breakfast, his unshaven chin, and the external results of his mixed potations and his seclusion from fresh air, by no means tended to improve his personal appearance. In plain words, he looked the picture of dyspeptic wretchedness.

"I am afraid, sir, you are hardly so well this morning as we could all wish?" said Sir John, kindly.

Herr von Müffe looked at his host affectionately, surveyed the company all round the table, smiled faintly, laid the chubby forefinger once more on the organ whose name he did not know, and answered with the most enchanting innocence and simplicity:

"I am so sick!"

There was no harm—upon my word, there was no harm in Herr von Müffe. On the contrary, there was a great deal of good-nature and genuine simplicity in his composition. But he was a man naturally destitute of all power of adapting himself to new persons and new circumstances; and he became amiably insupportable, in consequence, to everybody in the house, throughout the whole term of his visit. He could not join one of us in any country diversions. He hung about the house and garden in a weak, pottering, aimless manner, always turning up at the wrong moment, and always attaching himself to the wrong person. He was dexterous in a perfectly childish way at cutting out little figures of shepherds and shepherdesses in paper; and he was perpetually presenting these frail tributes of admiration to the ladies, who always tore them up and threw them away in secret the moment his back was turned. When he was not occupied with his paper figures, he was out in the garden, gathering countless little nosegays, and sentimentally presenting them to everybody; not to the ladies only, but to lusty agricultural gentlemen as well, who accepted them with blank amazement; and to schoolboys, home for the holidays, who took them, bursting with internal laughter at the “molly-coddle” gentleman from foreign parts. As for poor Sir John, he suffered more than any of us; for Herr von Müffe was always trying to kiss him. In short, with the best intentions in the world, this unhappy foreign bachelor wearied out the patience of everybody in the house; and, to our shame be it said, we celebrated his departure, when he left us at last, by a festival-meeting in the Bachelor Bedroom, in honour of the welcome absence of Herr von Müffe. I cannot say in what spirit my fellow-revellers have reflected on our behaviour since that time; but I know, for my own part, that I now look back at my personal share in our proceedings with rather an uneasy conscience. I am afraid we were all of us a little hard on Herr von Müffe; and I hereby desire to offer him my own individual tribute of tardy atonement, by leaving him to figure as the last and crowning type of the Bachelor species presented in these pages. If he has produced anything approaching to a pleasing effect on the reader’s mind, that effect shall not be weakened by the appearance of any more single men, native or foreign. Let the door of the Bachelor Bedroom close with our final glimpse of the German guest; and permit the present chronicler to lay down the pen when it has traced penitently, for the last time, the name of Herr von Müffe.

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THE DEAD LOCK IN ITALY.

A LETTER FROM AN ENGLISHMAN IN ROME, TO
AN ITALIAN IN LONDON.

. . . . "YOU are visiting Rome for the fourth time. You have leisure at your command, you have eyes in your head, and your sympathies in the Italian question are on the liberal side. Rome is now on the eve of a change which may be felt all over Europe. Tell me, in my exile, how Rome looks."

This very natural request of yours reaches me, my good friend, on the fifteenth of November. In one calendar month from that date, the French troops are bound, under the Convention, to leave the Pope and the People to settle their differences together. Must I tell you truly how Rome looks, under these circumstances? Prepare yourself to be astonished; prepare yourself to be disappointed. Rome looks as Rome looked when I was here last, nearly four years since—as Rome looked when I was here, for the second time, eleven years since—as Rome looked, when I was here, for the first time, twenty-eight years since. New hotels have been opened, in the interval, I grant you; the Pincian Hill has been improved; a central railway station has been made; an old church has been discovered at St. Clemente; a new church has been built on the ruins of the Basilica of St. Paolo; Seltzer water is to be had; crinolines are to be seen; the hackney-coachmen have been reformed. But, I repeat, nevertheless, the Rome that I first remember in '38 is, in all essentials, the Rome that I now see in '66. Nobody walking through the city, nobody looking at the people and the priests, would have the faintest suspicion of the change which you tell me is at hand, of the convulsion that may be coming in a month's time.

What is the secret of this extraordinary apathy? I take the secret to be, that the Roman Catholic Religion sticks fast—and that the people stick fast with it. I may be quite wrong, but the impression produced on my mind by what I have seen and heard in Italy this time is—that the Pope's position is, even yet, by no means the desperate position which the liberal newspapers represent it to be. I see three chances still for His Holiness and the Priest. First, the enormous religious influence at their disposal. Secondly, the miserable dearth (since Cavour's death) of commanding ability in the civil and military administration of the Italian Kingdom. Thirdly, the inbred national defects of the Italian character.

Don't crumple up my letter, and throw it into the fire! Don't say, "The priests have got hold of him! My friend is nothing better than a reactionary and a Jesuit after all!" No Englishman living, is a heartier friend to the Italian cause than I am. No Englishman living, desires more earnestly than I do to see this nation great, prosperous, and free, from one end of the peninsula to the other. But, there are two sides to every

question—the shady side, and the bright. Italian liberals and English liberals have agreed long enough (in my opinion) to look at Italian politics on the bright side only. Give the shady side its turn. When an individual man is in a difficulty, it is universally admitted that his best preparation for getting out of it, is, to look the worst in the face. What is true of individuals, in this case, is surely true of nations —doubly true, I venture to think, of your nation. Suffer a barbarous Englishman to speak the rude truth. The very last thing you are any of you willing to do, is, to look the worst in the face. Give me your arm, and let us look at it together.

You have been twenty years in England; you are almost—though, fortunately for my chance of convincing you, not quite—an Englishman. Have you noticed, in the time during which you have inhabited my country, what the religious influence can do, applied to purely political and purely worldly objects? Why, even in my country, where Religion expressly assumes to leave thought free, and to let men decide for themselves—the so-called religious influence, applied to political and social ends, fights from a 'vantage-ground in the minds of the masses of mankind equally above the reach of reason and of right.

If the (always so-called) religious influence can do this in England, what sort of enemy have you Italians to deal with, in the religious influence of Rome? You have a system against you here, which for generation after generation, and century after century, has put the priest before the people with his hand held out, and the one everlasting formula on his lips: "Let me think for you, and I will take you to heaven." For generation after generation, and for century after century, the people have taken the priest's hand on those terms. The greatest of human writers, the noblest of human beliefs—patience under worldly trials, consolation under afflictions, the most sacred domestic ties, the very ledge of immortality itself—have all been held through century after century, for millions and millions of your people, in the priest's hand. In the priest's hand they are held still and you have got him against you.

Yes! here, in his central stronghold, the priest's immovable composure has its old foundation, to this day, in the priest's consciousness of his power. The political tyranny that he administers—the infamous misgovernment that he permits—has alienated you, and thousands of men like you. But he has got your wives and your daughters; he has got the influence of the mothers over the children, and the other stronger influence yet of the women over the men. Nay, to come to individual instances of note and mark, he has even got your King. It is notorious to everybody out of England—though it has been carefully concealed *in* England—that there is a religious side to Victor Emmanuel's character, as

well as a political side, and that he presents to this day the curiously anomalous phenomenon of a zealous Papist who is in disgrace with the Pope.

But I am drifting into general considerations, and am forgetting that it is my business to give you the results of my own personal observations, such as they are.

I have attended more than one of the Catholic church-services on Sundays. I have walked again and again over those remoter quarters of Rome in which the life of the people shows itself most strikingly and unrestrainedly to strangers. Go where I may, I see no change in the congregations, since my first experience of them; I discover no such phenomenon as a threatening attitude among the people. Last Sunday morning, I went to a "solemn function" at the church of St. Martin; then, to St. Peter's, to Vespers, and Catechism in the afternoon; then, all through the Trastevere, where all the people were out enjoying the lovely sunshine; then, back again, across the river, and round about another populous quarter, to another "solemn function." In all this peregrination I looked carefully for any signs of a change anywhere, and saw none. The church ceremonies were as superb and as impressive as ever, and the congregations (the men included, mind) just as numerous and just as devout. Four years since, I saw the catechising at St. Peter's—the boys openly taught under one of the aisles, and the girls secretly taught behind a screen, under another. On that occasion I noticed that the girls all respectfully kissed the priest's hand when they came out from the screen, and were dismissed. There was the whole thing, last Sunday, going on again as usual—the much-enduring boys kicking their legs on the forms, and the nicely trained girls crowding round the priest to kiss his hand as they went out. In the whole Trastevere, when I walked through it afterwards—in all that turbulent ultra-Roman quarter of Rome—I doubt if there were a soul in-doors. Were the men cursing in corners, and the terrified women trying to moderate them? The men were playing the favourite Roman game of "morra" in corners—the men were smoking and laughing—the men were making love to their sweethearts—the men went out of the way into the mud, at a place where a cardinal's carriage was standing as an obstacle on the drier ground, without a wry look or a savage word in any case. The women, in their Sunday best—the magnificent Roman women of the people—sat gossiping and nursing their children, as composedly as if they lived under the most constitutional monarchy in the world. If they had been English women, and had "known their blessings," they could not have looked more comfortable—nor, I will add (though it is treason in an Englishman to find any beauty out of his

own country), could they have looked handsomer. Do you remember, when you were in Rome, devout female individuals stopping a cardinal out for his walk, to kiss the ring on his forefinger? I saw a devout female individual stop a cardinal, yesterday, for this extraordinary purpose, in a public thoroughfare. The cardinal took it as a matter of course, and the people took it as a matter of course, just as they did in your time.

Don't misunderstand me, in what I am now writing. I am not foolish enough to deny that there is discontent in Rome, because I don't find it coming to the surface. I don't for a moment doubt that there is serious and savage discontent—though I firmly believe it to be confined to the class (the special class, here and everywhere) which is capable of feeling a keen sense of wrong. More than this, I am even ready to believe that “the Roman committee” can raise a revolution, if it please, on the day when the French leave Rome. But granted the discontent, and granted the revolution, I am afraid there is a power here which will survive the one, and circumvent the other. I see the certainty of possessing that power in reserve in the unchanged attitude of the priests; and I see the foundation on which the conviction of the priests rests, in the unchanged attitude of the people. You know the old story of the man who had been so long in prison that he had lost all relish of liberty, and who, when they opened the doors for him at last, declined to come out. When you open the door here, I hope—but I confess I find it hard to believe—that you will find the Roman people ready to come out.

So much for the first and foremost of the chances in favour of the Pope; the chance that the immense religious influence at his command will prove too strong for you. Observe (before we get on) how boldly and openly he is meeting you with that influence already, on your own ground. You know that the form of Christianity of which he is the head, is the one form that really adapts itself to the Italian temperament; and you leave the spiritual interests of the people at his sole disposal, while you take the material interests into your own hands. What does he do upon this? He declares, with the whole force of his authority and position, that his spiritual rights and his temporal rights are indivisible, and that respect for the one means respect for the other. View this declaration as a political assertion, and the absurdity of it is beneath notice. Pronounced by the Pope, it becomes an article of Faith. “You take your religion from Me,” says His Holiness. “*That* is part of your religion.” What is the answer to this from the life of the faithful—not in Rome only, but all over the civilised globe? The answer from hundreds of thousands of otherwise intelligent people, having their influence on public opinion, is—“Amen!”

The second of the chances in the Pope's favour; the present dearth of commanding ability in the civil and military administration of the Italian Kingdom; needs no discussion here, for it admits of no denial. To enlarge on this part of the subject, after the events of the late war, would be almost equivalent to reproaching Italy with her misfortunes. God forbid I should do that! May you yet find the men who can lead your brave army and your brave navy as they deserve to be led! May you yet find the men who can hold out to the discontented, disunited, degraded people of the southern provinces the hand strong enough to help them up, the hand that can rule! Here, at least, we may hope for Italy, with some assurance that we are not hoping in vain. The nation that produced Cavour, the nation that possesses Garibaldi, must surely have its reserves of strength still left.

If you were not a northern Italian, I should feel some difficulty in approaching the last of the three points of view from which I look at the Papal Obstacle standing in your way. Fortunately for my purpose, you are not a Tuscan or a Roman for it is precisely in the radical defects of the Tuscan and the Roman characters that I see the last of the three chances which the weakness of Italy still offers to the cause of the Pope.

The two striking defects of your countrymen, so far as a stranger can see them, appear to me to be: first, their apparent incapability of believing in truth; secondly, their want of moral fibre and nerve in the smaller affairs of life. The first of these defects presents the Italian to me in the aspect of a man who cannot be persuaded that I am telling the truth about the simplest matter conceivable, so long as he sees under the surface an object which I *might* gain by telling a lie. The second of these defects shows me my Italian fellow-pilgrim along the road of life, in the character of a man who, whenever he finds a stone in his path, skirts lazily round it, and leaves it to the traveller behind him, instead of lifting his foot and kicking it, once for all, out of the way. These are both (to my mind) dangerous national failings. The first lowers the public standard of honour, and does incalculable mischief in that way. The second leaves your countrymen without the invaluable check on all nuisances, abuses, and injustices, of a public opinion to discuss, and a public voice to resent them. There is gain, my friend, certain gain and certain strength here, for the cause of bad government all the world over.

Let me illustrate what I mean, by one or two examples, before I close my letter.

Not long ago, a certain mistake (the pure result of hurry and carelessness) was made in conducting the business of a certain English Legation. Some consternation was felt when the error was discovered, for

it might have ended in awkward results. But the caprices of Chance are proverbial. An unforeseen turn of circumstance placed the Legation in the lucky position of having blundered, after all, in the right direction: a diplomatic advantage was thus accidentally gained, by a fortunate diplomatic error. A friend of mine (himself in the diplomatic service) was a few days afterwards in the company of several Italian gentlemen; all of them men of education and position; some of them men of note and mark in politics. On entering the room, my friend, to his astonishment, found himself eagerly surrounded, and complimented in the warmest terms on the extraordinary capacity of his Chief. It was almost a pleasure, your polite countrymen said, to be overreached in such an extremely clever manner. The Englishman, as soon as he could make himself heard, attempted to put the matter in its true light. It all originated, he declared, in a mistake. The Italians smiled, and shook their heads with the most charming courtesy and good humour. "Cave! cave!" they remonstrated. "You have outwitted us; but, my dear sir, we are not downright fools. The 'mistake' has done its work. You may drop the mistake!" The Englishman declared, on his word of honour, that the true explanation was the explanation he had given. The Italians bowed resignedly, and left him. To this day they are persuaded that the mistake was made on purpose. To this day they admire my friend as a master in the art of solemn false assertion for diplomatic ends.

This little incident is trivial enough in itself, I grant you; but pursue the inveterate belief in deceit that it exhibits, into the daily affairs of life, on the one hand, and into serious political emergencies on the other, and tell me if you do, or do not, see some of your domestic scandals and some of your ministerial complications under a new light.

Take your railroads again, as illustrating some of those other defects in the national character which I have ventured to point out. In Northern Italy, the railroad is excellently managed: in Northern Italy the railroad has taught the people the value of time. Advance through Tuscany, and go on to Rome, and I hardly know which would surprise and disgust you most—the absolute laziness of the official people in working the line, or the absolute submission of the passengers under the most inexcusable and the most unnecessary delays. I arrived at the capital of the kingdom of Italy by the train which they called an express. There were surprisingly few passengers, and there were only some six or eight barrow-loads of luggage. The porters—and there were quite enough of them—occupied half an hour, by my watch, in transporting the baggage from the van to the receiving-room. I never saw men lounge as those Florentine porters lounged; I never saw inspectors stand and do nothing, as those

Florentine inspectors stood and did nothing; and I never saw travellers take the exasperating and disgraceful indolence of the people paid to serve them, as the Italian travellers took it. Two men protested—two men were angry. One was a Frenchman, the other was your obedient servant.

Going on once more towards Rome (but not yet, mind, out of the kingdom of Italy), we were kept waiting three-quarters of an hour for the arrival of a branch train. Three impatient men got out, and walked up and down the dominions of Victor Emmanuel, fuming. Again, the Frenchman; again, your obedient servant, and another Englishman. And what did the free Italians do? They sat talking and smoking in the sweetest of tempers. The perfect composure of the engine-driver, the stoker, and the guards, was more than matched by the perfect composure of the native passengers. Late or early, in the train or out of the train, oh dolce far niente, how nice you are, and how dearly we love you! See the Frenchman grinding his teeth, and hear the Englishmen with their national "Damn!" What a fever is in the blood of these northern people, and what lives the poor guards and engine-drivers must lead in those restless northern lands! Here comes the train, before the fourth quarter of an hour is out—what would you have more? Has any accident happened? Nothing has happened. "We have somehow lost three-quarters of an hour on the road, to-day; you somehow lost an hour on the road yesterday. Ma che? After all, we are going on to Rome. We go on. Night and darkness overtake us. The train stops, without a vestige of a station or a lamp visible anywhere in the starlight. A lonely little maid, with a little basket, appears, drifting dimly along the line, and crying "Medlars! medlars! buy my medlars!" Have we stopped to give this poor child a chance of picking up some coppers? Send her this way directly; let us buy the whole basket-full, and give the little maid a kiss, and go on to Rome. My head is out of the window; my hand is in my pocket. A gendarme appears, and the little maid vanishes. "Be so obliging," the gendarme says, "as to come out and be fumigated." I tell him I have come from Florence; I tell him there is no cholera at Florence; I tell him I have got a clean bill of health from Florence. The gendarme waits till I have done, and replies, "Be so obliging as to come out and be fumigated." Everybody else has already got out to be fumigated. I hear the Frenchman in the darkness; his language is not reproducible. First class, second class, third class, we grope our way, without artificial light of any sort to help us, up the side of a hill, and all tumble into a shed. A soldier closes the door on us; a white smoke rises from the floor, and curls feebly about the people who are near it. Human fustiness and chloride of lime contend for the mastery; human fustiness, if my nose be to be trusted, has the best of it. Half a minute (certainly not more) passes, and the door is suddenly opened

again; we are all fumigated; we may go on to Rome. No, we may not. The passports must be examined next. In any other country in the world, one stoppage would have been made to serve the two purposes. In Italy, two stoppages take place. As we jog on again, I consult my official guide to find out when we are due in Rome. The guide says 9 P.M. An experienced traveller tells me the guide is wrong—the hour is 8 P.M. A second traveller produces another guide—the hour is so ill printed that nobody can read it. I appeal to a guard, when we stop at the next station. “In Heaven’s name, when do we get to Rome?” In the gentlest possible manner he replies, “Have patience, sir.” I catch the vice of patience from the guard, and it ends in our getting to Rome before midnight. Next morning I try to find out, in various well-informed quarters, whether there is a public opinion of any sort or kind to resent and reform such absurdities as I have here, in all good humour, tried to describe. I can find out no such thing as a public opinion. I can find out no such thing as the nerve and fibre out of which a public opinion is made. Abuses which have nothing to do with politics, abuses which are remediable even under the Pope himself, encounter no public condemnation and no public resistance. Is it wonderful that the King of Naples still persists in waiting for his turn of luck? Can you call the “Catholic party” absolutely demented, if the “Catholic party” believe that the cards may yet change hands?

My letter is ended. All that is to be written and said, on the other side of the question, has been written and said, over and over again, already. The ungracious task of finding out your faults, and of stopping to look for the pitfalls that lie in your way, is now, to the best of my ability and within my narrow limits, a task performed. For the rest, time will show how far I am right, and how far I am wrong.

Meanwhile, I beg you will not do me the injustice to suppose that I have lost hope in the future of Italy. I have said what I have ventured to say, because I believe in the sincere resolution of the best among you to rouse the worst among you, and to show them, if it lie in human power, the way to advancement and reform. A man who honestly tells another man of his faults has some hope in that man, or he would hold his tongue. Distrust the flatterers and the enthusiasts—see the difficulties still before you, as the difficulties really are. When your people have had their Venetian holiday, send them mercilessly to school. For the future, let us have less throwing up of caps, and more throwing up of arable land—less illumination of houses, and more illumination of brains—the industry of an united people (which you have not got yet) in place of the acclamations of an united people (of which you have had more than enough). In plainer English still, do the work first, and shout over it afterwards. On the day

when Italy has learnt that lesson, you will be too strong for the Pope, and you will be a free people.

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SUGGESTIONS FROM A MANIAC.

THE communication here given to the readers of this periodical reached the office of its publication under circumstances of unparalleled singularity.

An immense package appeared on the table one morning, which had been left, as was stated ingenuously outside, "on approval." It must be owned that the dimensions of the supposed manuscript were, to judge from the outside, rather alarming, but it was none the less determined that in this, as in other cases, justice should be done to the volunteer contributor. The parcel was opened. What was the surprise of "the management" to find nothing inside but an old and much worn copy of Goldsmith's Abridgment of the History of England.

The book was about to be flung aside, when Mr. Thomas Idle, who was loitering in the office at the time, happening in sheer listlessness to turn over the pages of the volume, suddenly uttered the dissyllable "Hullo." A general rush was made towards the spot from which this sound emanated, and it was then found that the volume of Goldsmith was covered, as to the fly-leaves and the margins of the pages, with manuscript written in pencil, which, when it had been deciphered with much difficulty, came out in the form of the subjoined article.

All endeavours to trace the authorship of the paper have been made in vain. It had been left at the office—this was all the information that was to be got—by a stout good-natured-looking personage, with bushy whiskers, and dressed in a shooting-jacket: who had handed the package in with a grin, and with the remark, "You won't often get anything like *that*, I'll be bound!"

The manuscript begins thus:

The straw with which my hair is decorated has failed lately to afford me the pleasure which it was wont to give. The lath which I have furbished up, and made into a sceptre, will not do, either. It was a great consolation to me at first, but it has ceased to be so now. Nothing will give me any satisfaction except the possession of pens, ink, and paper, by means of which to impart my rapidly flowing ideas to the public. Ideas! Flowing ideas! They crowd and rush into my brain, trampling on one another's heels at such a rate that I can keep them in no sort of order—and they are such valuable ideas, that they would set the whole world to rights if the whole world only knew about them.

And the world *shall* know about them. I asked for pens, ink, and paper, and they would not let me have them; but, I've got a book—what's it called?—Goldsmith's Abridgment of the History of England—and Struddles, the keeper, who is my dear friend, has lent me a pencil, and I can write all I want to say on the flyleaves and round the margins of the pages of this book, and then Struddles promises to take it away for me and to get it published. As to the pencil point, they won't let me have a knife to cut it with, so when I've worked it down to the cedar (as if I was mad! Why see, I know what wood the lead of a pencil is set in), I give it to Struddles, and he cuts it for me; or if Struddles is out of the way, I bite the wood away, till there is lead enough bare to write with. But I must not waste my space. I want to get to my ideas at once. I am going to begin. Where shall I begin? Anywhere.

Why not raise your pavements up to the first floors of the houses. Not all the pavements in London at once (that *would* be a mad notion), but by degrees, and as opportunity offered?

Take Regent-street, for instance. Bless you, I know Regent-street well, and have often nearly been run over at that awful crossing at the Circus where it joins Oxford-street. Why not have an iron balcony the whole length of Regent-street on a level with the first-floor windows, to be used as the promenade for foot-passengers? You couldn't do it at once, but by degrees you might, beginning at the Circus. Then might a suggestion made once by a dear friend of mine (Columbus Startles) be carried out completely. His idea was, that light iron bridges should be thrown up over the crossings at the Circus, and a capital idea it was. Well, my iron balcony would be like a continuation of these bridges, or the bridges would be a continuation of the iron balcony, and so you would be able to walk straight on when you came to the crossing, and take no account of the carriages, omnibuses, and carts, roaring along underneath you. But the wiseacres who think that I have not weighed all the difficulties of my plan will say, "And pray what is to become of the shops?" My answer is ready instantly. Raise them too, and let the shop-fronts be on the first, instead of the ground floor, which should then be used for storehouses, or whatever the upper portions of the houses are used for now. Once more I repeat, you must do all this by degrees. That is the great secret. Do it gradually.

How pretty it would be as well as convenient! The balcony or iron pavement would be supported on pillars of the same metal, and would communicate with the carriage-road by occasional staircases at the crossings. All the smaller streets would be left as they are. There is no difficulty in crossing over them; and supposing you were on my raised pavement in Regent-street, and wanted to turn into Conduit-street, for

instance, you would descend the staircase at the corner, on which side you liked, and would proceed along the pavement of the latter thoroughfare exactly as usual. (The pavement, by-the-by, might remain just as it is under the iron arcade, and would be a pleasant refuge in rainy weather.)

Now something of this sort—I am not bigoted to my own scheme—but something of this sort will have to be done. Even when I was a gentleman at large, some two years ago now, I have waited and waited at some of the principal crossings in London for an opportunity of getting over, till my poor nerves got into such a state that I could hardly take advantage of the chance when it did come. Of course the thing is much worse now, and what will it be five years hence? Modern nerves are more delicate and susceptible than ancient nerves, and yet they are in some respects more severely tried. I am told that already people collect in groups at some of the London crossings waiting till the police come to their assistance. What will this come to, I ask again, five years hence?

So much for that idea. Now for the next. Let me see, what *is* the next?

When I kept house—an undertaking of such fearful difficulty, and surrounded with such severe mental trials, that my having anything to do with it is one of the causes of my being here, by mistake—when I kept house I observed, for my occupation led me to look out of window a good deal, that the street in which I resided was much frequented by a class of gentry with greasy hair, wearing caps instead of hats, with a general second-hand look about everything they had on, with villanous faces, and with bags or sacks slung over their shoulders. Sometimes these individuals carried work-boxes or tea-caddies in their hands: the boxes in question being held open, in order to show the splendour of their interiors. Now, I remarked that these men were always looking down into the areas, that they always appeared to be communicating by signs, or sometimes by word of mouth, with the servants, and that everything they did was done in a furtive and sheepish manner, very disagreeable to witness. Their communications with the servants would often terminate in a descent of the area steps, but it was always remarkable that no one of the individuals of whom I speak ever opened an area gate, or, indeed, did anything else without first glancing over his shoulder to right and left, looking first up the street and then down the street. On emerging from the area, that same look was repeated before the man would venture out into the street.

Sometimes it would happen, naturally enough, that one of these men would, in the course of his day's work—what work?—arrive at the house then tenanted by me, and, little suspecting that I was hiding behind the wire blind and listening with all my might, would go through his usual

manœuvres in front of my dining-room window. Watching till one of the servants chanced to approach the kitchen window, he would try to attract her attention by gently rattling a tea-caddy against the railings, and then, attention once caught—it was easily done, Heaven knows—he would begin cajoling the women, and calling the cook “mum:” an offence in itself which ought to be visited with transportation.

“Want a nice work-box, mum—nice tea-caddy, mum?” the sneak would begin.

The servants, I suppose, answered only by signals: at any rate, I could hear nothing of their replies. The sneak looked up and down the street again, and then crouched down so as to be nearer the kitchen window. He also swung the bag off his shoulder, to be able to get at its contents.

“Nice work-box or caddy, mum! very reasonable, mum. Nice ribbings of all colours! Bit of edging, ladies, for your caps.”

The telegraphing from below would seem to be in the negative, though not sufficiently so to discourage this wretched sneak. He got nearer to the gate, and again looked up and down the street.

“Make an exchange, mum, if you like! A old pair of gentleman’s boots, if you’ve got such a thing, mum, or a gentleman’s old ’at or coat, ladies. Take a’most anythink in change, ladies, if it was even so much as a humbrella, or an old weskit, or a corkscrew.”

And what business, pray, had my female servants with boots, hats, waistcoats, or corkscrews, in their possession? If these articles were given to that disgusting sneak, who, at the conclusion of the last sentence quoted, made his way furtively down the kitchen steps, where could they possibly come from? Women servants do not wear coats and waistcoats and hats, nor do they generally have corkscrews *of their own* in their possession.

Why are these area sneaks allowed? They may be identified by anybody, but by a policeman especially, at a single glance. Why are they allowed to pursue their avocations? My beloved friend Featherhead here, who has continual information from outside the walls, tells me that lately several robberies have been traced to these detestable creatures. Featherhead has a bee in his bonnet, poor fellow, but he is truth itself; I can depend implicitly upon what he tells me, and it really seems to me, that if you go on allowing these area-sneaks to spend their days in wandering about the less frequented streets, corrupting the servants, and making them as great thieves as they (the sneaks) are themselves, you must be much madder than any of us poor fellows who are living—well, in retirement.

I want to know, not that this has anything to do with the last subject—why should it? I suppose I may adopt a disjointed style if I choose—I want to know why, among you outside, the young men, the bachelors, are made so much more comfortable than they ought to be? You cannot keep them out of some of their luxuries and comforts, it is true. They live in central situations at trifling rents. They take their meals at clubs, where they are provided with such food as is hardly to be obtained anywhere else. They have no responsibilities, no anxieties worthy of the name. And, as if this was not enough, what else do you do to encourage them in celibacy? You allow them at any age to accept your hospitalities, and you expect no return, and you charge them twelve shillings only for the privilege of wearing a demi-griffin rampant on their little fingers, while the married man has to pay twenty-four. Now this, I say, is too bad. The bachelor is a selfish luxurious wretch, able to do more with three hundred a year than the family man can with three thousand. Tax him then—tax him heavily. He is young and strong, and able to endure—grind him down with taxation till he groans under the load, and then when he becomes a married man, and a worthy useful citizen, lighten his load instead of increasing it. And at the same time that we bully these selfish young dogs of bachelors, would it not be judicious to take a hint or two from them. How is it that they manage to get a maximum of enjoyment out of a minimum of expenditure? By combination. And why shouldn't married people combine as well as bachelors? Not combine socially, I don't mean that, but pecuniarily; as they already do to get their supplies of water, their gas, the books that they want to read. We ought to have club chambers for families. Great big handsome houses let off in floors. For want of these we have ruined our town; we have made metropolitan distances so vast that we want railways from one part of the town to another; we are involved, each one of us, in an enormous expenditure for which we only get the smallest amount of comfort. In the present state of society, the providing for families should be the work of a professional man. Why are you a householder, which is another name for a persecuted miserable swindled wretch?—why are you to be bothered with mysterious papers about gas-rates, and water-rates, and poor-rates, and police-rates, besides ten thousand other cares and botherations, which are at once vexatious and unworthy of your attention. Let it be the business—and a very profitable business it might be—of a professional man to take a house or houses, to attend to the rates, taxes, and repairs, and to superintend and watch its kitchen arrangements as carefully as such matters are looked after by the committee of a club.

“If you please, sir, the thor has set in and all the pipes is burst;”—“If you please, sir, the man ’ave called to see about the biler, and he says could he speak to you about it;”—“There’s a party in the ’all, sir, as wishes to see you about the gas-meter, which he says a new one is wanted.” Such announcements as these, together with incessant intimations that, “A gentleman has called for the pore-rate, and has been twice before,” are familiar to every British householder. What bliss to hear no more allusions to such matters, and to make over a cheque once a quarter to an individual who would take all such troublesome matters off your hands for ever!

I have no space to dwell longer on this particular suggestion. I was thinking just now of something else that I wanted to say—what was it? Oh, I remember:

Why don’t you improve your street conveyances? As to omnibuses, they are beyond hope. A faint attempt was made to do something with them, but it soon subsided, and you have lapsed back into your old grooves again. But don’t you think something might be done with the cabs? Why not follow the plan adopted on railways, and have first and second-class cabs. According to the present arrangement, you go to the play with your wife, in a vehicle which just before has been occupied by six drunken blackguards returning from a foot race, or even by worse customers. If there were first-class and second-class cabs, such objectionable people would hail the latter, on account of the difference in price. And keeping still to the cab question, why don’t you have some means of communicating with the driver without thrusting your head and half your body out of the window? Even by doing that, you can hardly make yourself heard, in a crowded thoroughfare, till you have got past the house you wanted to stop at, or the street up which you should have turned. By means of a flexible tube you might give your direction with ease, without stirring from your place, or bawling yourself hoarse. And would it be too much to ask that in close cabs there should always be a light inside after nightfall? As it is, you plunge into the interior of that dark receptacle for locomotive humanity, compelled to take your chance of plumping down upon a seat on which some inconsiderate person has just before deposited a pair of boots thickly encrusted with mud. There is a lamp *outside* the Hansom; why don’t you have a lamp inside the four-wheeler? And talking of Hansoms, how is it that the public puts up with that guillotine window? We have a very nice fellow in this establishment who once broke one of those windows with his nose—the feature is a large one, and the scar is upon it to this hour. If it is not possible to make a window altogether outside the cab, allowing a good space between it and the apron for ventilation, at least the window as at present existing might be left to the management of the individual inside

the cab. The majority of persons who have sense enough to find their way into one of these vehicles, would probably be capable of the mental and bodily effort of dealing with the window. But it is a curious thing, and difficult to account for, that all persons who are professionally mixed up with horses and carriages always treat you as if in all matters connected with either you were a perfect baby. I must leave this subject of Hansoms and four-wheelers. I come to my most important suggestion. It is new. It is practical. It gets us—the country generally—the government—the people—out of a difficulty. It is economical.

I have to propose a new method of rewarding merit in this country: a new way of distinguishing those among our citizens who have earned a right to our approval, and on whom it is the general wish to confer some great public evidence of our respect and gratitude. Hitherto, when we have sought to do honour to a great man, or to render an illustrious name additionally illustrious, it has been our custom to erect a monument.

Now, my desire is to establish a system the very reverse of this. I propose that in grateful remembrance of every great man who arises among us, instead of putting up a statue, or other monument, we go to work with axe and hammer, and PULL ONE DOWN!

Here would be a stimulus to exertion! Gracious powers! who that loved his country or—rather his town—would not strain every nerve to excel in his own particular department, when the hope was before him of delivering his fellow-creatures from one of those terrific monsters, the public statues! Once let the edict go forth, once let it be distinctly understood that any man who achieved greatness might not only feel secure himself from ever appearing in one of our public places with a scroll in one of his hands, and tights on both his legs, but that he would secure to himself the glory of abolishing a London statue—once let this be understood, and I believe there would be no end to our greatness as a nation. How would the flagging energies of a virtuous rising man revive as he passed the Duke of York's Column, or George the Third's Pigtail, or George the Fourth's curly wig, and said to himself, "A little more labour, a little longer effort, and, thou monstrosity, I shall lay thee level with the dust."

Some one has remarked that we are not a military nation. From the moment when this plan of mine is adopted—as of course it will be—we shall become so. What will a man not do, what hardship will he not encounter, what danger will he not face, with the thought deep down in the recesses of his heart, that he is not only combating his country's foes, but that he is helping to lift that load of horror off the arch at the top of Constitution-hill!

From one end of our social scale to the other our whole community would feel this additional stimulus to exertion. Even the illustrious prince in whose presence it has never been my good fortune to bask, would be urged on in a glorious and virtuous career by the thought that one day the statue of his great-uncle might by his greatness be swept away from the surface of Trafalgar-square, or that his noble acts would remove another great-uncle from King William-street, where he interrupts the traffic by vainly offering a coil of rope for sale, and depresses the spirits of the passers-by in a perfectly inexcusable manner. All classes, I say, would feel this stimulus. The politician would look at Lord George Bentinck, and, shaking his fist at him, would mutter, "Thy days are numbered." The medical man would think of Jenner, and sign his prescription with a bolder hand. "Fiat pilula, ruat Jennerum!"

And consider how remarkable it is that the bronze coinage should have come into existence just at the moment when we are likely to have so much bronze thrown upon our hands. What unnumbered pennies there must be in the length and breadth of that fearful statue of the Duke of Wellington. Why, there must be change for a five-shilling-piece in his nose. The cocked hat would be a dowry for a princess. The stirrups—but. the mind shrinks before the contemplation of such wealth.

PROPOSED FORM.

To His Excellency General Lord * * * * *,
Field-Marshal, &c. &c. &c.

My Lord,

We hasten to approach your lordship with our heartfelt congratulations on your safe arrival on these shores, and also on the success which has attended your arms in every action in which you have been engaged while defending the interests of that great country which you so adequately and nobly represent.

We are directed to convey to your lordship the acknowledgments of your gracious sovereign for the services rendered by you to your country, and we are further directed to add to the honourable titles which already adorn your name, those of—&c. &c. &c.

But a prouder distinction yet awaits your lordship; one which it will be more glorious to you to receive, and for us to confer.

It has been decided that such services as those by which you have recently so eminently distinguished yourself, are worthy of some more marked commemoration than any which mere titles, however illustrious, can afford. We have to announce to you that it is the intention of the

sovereign of this country to confer upon you the highest honour which a monarch can give, or a subject receive.

It has, doubtless, not escaped the notice of one so well acquainted with our metropolis as your lordship, that in one of its principal thoroughfares, at the entrance to one of its principal parks, in the immediate vicinity of its clubs and its Tattersall's, there exists a monster of noisome and appalling proportions, which, besides being the terror of the neighbourhood in which it is located, has disgraced the name of Britain in those foreign countries which the rumour of its existence has unfortunately reached.

This monster it has been your proud privilege to depose from his high place. An enemy to the fair name of this country, almost as much so as those other enemies over whom you have lately triumphed—that monster has fallen before your victorious approach, and beneath the spot which was once its lair may now be seen your lordship's name, in bold characters, and underneath it the simple inscription—"OVERTHROWN BY THIS PUBLIC BENEFACTOR."

As your lordship's fellow-countrymen pass that inscription in their daily walks, not only will the remembrance of the numerous exploits with which your name is associated be kept continually before them, but their gratitude towards the man who has delivered his country from a terror and a shame, will be reawakened from day to day, and from hour to hour.

Feeling that nothing we could add would give any additional value to this tribute which we have thus the honour of offering to your lordship, we will now withdraw, wishing your lordship long life and health, and many a pleasant ride under that arch on Constitution-hill which will henceforth be always associated with your proudest triumphs and your most glorious achievements.

We are, &c. &c.

(Signed)

There! I've come to the end of the space at my disposal, and can say no more; but if you'll only send me another big book—say Hansard's Debates—I'll annotate it with suggestions by the dozen.

By-the-by, does it strike you, or any of your readers, that Oliver Goldsmith was at all mad?

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