

**Illustrated life and career of William Palmer of Rugeley : containing details of his conduct as schoolboy ... with original letters of William and Anne Palmer and other authentic documents ... / [William Palmer].**

**Contributors**

Palmer, William, 1824-1856.

**Publication/Creation**

London : Ward, Lock, 1856.

**Persistent URL**

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ILLUSTRATED  
*Life and Career*  
OF  
WILLIAM PALMER  
OF RUGELEY:

CONTAINING

DETAILS OF HIS CONDUCT AS SCHOOL-BOY, MEDICAL-STUDENT,  
RACING-MAN, AND POISONER;

WITH

ORIGINAL LETTERS OF WILLIAM AND ANNE PALMER,

AND

OTHER AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS.

TOGETHER WITH

THE WHOLE OF HIS PRIVATE DIARY UP TO THE HOUR OF HIS ARREST,  
AND THE FULLEST PARTICULARS RESPECTING HIS  
EXECUTION AT STAFFORD.

---

ILLUSTRATED  
WITH VIEWS, PORTRAITS, AND REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CHIEF INCIDENTS IN HIS CAREER.

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LONDON: WARD AND LOCK, 158, FLEET STREET.

MCCCCLVI.



ILLUSTRATED

Life and Career

OF

WILLIAM PALMER

OF RUGGLEY

CONTAINING

DETAILS OF HIS CONDUCT AS SCHOOL-BOY, MEDICAL STUDENT,

KKK

WITH



ORIGINAL LETTERS OF WILLIAM AND ANNE PALMER

OTHER AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

ARRANGED BY

THE HOUSE OF HIS LORDSHIP MARSHALL TO THE HOUSE OF HIS LORDSHIP

AND THE TULLETT FAMILIAR RESPECTING HIS

EXPOSITION AT STAMFORD

ILLUSTRATED

WITH THE ORIGINAL AND REPRODUCTIONS OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IN HIS CAREER

LONDON: WARD AND LOCK, 15, FLEET STREET.

## PREFACE.

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WILLIAM PALMER, the Poisoner, has passed by a terrible and opprobrious death to the bar of a more awful tribunal, and to the presence of a mightier audience than that before which he publicly stood for so many days in London. For what other deeds he has to be there arraigned we shall never know in this world. Enough, however, has been proved, to the satisfaction of all thinking minds, to consign him to a doom which could not have been aggravated on earth had everything of which he was guilty been adduced. It is no subtle or recondite moral that his fate inculcates. More than once of late years, he has had large sums of money in his possession, and yet, from the moment of his first frauds, he never regained a chance of independence or of solvency; since the same epoch, he endeavoured to parry immediate and pressing dangers, by incurring progressively higher and worse risks, which were not to be so instantaneously encountered, but which were inevitable in their own time—until, from the fraud of a bill which there was no rational prospect of meeting when due, he advanced to the deeper fraud of forged acceptances, continually renewed by fresh forgeries; and so, step by step, to the plunder of insurance companies by means of policies made available through the assassination of the insured; and, lastly, to robbery with his own hand at the death-bed of the man whom he had murdered.

Not for one instant, in spite of the enormous amounts for which he laid his schemes, could he see his way towards clearing himself; and not for one instant, despite of a certain superficial popularity among his coarse associates, could he say to himself that he was safe. Had he purchased by that certainty of ruin, more or less speedy, in which he involved his affairs, and by those still more terrible and more fatal uncertainties with which he begirt the duration of his existence, as well as the mode of its close—had he thus purchased some of the most exquisite delights and the chief enjoyments of which man is susceptible, the cost would still have been insensate. But—having started with fair opportunities and ample means—it was for the sake of that hideous and dark career to which we have alluded—it was for the sake of that life of forlorn makeshifts, of mysterious expedients, of unintermitted alarm, struggle, and anxiety—for



the sake of this wretched, troublous, crazed, hurrying, and desperate existence, that he chose to bring himself at the age of thirty-two, or very little more, to the terrible and ignominious death which he publicly underwent on the gallows in front of Stafford gaol.

The moral is trite and obvious. It is not on every nature that the influences which led Palmer to destruction would have proved so malign; but they were not the less evil in themselves, and they are not the less a danger. The unbridled impatience to grow rich quickly, the excitement of a gambling life and the ever deepening debasement of unprincipled companionship, will produce their natural fruit in a great many characters who might otherwise have remained innocent of at least the more dreadful forms of crime.

As to the guilt of the wretched man, the certainty of it is such as may safely set the public conscience at rest. It is true, the proofs in this case were exclusively circumstantial. But we would remind all who may not have accurately reflected on this interesting subject, that no proofs can possibly be so satisfactory as those derived from circumstantial evidence, where the chain of that evidence is really complete. And why? Because, however trustworthy witnesses may be, they still are liable, when deposing to the fact itself at issue, itself controverted (instead of to a multiplicity of seemingly minor circumstances)—however trustworthy witnesses may be, they are liable to be swayed by a thousand feelings—by pity, terror, hope, fear, by likes and dislikes;—whereas circumstances have neither likes nor dislikes, no passions, no emotions, no interests to warp their testimony or cloud their judgment. It may be said that it is living witnesses, after all, who depose to those circumstances themselves. True; but so far as each is severally concerned, these circumstances do not appear necessarily connected with the actual deed, or with its disturbing spectacle. No one individual circumstance would of itself convict the accused; it is the chain of them which involve him, and that chain is formed out of the depositions of a multitude of different persons, who not only could not possibly have concerted such a mutually explaining body of proofs, but who are many of them strangers to each other, and are, like all numerous masses of individuals, actuated by various interests, objects, and passions. The obvious impossibility of jointly inventing this complete plot of inferential proof—an impossibility inherent in the very nature of circumstantial evidence—*where every fact would be indifferent only for its perfect concordance with every other fact*, and where each of these facts is attested by a distinct witness unconnected, and often unacquainted, with his fellow deponents; this impossibility constitutes the superior strength of circumstantial evidence, in comparison with that direct testimony about the main issue itself, which testimony can be, and too often is, suborned on either side.



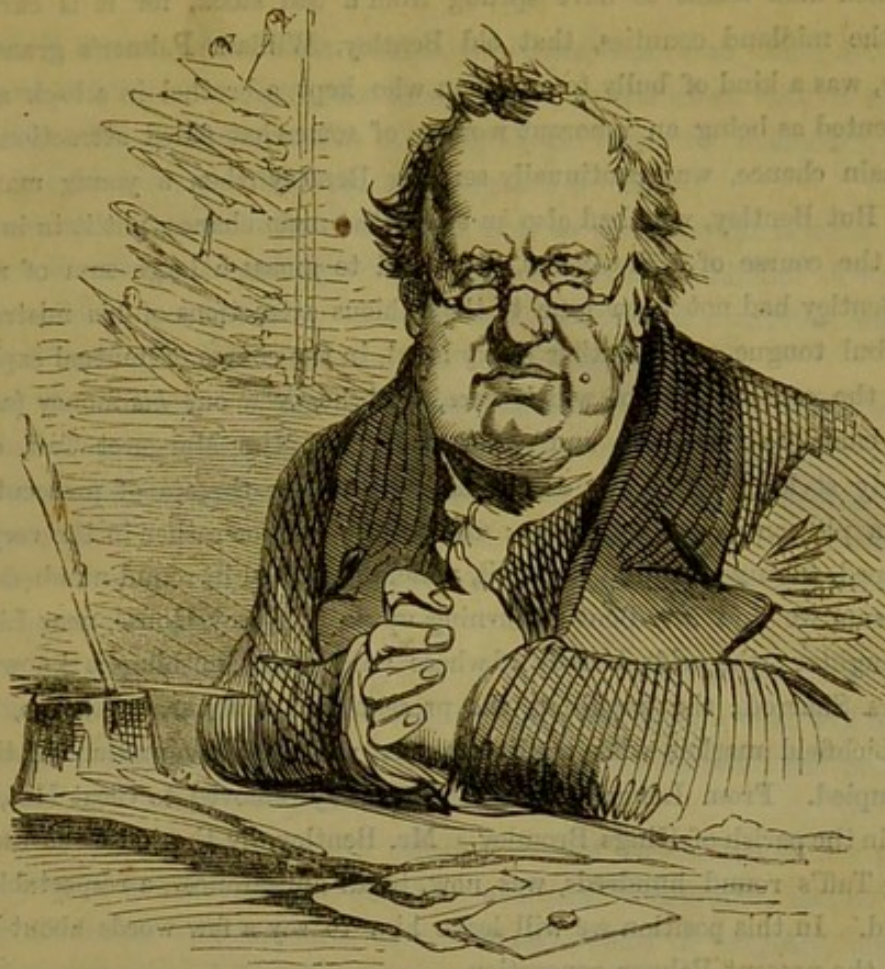
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## CHAPTER I.

PALMER'S ANCESTORS—THE FOUNDER OF THE PALMER FAMILY—HIS WIDOW AND HER REPUTED LOVERS.



**I**F the lives of the great and good are deserving of being written for the admiration of succeeding generations, and to excite those who study them to the practice of brave and virtuous actions, the careers of great criminals are equally worthy of being recorded, that their misdeeds may become the abhorrence of posterity, and that all who ponder over their wretched courses may take warning by the rapid progress with which, after the first false step, they too surely enter upon their downward path of crime.

Among this class of lives, few are so pregnant with warning as that of the man whose name has hung incessantly on the lips of people of all classes and conditions, for weeks—nay, for months past; the long catalogue of whose victims, as one fresh case after another emerged into the light, sent a thrill of indignant horror throughout the land; and whose conviction has calmed that just apprehension which existed in the minds of all thoughtful men, with regard to the security of life in this country, against the insidious arts of the skilled secret poisoner. Need we say that we allude to the notorious William Palmer, of Rugeley.



This wretched man seems to have sprung from a bad stock, for it is currently reported throughout the midland counties, that old Bentley, William Palmer's grandfather, by the mother's side, was a kind of bully to a woman who kept a brothel in a back street in Derby. She is represented as being an ignorant woman, of somewhat faded attractions, who, with an eye to the main chance, was continually sending Bentley (then a young man) with money to the bank. But Bentley, who had also an eye to the main chance, put it in in his own name, and thus, in the course of a few years, contrived to amass a large sum of money. In the meanwhile, Bentley had not been true to the dubious attractions of his mistress, and as she had a very foul tongue, and a rather heavy hand, in the course of mutual explanations, they fell to blows, the consequences of which were, that he drew out *his* money (as he now called it) from the bank, to the alarm and consternation of Miss Margaret Taff, or, as she was more familiarly styled, Pegg Taff, of Micklover. At her threats of prosecution he merely laughed, like a pleasant man as he was; and in the end, or rather in the very night following, he decamped, taking with him the spoil, which amounted in round numbers to £560.

With this sum we find Mr. Bentley turning up at Longway House, near Lichfield, with a wife and a daughter; the wife, a lady of whose antecedents nothing is known, except that she was a Mrs. Sharrod; the daughter, the present Mrs. Palmer, sen., who, it is reported, used to visit Lichfield market with poultry, butter, and eggs, the produce of the farm which her father occupied. From Longway House, the family removed to Cleat Hill, and thence to Ashton Hays, in the parish of Kings Bromley. Mr. Bentley, by the judicious use which he had made of Pegg Taff's round hundreds, was now, to all appearances, a respectable man, well to do in the world. In this position we will leave him to say a few words about his son-in-law, the father of the present Palmer generation.

Bentley's daughter was a prudent young lady, who thought it not amiss to have a couple of strings to her bow. She was courted by Mr. Hodson, the Marquis of Anglesea's steward, and by a young sawyer of the name of Palmer. The sawyer, whom everybody speaks of as a coarse, vulgar fellow, fancying that the Marquis's steward was almost fond enough of Ann Bentley to marry her, saved him the trouble by marrying her himself. Mr. Hodson is said to have proved none the less fond of Sarah Palmer than he had been of Sarah Bentley; and while he was paying his court to her, her husband was quietly marking the Marquis of Anglesey's timber, which is a very innocent practice in itself, but when by marking them 1, 1; 2, 2; 3, 3; instead of 1, 2, 3, Palmer could get six at the price of three, or better still, ten at the price of one, for we were informed by an old man who carted timber for old Palmer, that he had seen ten No. tens come in one day from Stroughborough Park—you can imagine that, even after "going snags" with the steward Hodson, he still was in a fair way to make his fortune. He evidently thought so, for he took extensive premises at Rugeley, built a fine house, began to keep servants, and, in fact, accumulated money. Then he fell in with the steward of the Bagot estate, with whom he was also in the habit of "going snags," and these sums of compound addition were worked out again with similar results. Finally, he fell in with the lease of the East Collieries at Brereton, and might now be considered a rich and prosperous gentleman.

¶ But one day this rich and prosperous gentleman came in from his timber-yard to dinner; he ate heartily, seemed to be quite well, and to be enjoying himself. He was just finishing his dinner when he fell back with his bread and cheese clutched in his hand—dead, without a word.

This happened, we believe, in 1837. The will which old Palmer left behind him was



unsigned, and it is understood that Joseph, the eldest son, who would have taken all the freehold property in his own right, executed a deed to the effect that he and his brothers should have £7,000 each, and that the old lady should have the remainder, and the landed property, for her lifetime; she, however, engaging not to marry.

Mrs. Palmer's solicitor repeatedly told Joseph that he would repent it some day, and in fact refused to have the deed executed by which Joseph dispossessed himself of so much property unless another solicitor was called in. Joseph then had his own solicitor, and for some time had thoughts of backing out, but eventually he signed the deed.

The body of the old man was laid in Rugeley church yard, and a tomb erected above his grave. He had risen to wealth and respectability, and deserved, according to the notions of his heirs, to have a Grecian tomb placed over his "dust and ashes," with iron rails to keep off the curious intruder. A man that leaves £70,000 behind him deserves something better than a grass mound to mark his last resting-place. He sprang from nothing, but he mustn't end so. He must be made a good deal of.

On the stone slab above the tomb—that kind of death's visitor's-book, where all who enter have their names written down,—is inscribed, in deeply-cut letters that will bear much wear and tear before they are worn away, "In a vault beneath are interred the remains of Joseph Palmer," together with his age, and the date of his death.

The sawyer's widow, in course of time, consoled herself for the loss of her spouse by other attachments. One of her favoured swains was a strapping linendraper, named Duffy; and at the "Shoulder of Mutton" public-house, in the Market-place of Rugeley, and close to the Town Hall, there could be seen, until recently seized by the police, the love-letters which the youthful, fascinating, and unfortunate Duffy is said to have received from the aged, giddy, and wealthy Mrs. Palmer,

The "Shoulder of Mutton" is a cottage with a tall roof, from which the bedroom windows look out upon the street. Over the entrance-door is the painting of an immense shoulder of mutton, only to be matched by the enormous dried hams showing through the passage window. In the front portion of the premises, the shelves are ornamented with sample-bottles of wines and spirits, which at the first glance have the appearance of medicine bottles. There is also a plaster cast of a cow, although no milk is to be purchased on the premises; and, unless the image should refer to "cream of the valley," it is totally out of place, and without meaning.

The taproom looks as if it had lately been added to the other portions of the house, for it has a small slate roof of its own, and is glazed with heavy white sashes and small panes of glass, twelve to the square yard, and is entirely out of character with the remainder of the building.

Thomas Clewley, the landlord, is a fine-looking man, with white hair and a cherry-red face, that puts one in mind of "trifle" at an evening party. The statement he makes to his customers, respecting Duffy and Mrs. Palmer, senior, is as follows:—

"There was a strapping chap of the name of Duffy—a good-looking fellow—who used to come to lodge with me. He was rather a dull chap in the house, and he'd sit still and drink. He did not run up a very big shot. The first time he came here, Mr. William Palmer paid for him. The second time he came, Mr. William Palmer told me he wouldn't pay, so I gave Duffy the bill, but he did not pay me then; he said he should have some money coming in a day or two. Soon after, he went out of the house without saying anything, and I never set eyes on him again. We gave him three or four years for coming back again; but as he didn't come, and his boxes began to smell very bad, my missus opened them—there was only a lot



of dirty shirts and things. He hadn't no clothing only what he had on his back. In the trunks I found some letters, not put by with any care, as if they were particular valuable, but just careless. They were only courting letters, and were from Mrs. Palmer (the old lady), written to him. I should think Duffy was about forty years old, and Mrs. Palmer was from about fifty-five to sixty. She has sons now as is above forty. I think Duffy was in the linen-draper's line. I never paid no more attention to him than that he was a traveller. The police has been here, and got Duffy's traps.

"The letters finished off with loving and kissing. They made appointments to meet at a many different places; but I was in no way interested in their loves, and I never troubled my head about it; it was the women as exposed the whole business—nobody would have seen 'em or known anything about the letters if it had not been for them. I should have burned 'em, or kept 'em secret. No, I never charged sixpence a-head to see 'em; I only showed 'em for a lark. The way in which they came to be seen was this—My missus got speaking of 'em, and one or two young chaps came here and gammoned the missus to show 'em. They spent one or two shillings in grog to have a look; then come another and another, and at last I took 'em away; but the missus got 'em again. There's no keeping the women quiet in these matters.

"I can't say how many letters there was—they was mixed up with tradesmen's bills, and that sort of thing."

Mr. Jerry Smith has long enjoyed the honour among the Rugeley people of being considered the fortunate successor of the truant Duffy; and it will be remembered, that, during his examination at Palmer's trial, the Attorney-General pressed him very closely on the point. As, however, when he was asked whether any improper intimacy existed between Mrs. Palmer and himself, he went to the extent of saying, that he *hoped not*—that there *ought not* to be any pretence for saying there was—with sundry other such-like denials, we suppose we may take it for granted that there is really no foundation for the reports current in the town of Rugeley, and that all the talk concerning Mrs. Palmer, sen., and Mr. Jerry Smith is a string of base fabrications from beginning to end.






## CHAPTER II.

THE CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-DAYS OF WILLIAM PALMER—HIS APPRENTICESHIP TO EVANS AND SONS, OF LIVERPOOL—THE MISSING LETTERS, AND THE ABSTRACTED MONEY.



WHEN old Palmer died he left behind him seven children, the issue of his marriage with Sarah Bentley.



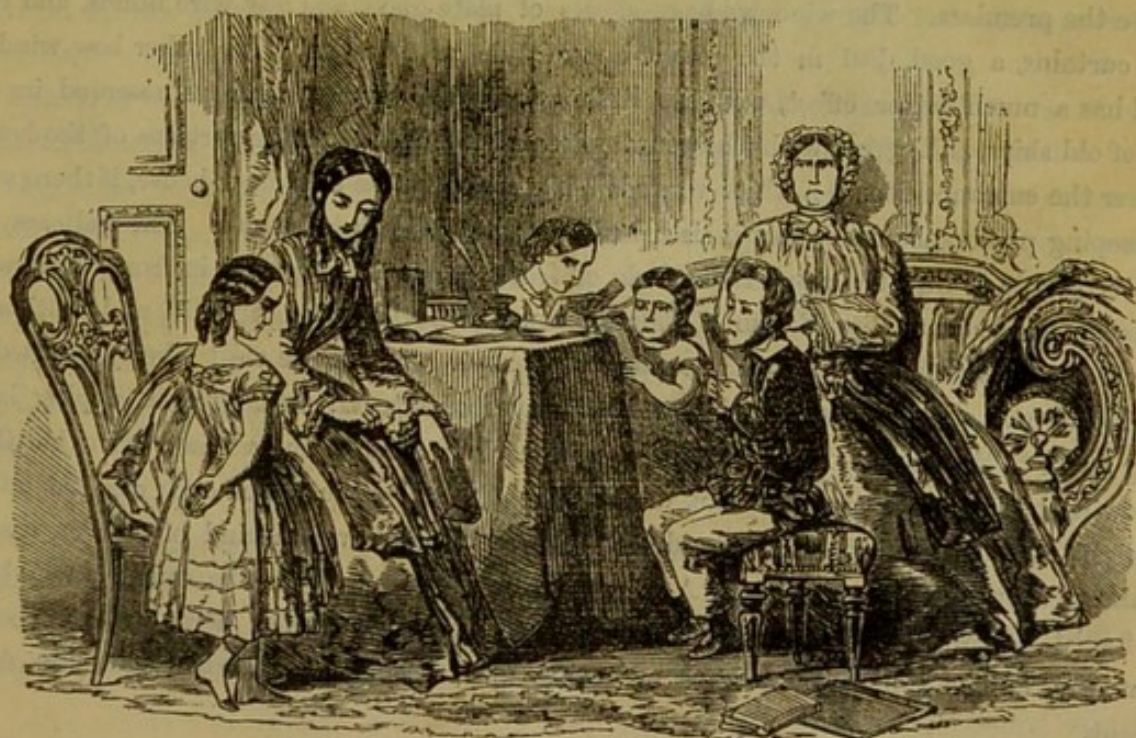
Joseph, the eldest son, was placed as an apprentice to the firm of Halhead, Fletcher, and Co., timber merchants, of Liverpool, in whose establishment he remained for between five and six years. He then left Liverpool, and returned to Rugeley, where he commenced business in his father's trade, combining with it that of a dealer in foreign timber. Not long afterwards he was introduced to the family of Mr. Milcrest, of Liverpool, and ere long married the eldest daughter, with whom he obtained a considerable fortune. Three years since he gave up the business of a timber merchant, and purchased a colliery at Cannock Chase, near Walsall, but after working this colliery for a short time, and losing a few thousand pounds by it, he ultimately disposed of it, retired from business altogether, and now resides with his family in Liverpool.

The second son is William, the subject of the present memoir.

George, the next brother, is an attorney in Rugeley. He is also, by marriage, connected with a Liverpool family, having married Miss Clarke, a daughter of Mr. Clarke, of Seacombe, formerly an iron merchant in Liverpool.

Walter was the fourth son: of him we shall have to speak more particularly as our narrative advances.

The youngest son, Thomas, who is now a clergyman of the Established Church, is at the present time twenty-eight years of age, and is also an exceedingly pious young man. Like th





rest of his brothers, he was identified with Liverpool in his more youthful days, for he finished an apprenticeship commenced by his brother William, to Evans and Sons, chemists, of that place. He showed early indications of a studious disposition, and displayed evidences of a serious and religious turn of mind. He was not long before he formed a determination to enter the church, and became a divinity student at St. Bees College. Here he remained for two years, and at the expiration of that time he entered into holy orders, and is now residing at Coton Elms, in Derbyshire. He it is who has recently published a pamphlet in defence of his brother William, in which he speaks of him, as "that darling brother, the playmate of my infancy, the companion of my youthful sports, in whom my heart's-blood circulates, and with whom my love is entwined; whose tongue never spoke falsely to one of us, but to whose language we listened ever with full assurance in its integrity and its faith."

The eldest daughter married Mr. Heywood, of Haywood, and drank herself to death; she is represented as a very bad character, and horrible rumours are circulated concerning her, which decency will not allow us even to allude to in print.

The youngest daughter in no respect resembles her sister. Against her the finger of scandal has never dared to point. She is a very quiet, unassuming, charitable girl, and is a general favourite; she is lady-like in appearance, and is well-informed and accomplished. There was a rumour that she had gone mad since the termination of her brother's trial, but we are glad to find that it is not true.

The house in which most, if not all, of these children were born, and in which the prosperous old sawyer—the founder of the Palmer family—resided at the time of his death, and which his widow still occupies, has been thus described by a clever correspondent of the "Illustrated Times."

"It is," he tells, us "a handsome, comfortable-looking place, built of red brick. On one side, next the graveyard, it is patched with a splendid ivy tree, that grows up to the very roof, and makes the walls look thick and smooth about the little window where the blind looks so white from contrast with the dark foliage. On the other side, next the canal, it is patched with a big, bulging, two-storeyed bow window, built of stone, which has no business to be there, for it is not in character, and looks tawdry. It is as if some idea had struck the tenant to improve the premises. The windows have sheets of plate-glass, and gay wire blinds, and rich silken curtains, a good deal in the public-house style of "fancy." The other bow window behind has a much better effect, with its little panes, like those we see represented in the sterns of old ships, and agrees with the countryfied look of the remaining portions of the house.

"Over the entrance-door is a white verandah, big enough to be a summer-house, if there were any creeping plants about it; but it is naked and carefully painted white. The Palmers are evidently people to like the respectable look of fresh paint. The garden in front is planted with large evergreens, clipped into a round form, and having a highly stiff and cultivated look, which lets everybody know that a gardener is kept. Where the old timber-yard used to be, and what was once a large wharf, has been converted into an attempt at a sloping lawn leading down to the canal. A few shrubs have been planted along the carriage drive, but they are growing brown at the tips, and look unhealthy. The old crane which once creaked under the weight of heavy timber, now rests idly at the water's edge, with a kind of wooden casing over him to keep him from the rain. A long narrow barge passes in the canal, drawn by a horse forced slantways by the strain upon the rope. The man at the helm turns round to look at Mrs. Palmer's house, and keeps on gazing until the trees at the bend hide him from the sight.



'At the other end of the timber-yard are the remains of the late stock-in-trade of the late sawyer. The few planks have grown black, and are piled up together, and form a convenient roosting-place for the fowls, and for hanging up linen to dry.

"If the front of the house has an imposing aspect, the back part, at least, lets you into the mystery of the attempt that has been made to obtain the admiration of the passer-by in the road. The back premises are dirty, and full of dirt. The garden is uncultivated, and the mould trodden under foot until it has grown as hard as the remains of the gravel walks that surround them. A few dishcloths hang up to dry; and there are a water-butt, with rusty hoops, and a coach-house and stable that a London cabman would not occupy. Here the carriage was kept; here the man in livery used to put to when ordered to 'come round.' Nobody who saw the handsome vehicle sweeping round the carriage-drive, would imagine that it had just come out of such a hovel of a stable, with the black thatch dropping away, and the woodwork looking too rotten even to burn.

"In this house William Palmer was born, with two churches looking down upon him, and gravestones around and about. 'The nearer the church, the farther from God.' As he played among the tombs, he could learn that men sometimes lived, like William Cope and John Dawson, to be 85 years old before they died. He could take such reading lessons as that on the monument near the gate, with the carved letters now filled in with green moss:—

'Praises on tombs are trifles vainly spent;  
A man's good name is his best monument.'

The morning after Palmer's birth, the apprentice of a grocer, carrying on business very nearly opposite the house at Rugeley, where William Palmer first saw the light, was sent by his mistress with her respectful compliments to know how Mrs. Palmer and the baby were.

Some thirty-two years afterwards, this apprentice rose to be a London alderman, takes his seat, in his official capacity, on the bench at the Central Criminal Court during the trial of William Palmer for murder!

It is the nearest approach that we have yet met with in real life, towards realising the climax of Hogarth's glorious series of the "Apprentices," where the "industrious apprentice, arrived at the dignity of a Judge, has the idle apprentice brought before him, charged with murder."

The Alderman to whom our anecdote refers, is Mr. Thomas Sidney, late M.P. for Stafford.

William Palmer, as a child, was noted for a great display of amiability and kindness, but he was also noted for great cruelty towards animals, and for indulging in general mischief in a sly underhand way; he has been known to torture animals, and even insects, and to play tricks with aged people, when he thought there was no opportunity of being detected; but in public, he was always officiously helping somebody, as though it were his wish to make himself generally agreeable. He was born, in the year 1824, at the house in Rugeley which his mother now occupies, and was christened on the 21st of October, according to the following certificate:—

#### "BAPTISM.

"October 21st, 1824—WILLIAM, son of JOSEPH and SARAH PALMER, RUGELEY, *Timber Merchant*.

"CHARLES INGE, *Vicar*."

"The above is a true copy, taken from the parish register, this 9th day of June, 1856.

"T. D. ATKINSON, *Vicar*."



Littler, a sawyer, an old man who was working in Palmer's father's yard when each of the children were born, and knew the whole of the family, and who has, moreover, nursed William Palmer many a time, furnishes the following particulars of his early days. He says, "the father was very strict with his children generally; made them play in the yard, and would not let them go into the village; but they were allowed to go wild after the father's death.

"The father never flogged William so much as he did the others! No, sir, William was not a particular favourite, but he was not so wild as the others, Walter in particular.

"Old Mrs. Palmer was very fond of her children, but especially fond of Joseph.

"Well, perhaps, he was a little sly. You see young men will be young men, and William was quieter like! Yes, sir, Walter was very racketty—and not so good-natured as William.

"William was the best-natured of all the brothers; in fact, sir, the people round about used to say he was the best of the bunch. I've often carried him through the fields in my arms; we used to play together at marbles. I never saw him in a bad temper. No, sir, a better tempered or more generous child there never was; he was a very nice young gentleman.

"When a baby he was very fat and lust—but the family were all very fat and lust. None of them could walk before sixteen or eighteen months. No, sir, William Palmer never played at the racketty games like his other brothers, Walter for instance. William was very fond of marbles, ball, and sometimes tipcat. Oh, yes, he played very well with them; he was a capital aim at marbles.

"Yes, sir, he did go to Bonney's, and he went to Clark's before that, sir. You see Clark had the grammar school before Bonney; but Clark died, and then Bonney came. William and his brothers were day-scholars; the school is the next house to Mrs. Palmer's. Bonney was reckoned a very clever schoolmaster.

"Yes, William Palmer was just as generous when he grew up; he never forgot an old face. Why he never met me but he said 'Littler, will you have a glass of something to drink.' He gave a deal to the poor, he was very charitable and kind.





Several of Palmer's schoolfellows, with whom we have spoken, describe him while at Bonney's, as having been "always up to his tricks;" and mention that it was a frequent habit of his to borrow money under false pretences, from the men who were employed in his father's timber-yard. He would go to them in his plausible way, and induce them to believe that his father had no change, and wanted sixpence or a shilling, as the case might be, which no sooner had he procured but he would spend amongst his schoolfellows indiscriminately. Yet none of his schoolfellows liked him; and although they would readily associate with the other brothers, most of them were very distant to William. One schoolfellow now resident at Bilston, speaks somewhat better of him, for he says, "that in the case of a school row, he was in the habit of protecting the weaker side."

T. Sherrit, for many years connected with Rugeley church, and now acting as parish-clerk, says of William Palmer:—

"I knew him when a lad; I never knew any harm of him; I gave him singing lessons; he came to me of his own accord, because he thought he should like it. He was a very good boy with me, but then I would not have anybody in the class unless he was; but the boys used to tell tales about him—that he was given to swearing, and other tricks. Mr. Bonney could tell you something about him, if he was alive, for he was a man of great discrimination; he could tell a boy's character directly. We had as many as eighty-three scholars when he was alive; we have only twenty-four now, and, some time ago, it had dwindled down to sixteen."

But when William Palmer left school he must have been an indifferent character, for not many months after that he went to be apprenticed to a wholesale chemist at Liverpool, where he behaved himself very badly, and where he is reported to have seduced a girl, and where it is quite certain that he robbed his masters.

The firm Palmer was apprenticed to, was that of Messrs. Evans and Sons, wholesale druggists, of Lord-street, Liverpool. When he first entered upon this situation he conducted himself with all seeming propriety, was attentive to his various duties, and for a long time there was not the slightest shadow of a suspicion of anything wrong in the conduct of the apprentice.

At length, however, unaccountable complaints arise. Various customers of Messrs. Evans begin to write to the effect that they have remitted money to the firm, in payment of their several accounts, of which they have had no acknowledgment. Inquiries are made without effect. No cash has come to hand from the complaining customers. They, in their turn, are positive that it was sent. The matter seems to rest between them and the post-office; no one suspected Palmer, whose duty it was to go every day to the Liverpool post-office to fetch the letters of the firm. It may be as well here to remark that it is customary in Liverpool, as in other important towns of England, for merchants to have letter-boxes of their own at the post-office, into which all letters directed to the firm are placed, and whence they are fetched by clerks or other *employes*, soon after the arrival of the mails, and are thus received much earlier than they would be if delivered by the letter-carriers.

Finding that these complaints of money lost became more frequent, Messrs. Evans and Sons wrote to the General Post-office, in London, on the subject. Accordingly the Post-office authorities sent an inspector down to Liverpool, to make inquiries into the matter. Every plan was tried that could be thought of to detect the thief, who it was believed must be some one in the Post-office, at Liverpool or elsewhere. Traps were laid for them, and letters traced from the moment of their being posted till they were delivered, but in vain. The



missing letters still remained a mystery, and still complaints came pouring in that money had been sent by post, but had not come to hand; one customer declaring that he had remitted £60, another £90, and so on.

One day, however, it occurred to Mr. Evans, junior, one of the partners of the firm, that, though the inspector sent from London had done all that could be done in tracing letters from one office to another, it yet remained to trace them from the Liverpool post-office to the counting-house in Lord-street.

So he went out one day, just after Palmer had gone to the post-office, as usual, to fetch the letters, and resolved to keep his eye on the apprentice. Palmer received the correspondence of the day—a good large batch, as generally happened—and walked off with it, little suspecting that a keen eye followed all his movements. Soon after he had left the post-office, he was observed to feel the letters, one by one, as though to ascertain if any of them had enclosures in them. Coming to one more bulky than the rest, he stopped deliberately and opened it. But he was disappointed this time; the letter that he opened had no money in it; so cramming it carelessly into his pocket, and having ascertained that there was little prospect of anything of value in the others, he presented himself with the unopened letters in the counting-house of his employer.

The gentleman who had watched him had arrived before him.

“But, Palmer,” he exclaimed, when he received the letters, “these are not all that came to day; are they?”

“Certainly, sir;” said Palmer, boldly.

“Where then,” asked Mr. Evans, “is the letter that I saw you open in the street, and put into your pocket?”

Even when charged thus positively, Palmer still held out; boldly denying that he had been guilty of the deed imputed to him. The evidence, however, was too strong against him to admit of doubt. Messrs. Evans and Sons immediately discharged him, and wrote to acquaint his mother with his conduct.

The old lady came over to Liverpool at once, accompanied by the brother of the culprit, and implored the Messrs. Evans to be merciful to him. These gentlemen very properly observed it did not rest with them. It was not they who had been robbed, but their customers, whose money he had stolen. It was with them that she must deal. Mrs. Palmer was accordingly furnished with the addresses of all those who had complained of their remittances not having come to hand, and the indulgent mother went round to them, and made good the defalcations of her son.

Palmer confessed his guilt when there was no further chance of his denying it; and on his expressing extreme penitence, his mother begged that Messrs. Evans would allow him to remain with them until the term of his apprenticeship expired. To this, of course, these gentlemen could not assent. But to prevent the public scandal that would arise from the cancelling of the young man's Indentures, were the reason of it known, they acceded to the mother's solicitations so far as to consent to take another son to finish the apprenticeship. So William Palmer was dismissed, and his brother Thomas, now the clergyman, took his place for the remainder of the term, conducting himself during his stay with them in the most exemplary manner.

Even at this early stage of his career, it would seem that William Palmer had contracted the evil habit of gambling, which ultimately led to his ruin; for we understand that, while in the service of Messrs. Evans and Sons, a very large portion of his ill-gotten gains was expended



in betting on the Liverpool and Chester races. Another portion—not by any means an inconsiderable one—went in the society of females of the worst character, with whom, unfortunately, Liverpool, like most large seaport towns, abounds.

He managed, however, to conceal these vices from his masters, for he was an out-door apprentice, not residing in the house with them; and, during the whole time that he served as their apprentice, he bore a good character for steadiness and attention to business. How well deserved this character was, his conduct proved.

It is after this, when he is getting on for eighteen, that he has one more chance given him. He is apprenticed to Tylecote, of Haywood.

### CHAPTER III.

PALMER IS APPRENTICED TO TYLECOTE THE SURGEON—HOW HE BORROWS FIVE POUNDS—THE FOOTMAN AT “THE ABBEY”—THE SHAM PATIENTS—HOW HE SERVED THE ASSISTANT, AND HOW HE RAN AWAY.



WILLIAM PALMER, at the age of eighteen, was apprenticed for five years, to Edward T. Tylecote, surgeon, of Haywood, near Rugeley, and while there became notorious for certain bad habits which it will be hardly possible to narrate here; but so far as we may allude to them, (and inasmuch as we think it of very great importance to do so,) we will.

Haywood is a little village, lying between Shoughborough Park and the Ingestre estate; and in this village, immediately opposite to the residence of Mr. Heywood, (Palmer's brother-in-law,) lived Mr. Tylecote—a shrewd, intelligent, but not over prosperous country surgeon, to whom was apprenticed William

Palmer—a great strong lad, described to have been as tall, though not so stout, as he is now. The first impression that he made upon everybody around, was that he was industrious, kind, and not devoid of application; but it was not very long before circumstances transpired that induced a different opinion.

The readiness with which he would (when called up in the middle of the night) put to the horse and accompany his master, was not thought so favourably of when it was discovered that swindling and seduction were two of his weaknesses.

Mrs. Hawkins, a widow woman with nine children, who resided at Gayton, but is now living at Grey Friars, Stafford, was tossed by a bull belonging to Mr. Parker, a farmer of the same place, and severely injured. The poor woman, after being carried home, sent for Mr. Tylecote, her “club doctor;” he being very ill at the time, could not attend; Mr. Parker therefore requested the woman to let him call in another surgeon of the name of Masfen, offering at the same time to pay the fee. The widow Hawkins accepted the proposition, and Masfen attended her, Palmer also being sent over by Tylecote for the purpose of making up any medicines which Masfen might prescribe. It was during the progress of this case that Parker, Palmer, and the widow being together alone—

“I say,” said Parker, “what's the amount of Masfen's fee?”

“Two guineas,” replied Palmer. Whereupon Parker took out his canvass bag, and, extract-



ing therefrom the required amount, threw it into the widow's lap. In so doing, he dropped some gold.

"By-the-bye!" asked Palmer, suddenly, "can you change me a five-pound note?"

"Certainly," said the farmer, and gave him five sovereigns. Palmer searched his pockets all over without finding what he appeared to be seeking for; but at length seeming to recollect, "Ah!" he ejaculated, "I remember now; I was in such a hurry to meet Masfen to-day, that, in changing my trowsers I left the note in the pocket; but it is of no consequence, I can send it over by the boy when he brings the medicine."

But he did not send it over.

Three months after, Parker writes for the money, threatening to prosecute; Palmer's master hears that some money is owing, scolds Palmer, who excuses himself by saying that he has not been able to spare it; his master advises him to ride over to his mother, and get it from her; he does so the next morning; getting back before breakfast. "Now," said his master, "Go, at once, and pay it."

He went, at once, and did not pay it.

Five weeks afterwards, his master, Tylecote, meeting Parker by accident, hears the particulars.

The money was eventually paid by Mrs. Palmer.

During this period of his career Palmer managed to scrape an acquaintance with a footman at "the Abbey," a picturesque old mansion in Haywood, and, before long, he succeeded in inducing him to take his savings (fifteen pounds) out of the bank, under a promise that, on his (Palmer's) coming of age, he would pay him twenty pounds, and the interest; but the money was only recovered after repeated applications to the mother.

It frequently happened that, after dinner, when Tylecote, tired with his morning's round, and anxious for a little rest, was settling himself for a nap, young Palmer would come into the room, and in the blindest tone suggest that a certain patient at some miles distance should be visited; at the same time offering to go. Almost as a matter of course, his master would give his permission, and tell him which horse to take out of the stable. Palmer having harnessed the horse, would ride "up village" in the direction of the patient; go round by the Abbey, through a croft belonging to the Clifford's Arms Inn; enter by the back way into the Clifford's Arms yard; put up his horse, and go off to a young woman in the village, whom it is believed he had seduced, returning in due time to his master, and even making a false entry of a visit paid to the patient in his master's books.

Tylecote had an assistant, a diminutive young man, rather weakly in frame, but affecting a fashionable exterior. He was received in the "society" of the village, and was a most respectable young man. One day he had occasion to scold Palmer very severely for some shortcoming, and it is curious to notice Palmer's revenge. He could have knocked him down with ease, but that was not Palmer's way. He said nothing, but went upstairs into the assistant's bedroom, opened all his drawers, poured a corrosive acid over all his fine clothes and linen, finishing with a new pair of dress boots (which had just come home in time for a ball at the Clifford's Arms), which unfortunate boots he cut and hacked, in every conceivable way, with a penknife.

Although no other person could have done it, he denied it to the last—with tears and protestations.

Early one morning he asked his master to let him go out for a day's rabbit shooting, and having obtained permission, he started off—not to the rabbit warren, but to Walsall—with the girl whom he was said to have seduced. Nothing was heard of him for some days, until a letter came to



a Mr. Lomax, of Stafford, asking for money to redeem Palmer from the inn in Walsall, where he lay in pawn for his bill; but this letter was enclosed to Mr. Tylecote, who, in turn, took it over the way to Mr. Heywood, Palmer's brother-in-law; but neither of them feeling justified in advancing money to him, the letter eventually reached his mother, who sent two of his brothers to fetch him home. They reached the inn at Walsall, where they found him with his bottle of sherry and port, and his dessert before him, quietly cracking his walnuts in company with the girl. At first he attempted to fight his brothers, but after some conversation a reconciliation took place; the bill was paid, and they prepared to return to Rugeley; but in the inn yard Palmer suddenly disappeared, and did not turn up until the next day, when he entered Stafford in a chaise, and after leaving the girl in the town, started off home to his mother.

The girl with whom Palmer went off to Walsall was Jane Widnall, the illegitimate child of Jane Widnall, married to a man of the name of Vickerstaff.

Vickerstaff was an assistant gardener, he worked in Shoughborough gardens, where he had many privileges in the way of perquisites, working over time, &c., and being a careful, plodding sort of fellow, managed through a course of years to save £100.

When Palmer became acquainted with Jane Widnall, his master, Mr. Tylecote, was not in the habit of going to church. Palmer, however, used to go, but invariably bribed a village lad to call him out (as if from his master) about a half an hour after the service commenced; he then went to the girl, who was alone, her father and mother being safe in church; and this, we believe, was carried on for some time.

When Vickerstaff and his wife discovered them, there is no doubt but that Palmer promised to marry the girl; and it was on the strength of this promise that Palmer, hearing from Jane Widnall of her father's savings, managed to borrow of Vickerstaff his £100, the whole of which sum was squandered either in paying his "debts of honour" at Haywood, or in dissipation at Walsall, where many a drunken game is remembered.

This girl, after Palmer deserted her, met with another man, whom she is said to have married; they went out together to Australia, where it seems she died.

## CHAPTER IV.

PALMER IS WALKING PUPIL AT THE STAFFORD INFIRMARY—DEATH OF ABLEY AT THE LAMB AND FLAG—PALMER GOES TO LONDON—PASSES HIS EXAMINATION.



RS. PALMER tried very hard to get her son William back to Tylecote's; he would have gone, but the surgeon refused to take him again; and it was now only after a great deal of trouble, and because he did not want to hinder his advancement in life, that Mr. Tylecote consented to procure him admission into the Stafford Infirmary as a walking pupil, and give him a certificate at the end of his term.

A curious circumstance happened at this time, which people now regard as of more importance than, possibly, the facts warrant. Palmer, it seems, had not been long at the Infirmary before his interference with the dispensing of medicines (of what nature the interference was we have failed to discover,) was so strongly objected to by the medical officers, that a rule was expressly passed forbidding pupils to have



anything to do with the dispensing of medicines. The medicines are now dispensed by the pupils, there being no paid officer for that purpose; but at that time there was undoubtedly a rule passed, which as far as we can learn, was for the purpose of keeping Palmer out of the Dispensary.

It is somewhat singular, that, immediately after Palmer left the Infirmary, a gentleman (now in India) of the name of William Palmer, was elected to the office of dispenser.

Palmer does not seem to have been either liked or respected at Stafford. It is generally said that he was "advised" to leave the place.

It was at this period of Palmer's life that he was concerned in what people at the time considered to be a medical student's lark, but which was accompanied by such serious results, that Palmer had a narrow escape of proceedings being taken against him—we allude to the death of a man named Abley. Concerning this there are two accounts, and we give them both, because, although the first mentioned is not the most reliable, it is the most generally received.

One day in the spring of 1846, Palmer invited Abley to the Lamb and Flag, and there gave him brandy and water; ordering the landlady to give him eight pennyworth each time instead of four pennyworth, as the man supposed. He became very intoxicated, and refused to drink any more; but, Palmer offering him half a sovereign to drink another, he tossed it off—vomited directly—staggered out, and died in the stable. At the inquest there was a great deal of talk about Palmer and Abley's wife, which was undoubtedly untrue.

The other and most reliable account is, that a bet was made between William Palmer and another Rugeley man that Abley would drink off two tumblers of brandy. He did it; went out into the stable (it was a cold day) and vomited continually, until they, finding him there and so ill, brought him in, and put him to bed—but it was too late, and he died. Abley was a thin, pale man, in indifferent health. A *post mortem* examination was made by Mr. Masfen, but the verdict which was found at the inquest, "Died from natural causes," was the only one which, with justice, could have been recorded.

It is a singular fact that the foreman of the jury was strongly opposed to this verdict at the time, and that he has ever since been constantly in the habit of expressing his suspicions that Abley was unfairly dealt with. For years past he has not scrupled to state openly that he thought Palmer had poisoned him—a circumstance on which he prides himself not a little at the present time.





## CHAPTER V.

PALMER COMES TO LONDON—HIS MEDICAL “GRINDER”—PALMER, A STUDENT OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW’S—HIS EXTRAVAGANT MODE OF LIFE.



IN the latter part of the year 1846, Palmer came to London to complete his medical studies under the direction of Dr. Stegall, a gentleman well known in the profession, with the view of passing his examination. At the time Palmer placed himself under the tuition of the doctor, he was, as may be supposed, very backward in his medical knowledge, a fact of which he was himself perfectly sensible; and he promised to pay the doctor, who was to act as what is familiarly styled his “grinder,” the sum of fifty guineas, if he enabled him to pass his examination and escape being plucked. Mrs. Palmer also promised an additional ten guineas, as did also his friend Mr. Jerry Smith. Dr. Stegall worked hard with his pupil; but Palmer, true to his usual character, never paid him the promised fee, although he passed his examination with credit, and was not plucked as has been reported. Of the many stories told of him, one goes so far as to say that he only got his Diploma by paying somebody to personate him. This, however, is not true. Mr. Jerry Smith declined to pay the ten guineas he had promised; but an action which was brought for the amount went against him. Jerry Smith stated that he had seen Mrs. Palmer pay into the hands of her son the ten guineas she had promised to Dr. Stegall. It is, however, almost needless to say, that it never reached the person for whom it was intended.

Palmer, during this period of his life, did not reside with Dr. Stegall, excepting for a few days. His habits were extravagant and irregular in the extreme. He was constantly giving parties, at which large quantities of champagne were consumed. His associates, even at this time, were sporting men, and Palmer was very often the victim of their duplicity. His studies were not pursued with any degree of pleasure on his part; his whole time was taken up with horses and racing matters; which were his favourite topics of conversation. During the time he was in London, Jerry Smith was frequently with him; indeed, they were inseparable companions.

Dr. Stegall, who is an accomplished artist, painted two portraits of Palmer: one was presented to his dear Annie, the lady he was then courting, and who afterwards unfortunately became his wife; the other remains in the possession of Dr. Stegall, and an admirable portrait it is. Since Palmer has been in custody, charged with the Rugeley murder, he has written to Dr. Stegall, requesting that he would let his brother George have this portrait; but as the doctor was never paid for it, and had moreover lost a large sum of money by Palmer, we presume he saw no reason for complying with this request.

It was, of course, necessary, that Palmer should attend lectures at one of the great London hospitals, and Bartholomew’s was the one at which he entered himself a student. He lodged with a Mr. Ayres, in Bartholomew-close, and it was during his residence here that he commenced that course of reckless extravagance which first led him into pecuniary difficulties.

The medical student of the present day is still “sad dog” enough, but he was even more so at the time of which we speak. We cannot tell what there is in the study of medicine that produces such results, but we believe that it is a well-known fact that the majority of medical students have generally, if not always, been, *par excellence*, “fast men.” Of course there are





exceptions to this rule, as to every other. We have ourselves known one or two most honourable exceptions—men who have taken up the healing art as a profession, and have gone conscientiously to work to learn whatever could be learned during their studentship.

Some few years since, the *summum bonum* of human happiness to the medical student's mind seemed to consist in strolling down the Haymarket or Regent-street, clad in the roughest of all overcoats, smoking the strongest of cigars, and peering under the bonnet of every female passer-by, delighted if he could succeed in staring out of countenance some poor little dress-maker or milliner wending her way homewards all alone, and wearied with the long hours of labour. This he would call a "lark." Great was he at the bars of public-houses, and copious were his draughts of half-and-half, which he would always take, as he expressed it, "in its native pewter." Boisterous was his merriment, too, later in the evening (civilized people call it night), when all the shops were shut up, and he would walk along with three or four companions, all abreast and arm-in-arm, taking up the entire width of pavement, and shouting "Lullaliety!" whatever that may have meant, in a voice that would not only wake the slumbering echoes, but the slumbering householders as well, and make them wonder what on earth they paid police-rates for.

Then he was very clever at the extremely fashionable and highly exhilarating amusement of wrenching knockers off street doors (a sport now quite gone out, like cock-fighting and other intellectual pastimes). He would exhibit the trophies of his prowess in this line—which, by-the-bye, the law might look upon as petty larceny—but what cared he for the law?—and would boast of them to his friends, (he called them "chums,") much as a savage might exult over the number of scalps that he had taken from a hostile tribe.



The style of living of those students who had not, like Palmer, an indulgent parent to draw upon, was every bit as singular as their amusements. With them beer was their morning beverage. Tea, coffee, and such like, were scorned as "slops." The breakfast usually consisted of whatever happened to be in the cupboard; cold meat, or bread and cheese, or butter all came alike, provided there was beer to wash it down; or, in default of that, cold gin-and-water. Their appetites were, for the most part, vigorous; and no amount of raking over-night appeared to weaken them; nor would some mouldering human bone (on which the student had been operating, or pretending to do so), lying in the cupboard close beside the loaf, take from the relish with which he attacked his breakfast.

Yet would he get the eating business over in as little time as possible, that he might have his pipe, which he invariably smoked the moment he had finished with the solid portions of his morning meal, and long before the liquids were put by.

He seldom breakfasted alone though. He preferred to drop in on some "chum," or have some "chums" drop in on him, that they might talk over the last night's "larks," whilst they were breakfasting. And though at these gatherings, knives and forks, plates and glasses, might run short, it did not in the least interfere with the meal. The cold meat could be cut with pocket-knives, and eaten in the fingers; the gin-and-water drunk from pickle-jars or gallipots, or even, at a pinch, from the ornamental vases on the chimney-piece. The beer was, of course, in the pewter, so with that there could be no sort of difficulty.

Dinner, of this class of student, when he dined at all, was generally taken at a cheap eating-house (he called it a "slap-bang"); where he was always on most friendly terms with the waiters—especially the female waiters, whom he invariably called "my dear," and winked at.

Of course he never dreamt of tea. That was a meal no man on town could ever condescend to take. He liked his supper, but it was taken irregularly, and varied according to his pecuniary resources at the moment.

Palmer, however, was not a student of this genus. *He* ate and drank of the best, spent his days and nights in riotous living, and gave but little thought to those severe studies which he was required to surmount to become fitted for his profession.





He would frequently commence the day with the luxury of a champagne breakfast, given for no earthly reason whatever, to some party of fellow students, who, in return for his misjudged prodigality, did him the honour of speaking of him among themselves as stupidly good-natured. Few men would feel an inclination for study after so respectable an orgie, even as the above; consequently the remainder of the day was run through in going the rounds to certain betting-houses, at which William Palmer was better known than in the Lecture Theatre of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, or in an adventure in the pursuit of female beauties of doubtful reputation. Evening would at length draw on, and then the theatre would perhaps furnish its hour or two of amusement. Then would come the supper at the night-house at some adjacent oyster-shop, where ruddy lobsters and thick-shelled crabs lie in luxuriant profusion over the slabs of slate in the window; where pickled salmon hides in shady groves of fennel; where stout oyster-tubs balance themselves on each other against the wall, and Finnon haddocks, truly Scotchlike in their hardness and crispness, are ranged in tempting layers; where the gilt placard hanging from the gas jet, invited the passer-by to partake of chops, kidneys or steaks. At the counter are ruffling gallants cooling their parched throats with natives, and swearing at the flannel-aproned attendants; in the inner rooms there are to be seen many rustling silks and satins, many feathers, much ochre and bismuth, technically termed "slap;" much male mirth, and alas! forced female gaiety. This was the sort of company that William Palmer delighted in. Here he found men who were well-up in the slang of the racing fraternity. Men whom he regularly met on the race-courses, in the neighbourhood of London—flashy in dress—shallow in intellect—and depraved in morals. Or, perhaps, Palmer and his companions would wend their way down Coventry-street and across St. Martin's-lane, entering for a few minutes through the open door of a public-house, where the ex-champion of England, that enormous giant might be seen standing behind his bar, confronted by fighting men, with flattened noses and contused eyes; dog fanciers, ratting-match concoctors, and the scum of sporting life generally. They would then turn up quiet Little New-street, even at this hour blocked up by the carts opposite the cheese-monger's; along King-street, past the Garrick Club, through the illumined windows of which late diners might yet be seen congregated round the mahogany; down a steep flight of steps, and into the supper-room at Evans's.

Far-famed as this supper-room has been for many years, it was destined for its present proprietor to raise it to the reputation it now enjoys—that of being the most excellent place of the kind in the metropolis. Visit it, reader, and judge for yourself. In the "café" part of the establishment, there sit the guests who come simply to get their supper and to enjoy each other's conversation; for in the large hall you are expected, and very properly too, to give your whole attention to the viands and the singing. The walls of the "café" are hung round, as you will perceive, with portraits of the most famous theatrical personages of ancient and modern times. The large hall is thronged: there are perhaps six or seven hundred persons seated round the various tables; at the upper end is a platform on which is stationed a grand piano, and on this platform stand the singers. Immediately below the platform is stationed the chairman; you hear his hammer now rapping on the table, while he loudly calls for "Attention to the music from *Macbeth*, No. 63 in the books, gentlemen, if you please." On to the platform come some dozen singers, half of whom are boys, with fresh singing voices, and never did you hear Locke's beautiful melodies more sweetly executed. The most decorous silence reigns throughout the room, broken only at the end by a tumultuous clapping of hands and knocking on the tables. Here, moving quietly through the room, courteously inquiring at every table whether his guests are



satisfied, and ever and anon offering his silver snuff-box, is the proprietor of the establishment; then, coming round with a goodly burden of cigars is the old German *siffler*, who must be associated, O, reader! with your earliest reminiscences of town-life. At the various tables, you will see some of the principal notabilities of London. Take the party nearest to us. The short, bald-headed man, with the clear blue eye and sharp features, is one of the cleverest comedians in London; that huge massive head and huge beard belong to a man whose name will ever be associated with mountain ascents, strict perseverance, and extraordinary success, while the square-shouldered, broad-built gentleman, with hair fast turning grey, is one of the best antiquarians and finest judges of good living the world can boast. At the next table is seated a party of swells, to whom the gin-and-water, or stout of ordinary life is pollution; they are drinking champagne up as befits such able creatures, and are regarded with intense astonishment and veneration by their neighbours, sometimes provincials from the neighbourhood of Wolverhampton, who are in the greatest state of bewilderment at all they see passing round them. More rapping of the hammer; the great comic singer is about to come forth, but we cannot wait for him.

Evans's, in Palmer's student days, though making less pretensions to the magnificent, was every bit as well frequented as now, and boasted much the same style of entertainment. Palmer and his companions would, doubtless, stop to hear the comic song, and, in the small hours of the morning, would be found wending their ways homewards with certain female companions of doubtful reputation.

Strange to say, with nights spent like these, Palmer was, nevertheless, invariably a very early riser. He was particularly nice about his dress, which was neat rather than showy in style. He was quite the gentleman, both in manners and in conversation, when he came in contact with others than his ordinary familiars. His rooms were fitted up in approved medical style; the walls were covered with anatomical preparations and models. It is said that he purchased more of these than any other student, and that the library of medical and other works which he possessed, was not matched by any of his acquaintance. It is said by those who were at Bartholomew's during Palmer's time, that he must have spent, at least, £2,000, while he was in professional parlance "walking" the hospital.

A gentleman who has been connected with the hospital for nearly thirty years, and who well remembers Palmer as a student, gives him the following character:—He says that he was one of the most extravagant fellows he ever knew. The parties at the hospital say that he would give them wine in a tumbler whenever they called on him. Those among his equals who were

friendly terms with him, and perhaps showed him some slight, he would recompense with a most liberal return, in the shape of hampers of game, bundles of cigars, or bottles of wine. Whether his wine-merchant's and his poulterer's bills were, like his grinder's bill, never paid, we have no means of ascertaining.

It is, moreover, recorded of him, that to the poor patients in the hospital he was very kind; he would frequently get up subscriptions for them, when they were on the point of leaving the hospital.

In his anatomical studies he was very backward. Just before going up to the college for examination, he worked night and day at dissecting subjects. On one occasion, when he had been drinking rather freely, and was in a state of some excitement (although not intoxicated) he became so nervous while at work, that he went to one of the porters, and asked him to come and keep him company; saying, that he did not feel quite comfortable over such work alone. "It is very stupid," he said, "but one cannot always control one's thoughts."

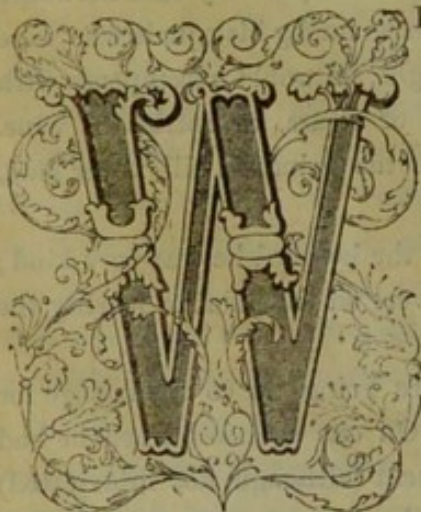


One could not desire a better proof of the progress which Palmer had made in his career of vice and profligacy since his sojourn in the metropolis, than is furnished by the following little fact. It seems that Palmer was very partial to one of the hospital officials, and was very anxious to reside with him. He had both female servants and daughters, and although he liked Palmer well enough in most respects, he felt that he was such a reprobate in the matter of female virtue, that it would be dangerous to admit him within his doors!



## CHAPTER VI.

COLONEL BROOKES AND MRS. THORNTON.—“GOOD ANNIE BROOKES.”



WE now come upon a Family of Suicides.

Of five brothers who successively and by similar means died by their own hands, Colonel Brookes was the last, and it is of him we are about to speak.

A rather reserved and quiet man, gentle in his manners, considerate, liberal, and wealthy, fond of little children, with few associates, and without a wife, he comes to Stafford from India with a debilitated constitution, bringing with him but few introductions; his reserved habit makes him but few friends, and with nothing to boast of personally but a strong animalism, he settles down in a house in what is called the “Front Street,” with a servant maid of the name of Ann Thornton. Almost his only friends at that time were old Mr. Wright, of Stafford, Edward Knight, M.D., Thomas Davis Weaver, solicitor, and Charles Dawson, Esq., a wealthy



druggist, and, as may be supposed, all men with habits totally distinct from those of the quiet, old Indian epicure.

Now, though a gentle-minded elderly man may allow himself to be merely tolerated by his friends, he would rather be devotedly loved by a woman. The Colonel's friends did "merely tolerate" him. The housemaid, Ann, professed affection. He rewarded her devotion by making her his mistress; and his friends, although they still held by him, refused to receive him in society.

In a few months after, defying the good advice of his friends and relations, he removed from the "Front Street" to a large house (one of nine that belonged to him) behind St. Mary's church. In this house it was that Ann Thornton (properly known as Mrs. Thornton) gained a complete ascendancy over the old Colonel. He had originally loved her, he now feared her—she had professed affection only that she might tyrannise over him. He had thought her a lovely kind-hearted young girl, and had only refrained from marrying her because of her utter ignorance and want of position; she had soon ceased to be beautiful, and nothing remained of her former self but her ignorance—which was gross, savage, and complete. The beautiful dream of Ann





Thornton, the pretty servant maid, had vanished; and Mrs. Thornton, tall, thin and angular—a drunkard and foul-mouthed, loose in her habits, and not even true to her old Colonel—was all that remained. It is said that the Colonel's eyes were first opened by finding her dead drunk in bed, shortly before they moved from the "Front Street." Mrs. Thornton, in addition to her drunken habits, was given to wild fits of ungovernable passion. The old Colonel, evidently a man of feeble mind, though strong appetites, would flee from her anger to a neighbouring tavern, and there seek refuge till the storm had blown over. Not unfrequently, however, she would track him to his retreat, and drag him home in ignominious triumph. Indeed, as it is naively remarked in the neighbourhood, "he might as well have been married."

This much is certain, that the poor old Colonel was harassed out of his life by Mrs. Thornton, who was not only an habitual drunkard, and a notoriously bad woman, but was in the habit of chasing him round the room with a knife, swearing she would kill him. So frequent, indeed, were these outbursts, that when at last he was found dead, if it had not been for the Colonel's statements made a day before he committed suicide, she would undoubtedly have been suspected.

It appears, that one afternoon he called upon Mr. Wright, and in the course of conversation told him an anecdote of the Captain of a vessel coming from India, who, being a Freemason, and having inadvertently divulged some of the secrets of his order, was so distressed in mind as to shoot himself in his cabin. "When he shot himself," said Colonel Brookes, "he was in his dressing gown, his slippers, and his cap." The next day the Colonel also shot himself, and he was discovered in *his* dressing gown, his slippers and his cap.

Now, although the Colonel and his mistress were in the habit of living so retired, and although they were not received in society at Stafford, it was not so with their daughter.

Annie Brookes, born in 1827, soon after they moved from the Front Street, was the most engaging little child that can be imagined.

A gentleman who knew her very intimately has given us the following particulars:—

He informs us that he knew her about twenty years ago, when she was quite a child; that she was proverbial for her simplicity, her kindness, and engaging manners. He tells us that she was the general favourite of the town, and that, as she grew in years, her virtues kept pace. Beloved by all who knew her, she acquired the title of "the Good Annie Brookes." She had not an enemy in all the world. Over the death-beds of Mr. Charles Dawson's two wives she gave every one an opportunity of testing her intrinsic kindness of heart, and her vigilance not only by day, but by night, was, considering her age, something more than surprising; at all hours she was present not only to administer medicine, and to perform the duty of a nurse, but to give spiritual consolation in the absence of the clergyman. It was the Rev. Mr.——, of Stafford, who told her that she occupied the place of three—"the clergyman, the doctor, and the nurse."

As a girl, she was very cheerful and fond of company; she was partial to concerts and balls, and was altogether a universal favourite.

When Colonel Brookes shot himself, in 1834, he had already, by a will dated July 27, 1833, bequeathed the interest of some thirty or forty thousand rupees to his illegitimate daughter, and had also bequeathed to Mrs. Thornton, the nine houses in St. Mary's churchyard; but, by a flaw in the will, the property was thrown into Chancery, and Annie Brookes became a ward in Chancery, under the guardianship of Charles Dawson, druggist, of Stafford, and Edward Knight, Esq., M.D., also of Stafford; these gentlemen being the same guardians as were appointed under the will of Colonel Brookes.

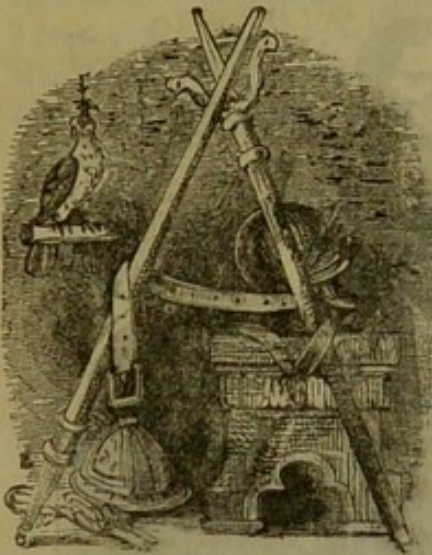
They sent her to school at Miss Bond's, at Haywood; and from the fact of Palmer being



with Tylecote at the time, and Tylecote being a cousin of Dr. Knight's, it has been rumoured that it was here that William Palmer was introduced to Annie Brookes. But we can venture to say that this is not true. Palmer was introduced to her at Abbot's Bromley (on the Bagot estate), the country residence of Charles Dawson, the wealthy druggist; and, indeed, it is said that T. D. Weaver, Esq., solicitor, of Stafford, was the "go-between." A conversation is narrated as passing between Weaver and Palmer on the subject. "Do you want a wife?" says Weaver, "for if you do, I can introduce you to a very pretty little girl, who has got a very comfortable fortune." Palmer said it was the very thing he should like; and the introduction took place. Annie Brookes was then eighteen.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PALMER'S COURTSHIP AT ABBOT'S BROMLEY. SOME LOVE-LETTERS.



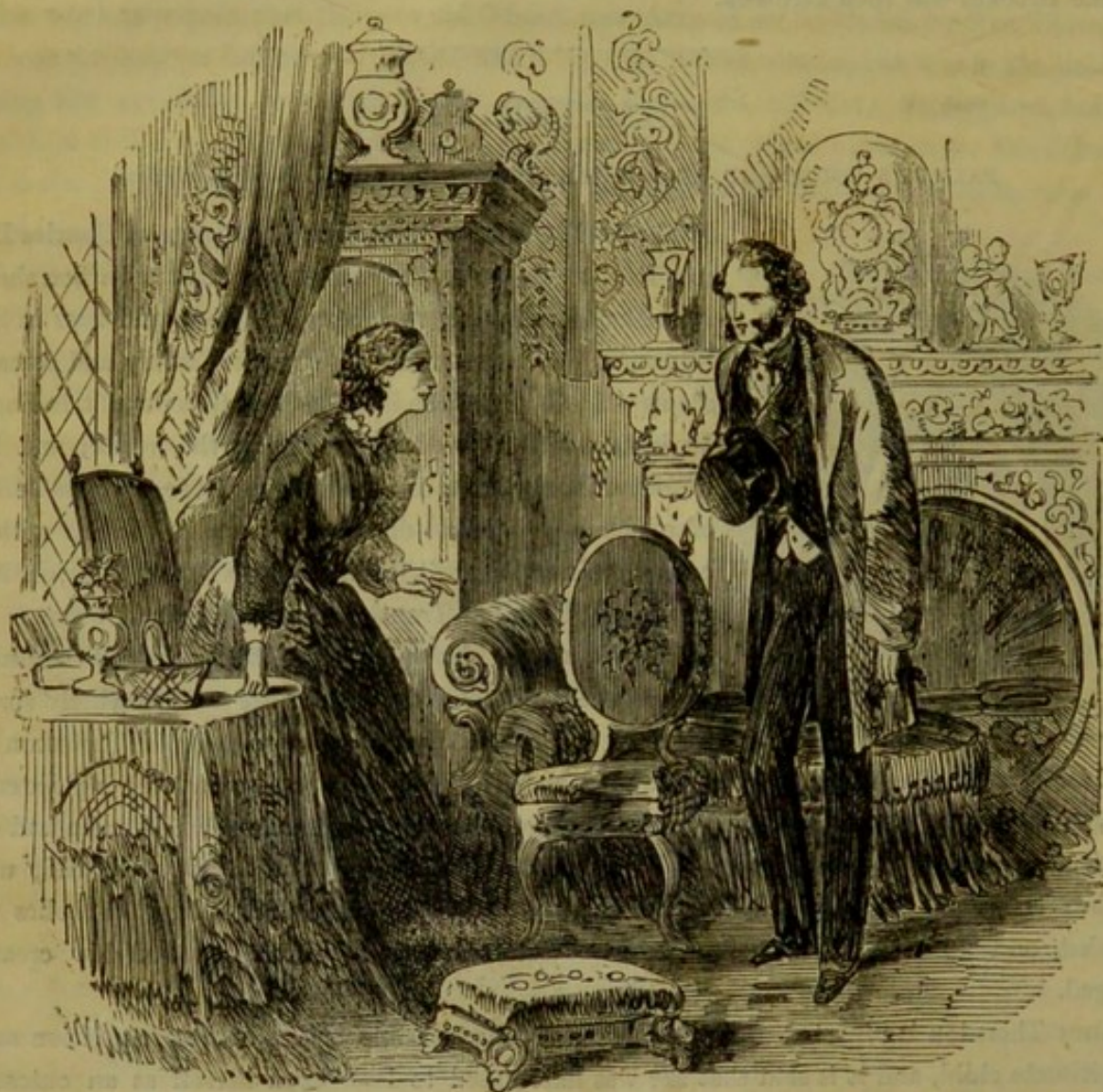
ABBOT'S BROMLEY, the country residence of Charles Dawson, Esq., to which Annie Brookes was removed when she left Miss Bond's school, is one of the prettiest residences in Staffordshire; it is surrounded by the most lovely and romantic scenery that can well be imagined. Adjacent to it is Bagot's Park, famous for the largest oaks in the world; and it is within walking distance of Cannock Chase, with its herbage of a thousand tints—of Shoughborough Park, with its beautiful ferns; and it commands a view of Colwich Nunnery, with the river Trent and its magnificent swans. We wondered, as we drove past all this variety of landscape, amid the bounties of nature which are here so widely spread, whether William Palmer had ever noticed (between the residences of Thomas Salt, the banker, and John Twigg, the millionaire farmer), a place called "Weeping Cross," where criminals used in times gone by to be executed—whether he had ever pictured to himself the well-tended estate of Thomas Salt, stretching far away, a wild, unreclaimed common, with the old Roman Cross before which the Staffordshire Catholics had kneeled, and on to which the Staffordshire clowns had climbed, to see a fellow creature hanged.

Anne Thornton is reported to have been "painfully sensible of her own false position as an illegitimate child, and it is said that she was habituated to look upon herself as an outcast—a being of an inferior order—one who should be deeply grateful to any man who would bestow his name upon a creature unrecognised by the laws, and tainted from her birth. Her first love was unpropitious. But the fountains of that great deep, a woman's heart, had been broken up. The ark of her existence now drifted to and fro, recklessness at the helm, and hope in the hold, until the waters of disappointment decreased, and the keel grated on the strand. Her mountain of Ararat was destined to be William Palmer."

Palmer is spoken of as displaying, at this period, peculiarly fascinating manners when in the society of women. This is not at all unlikely; for he appears to be one of those individuals who make up for the want of brilliant parts by the assumption of a certain superficial amiability, which causes them to be regarded as universal favourites by their own, as well as by the opposite sex.



It was at Abbot's Bromley, and among the oaks at Bagot's Park, that the plausible, soft-spoken William Palmer, fresh from the embraces of one of his many victims round about Haywood, spoke to the unsophisticated girl in the accents of love; it was here that vows of constancy were sworn; and it was here that Mr. Dawson discovered the lovers, and forbade William Palmer to enter his house. It is to be supposed that Dawson cautioned his ward, and, in so far as he could, exposed the man who sought her only for her money; for she rejected him about that time (the latter part of 1845); and it only explains the art and dissimulation which he knew



so well how to practise, when we narrate that he repeated his offer with such effect as to be this time accepted; and Annie Brookes, notwithstanding the strong and continued opposition of her guardians, became (by an order of the Court of Chancery in 1847), his wife.

During these so-called halcyon days of love, innumerable letters, of course, passed between them. We have been so fortunate as to procure three unpublished specimens, which we here lay before the reader.

The two letters subjoined were written to Palmer by his intended bride—the first has no date, and we are unable to suggest one by interval evidence. We may, however, state, that the ‘Bath Post’ on which it is written, bears date the year 1845.



"Tuesday.

"My own dear William,

"Why did you sulk when you bade me good-bye in the park this morning. Mr. D. is always very kind to me, and I should ill requite his goodness by acting directly contrary to his wishes. Come, put on one of your best smiles, and write me a real sunshiny note, for you have made me very unhappy. I shall expect a letter on Thursday.—Ever your's, dearest,

"ANNIE BROOKES."

The next letter bears both date and address:—

"Abbot's Bromley, September 13, 1846.—9. a.m.

"Dearest William,

"I think it was your turn to write, and I fancy that if you will only try and recollect, you will think so too. But never mind, although I have not written, you know quite well that I am *always* thinking of you.

"Mr. Dawson went to London on Monday last, and yesterday Miss Salt came over to see us. We gathered ferns together. I hope you will continue your botanical studies, and allow me the opportunity of puzzling you. I have two secrets to tell you, but these I must reserve for Saturday. I don't mind telling you that I think it is your friend M—who is trying to prejudice Dr. Knight. Miss Salt says she knows it is that very crabbed gentleman, whom, of course, you will now love dearer than ever.

"I have got a present for you, but as it is intended as a surprise, I must not spoil it by telling you what it is. Suppose instead that I tell you something you will not care to hear half so well, namely, that I am ever, my very dearest William, your affectionate,

"ANNIE."





The next letter is from Palmer. It has no year affixed to the date; we believe it, however, to have been written in 1847, as the "other four months" spoken of, apparently relates to their anticipated marriage. The "yard" is the name given to old Mrs. Palmer's place:—

"MY DEAR LITTLE ANNIE,

"Rugeley, May 16.

"It was not the rain that prevented me from joining you at Stafford, as you wished. I sprained my foot, and it was so painful that I could not keep it on the ground. I slid off the pathway as I was turning the corner from the "yard," past Bonney's. Now you know the reason, I am sure you will forgive me.

"Oh, Annie! you cannot tell how dull I have found the last few days; I sit and think over my miserable bachelor life, and feel so dull and lonesome, I really cannot explain. I resolved, yesterday, to write again to Mr. D——, but you forbid me doing this, so I must wait the other four months. My dear Annie, I cannot tell you how much I love you, and how I long to call you mine for ever.

"Yours, most affectionately,

"W. P.

"Did Dr. Knight get the game I sent; did he mention anything about it?"

It must have been rather above a year before his marriage that the letter (which Serjeant Shee read to the jury in his defence, and a copy of which was found in the volume on poisons that formed his favourite book of study) was written by Palmer to his wife. This letter we venture to subjoin:—

"MY DEAREST ANNIE,—I snatch a moment from my studies to write to your dear, dear, little self. I need scarcely say that the principal inducement I have to work is the desire of getting my studies finished so as to be able to press your dear little form in my arms.

"With best, best love, believe me, dearest Annie, your own,

"WILLIAM."

It is, perhaps, as well that we should understand Palmer's precise position at the time of his marriage. He had, after the finish of his education at Rugeley, turned out very badly—he had been embezzler, swindler, and seducer by turns. We heard an old man at Haywood count upon his fingers as many as fourteen girls whom Palmer had got in the family-way. He had, by a foolish freak, been concerned in the death of Abley. An illegitimate child, which a woman in Haywood had by him, died suddenly; and he is reported to have been suspected of foul play. He had been to London and led a very indifferent life, and had only just escaped being plucked. He had at last obtained his diploma, and was, at the time of which we now speak, William Palmer, Esq., surgeon, of Rugeley.

Do not forget that, through all this, he was neither addicted to drinking or swearing; but a cool, cautious, sober young rascal.

Perhaps, like many another rake, held captive for a while by the novel fascinations of a virtuous and really loveable girl, Palmer seriously thought of reforming; at any rate, Mrs. Remington, the person with whom he lodged at this period of his career, gives him a first-rate character. This is what she says:—

"He was a good young man as ever walked; he was with me nearly a twelvemonth; he came to me in October, 1846, I think. I remember he asked me when my wedding-day was, and he said, 'Well, then, that shall be mine;' and so it would have been but for the Lord Chancellor. The wedding dinner was provided for forty, at Abbot's Bromley. My husband and I were to go.

"I never saw him intoxicated but once, and that was one night when he came back from a party.



“ ‘Mamma,’ he said—he always used to call me mamma—‘Mamma, I am very ill; I have been drunk; it is not what I have had, but I have been drugged.’ Those were his very words. He told me, when he was going away, that he had spent the happiest days of his life in my house. He let my rooms, when he was going away, without my consent; and, as I felt rather hurt, he said, ‘Never mind, I have let them to a very respectable man, and I have got you 2s. a-week more rent, for I am sure you deserve it, you are so very kind.’ ”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE TOWN OF RUGELEY.



BEFORE we proceed to speak of Palmer's career since his return to Rugeley with the intention of settling down as it were, and of abandoning all his former bad courses, let us say something about that dull country town which has recently obtained so large a share of notoriety in connexion with Palmer's fearful crimes.

We will take the picturesque description of it, which we find in the “Illustrated Times” newspaper, penned by a special correspondent on the spot:—

Rugeley is a long straggling town of small houses, kept very clean, and occupied by persons extremely well to do in the world. It is about as large as Twickenham, and seems to have been built up without any apparent design beyond the whim of the bricklayer. Commercial travellers say it is a good place for business, and that the accounts “are particularly safe.” It certainly is a peculiar little place, with its cottage shops and red-brick houses, with large leaden lights and big shutters. To those who like bustle and crowded pathways, of course the country quietude of the town would be oppressive and saddening. But to us there is a certain charm in the deserted thoroughfares, when the only persons to be seen are the housewives at the windows, behind the rows of geraniums, plying the needle, whilst the husband is working in the fields. We prefer the noise heard from the other end of the street, of Mr. Wright's hammer, ringing on the anvil to the rumbling of bus and cab wheels under our windows. The young lady on the hot poney standing on the footway of bricks, close up to the shop-door, and giving her orders to the baker's wife, turns nobody into the road, for nobody is out walking, and yet there are plenty of inhabitants—hard working people—who are earning their day's hire at Bladen's brass-foundry, or Hatfield's manufactory.

Rugeley has a Town Hall, which occupies the centre of the Market-place, with its justice-room in the upper storey, and a literary institution and a savings' bank on the ground-floor. It has three or four London-looking shops, and a hundred countryfied ones. There are butchers with only half a sheep as their stock in trade, and grocers that sell bread, and tailors that keep stays and bonnets for sale. It is a very curious little over-grown village, and too pretty to be abused.

Soon after you leave the railway station, and have crossed the bridge by the flour mill, and left Mrs. Palmer's house and the two churches in the background, you come to the Talbot Inn; and, at the bend of the road, near the half-timbered cottage, is the shop of the only



person who has benefited by Palmer's ill deeds—Mr. Keeyes, the undertaker, for he has had the job of getting up all the funerals.

You are now in Market-street, where the new post-office is, which two dashing young gentlemen have come down from London to manage, in the stead of Mr. Cheshire. Already you perceive in the distance the sign-board of the Talbot Arms Hotel swinging over the stone steps before the entrance-door. The Talbot Arms is a bold-faced house, something like a cotton-mill outside, only the windows are too large, with an acre of backyard, surrounded by stables and coach-houses, which no doubt are filled during the horse-fair, but are nearly empty for the remainder of the year. You will most likely see an old gentleman in drab breeches and cut-away coat standing at the door, supporting himself on a stick. That is Mr. Thomas Masters, who has lived in the house for seventy-four years, and rides a brown mare, aged thirty. "We make a good bit over a hundred together," he will tell you, if you like to go and chat with him.

William Palmer's house is in front of the Talbot Arms, that stone-coloured building standing back, as if in shame, a little from the road. It will be a good time before that house lets again. The paper will peel off the damp walls, the tiles will become loose, and the little strip of neatly-kept garden at the back be choked up with weeds before the next tenant takes possession. We should not wonder if that house becomes haunted. However, the property belongs to Lord Lichfield, and he can afford the loss of rent.

Now the shops become bigger, and the stocks-in-trade more extensive. The bookseller's shop, with its fashionable mahogany front of plate-glass, appears to do a thriving business.

Down the first turning to the left, where the foundries are, used to be the post-office before Cheshire was found out. It is an ugly street, like a back street in Manchester, where spinners live. The post-office is closed now; the little slit is blocked up in the black band that occupies the under-sash of the window.

You pass by other shops, and amongst them Mr. Ben Thirlby's, the prisoner's assistant. Here, too, is the crockery shop, where Palmer used to deal; there is the saddler's, where his harness was repaired; there the tailor's, where his clothes were made. Everything in Rugeley is Palmer now. Nothing else is talked of.

We come to the bank where Palmer kept his flickering account; now immense, from the sudden influx of £13,000; now down to almost nothing, from losses on the race-course. They do not seem to work very hard at country banks, for this one opens at ten and closes at three.

Now you are in Brook-street, where the horse-fair is held. It is as broad as Smithfield, and as long as Regent-street, with plenty of room for looking at the horses, even though they should chase down the road like a cavalry regiment. The tall pole facing you is called the Maypole, and although it is as high as a three-decker's mast, it is said that boys sometimes climb up it; but it must hurt their legs, for half way is a quantity of iron hooping.

Now we see Rugeley in its beauty. The houses on both sides are large and comfortable, and country-looking. The trees that line the road give it a country air. The waggon before the miller's door, and the drove of sheep and cows raising the cloud of dust in the distance, are sufficient to destroy the solitude of the landscape. In the far background are the dark hills of Cannock Chase framing-in the view.

"Rugeley," observes an inhabitant to us, "is one of the prettiest places in Europe. The country around is most beautiful for miles. There are nothing else but noblemen's mansions and grounds; and do you think they would come down and live here if it wasn't a pretty spot? There is the Marquis of Anglesey's within four miles—the beautiful desert, as they call it—



Beau Desert, with the most lovely scenery, all along the road leading to it, you can imagine. There, in the other direction, is Lord Hatherton's park and woods, from which half the navy dock-yards are supplied. Oaks, sir, as big round as cart-wheels. Then there is my Lord Bagot's; the finest woods in Europe Lord Bagot's got. Then there is the Earl Talbot's estate, and Weston Hall, and a hundred such. Bless you, sir, compared to Rugeley, Nottinghamshire is a fool to it. Then there's Hagley Hall, within a hop, skip, stride, and a jump of the town—only a mile, with the finest shrubberies in the world; and the Hon. Mr. Curzon is so kind as to allow the people of Rugeley to enjoy them. It's only this Palmer that has set people against the place, or else everybody would be singing its praises."

To the above smart description, we will add a few additional particulars:—

Rugeley contains 7,120 acres, and has a population of 4,500. Its principal fair—the Rugeley Cattle Fair—for which it is so famous, commences on the first of June, and closes on the 6th. The other fairs are the second Tuesday in April, the second Tuesday in December, and the 21st of October.

The Free Grammar School at Rugeley, to which William Palmer went, and which is the only school he ever attended, is supported by endowment from Queen Elizabeth: consisting of land in and about the town, the present annual value of which is about £400. Rugeley has nine schools, all endowed, and belonging to the Established Church. It has one Catholic school, not endowed; and one Wesleyan Methodist, endowed.

The Free Grammar School is a square brick building, surrounded by a high brick wall. Premises have been recently built out from the house, which, from being pretentiously Gothic, are peculiarly unlike the plain square houses they are connected with. The scholars' entrance is through an iron gate. There are some fine trees round the school-house, and holly has been trained along the top of the wall. Very little of the house can be seen from the road, as the wall is very high, and the trees very luxuriant in growth. It stands immediately opposite the grave of Palmer's former friend—John Parsons Cook.





## CHAPTER IX.

## PALMER'S MARRIED LIFE—HIS SHOW OF RELIGION.



ALMER, when he returned to Rugeley, after obtaining the diploma of the College of Surgeons on the 10th of August, 1846, with the view of practising his profession, found, it seems, that patients were not forthcoming.

There was residing at Rugeley at that time a Mr. Benjamin Thirlby (the same individual to whom allusion will occasionally be made in the course of this narrative), who fulfilled the duties of medical assistant to Mr. Salt, a most respectable surgeon of that place. He was familiarly known throughout the county as "Ben at Salt's." Ben had the reputation of being a capital man of business; and Palmer, thinking that if he secured him, a practice might possibly be got together, made the necessary overtures, and was successful. This act of his, as may be supposed, was not, however, generally admired by his co-professionals.

Palmer's marriage with Ann Brookes took place at Abbot's Bromley, on Thursday, the 7th of October, 1847. She was then under age; was clever, amiable, cheerful, pretty, accomplished, and loveable.

Many now speak of her almost with affection, and the poor of Rugeley still deplore the loss of a most sympathising benefactress. The poor old Rugeley sexton says of her: "Mrs. Palmer was a very nice little woman. She was very good to me. I never bought a sock nor a pair of shoes for any little one after my missus died, nor yet for the girl that was in the house. She gave me all that, and many a thing beside that. Many a time she's given me food for the children."

With such a wife, one would have thought that William Palmer would have lived in contented obscurity in his snug two-storeyed cottage, standing a little off the street, with its three square windows above, and one on either side of the door. At that time he was following his profession with steadiness and the prospect of success. His house was furnished with some degree of elegance; he had a handsome carriage, and was not troubled in pecuniary matters. Moreover, he had no connexion with the turf; and, altogether, his former moral delinquencies set aside, was somewhat of a "catch" in this dull neighbourhood.

In a year and a few days after the marriage of William Palmer and Ann Brookes, viz., on October 11th 1848, their eldest child was born. Three months afterwards he was christened, as will be seen by the following extract from the entry in the church books:—

## "BAPTISM.

"January 3rd, 1849—WILLIAM BROOKES, son of WILLIAM and ANN PALMER, RUGELEY Surgeon.

"T. D. ATKINSON, Vicar."

"The above is a true Copy, taken from the Parish Register, this 9th day of June, 1856.

"T. D. ATKINSON, Vicar."

Willie, the child referred to above, is still living, and people speak of him as being remark-



ably intelligent. Four other children, the issue of this marriage, all died in infancy. Three died at a fortnight old, and one at three weeks. They all died in convulsions; and the nurse, Ann Bradshaw, is said to have run into a well-known public-house in Rugeley when the fourth child died, exclaiming, "I'll never go back to that wretch Palmer's house again." "The poor dear child was as well and as hearty as possible, when Palmer comes upstairs and says to me, 'You can go down, Bradshaw; I'll nurse the child for a few minutes.' But in a few minutes the poor child's screams made me run up again, when I found the poor baby had just died in violent convulsions."

There are two things in Palmer's career that would be extremely difficult to reconcile with the rest of his life, were it not for the known hypocrisy of the man.

He was an indulgent husband, and a man who always attended Divine service.

As a husband, he was not attentive, still he was not unkind; so long as no questions were asked as to his goings and comings, his wife might have what she liked, and do what she pleased. He bought her a handsome chaise and a beautiful pair of ponies, which she used to drive about the country with; and if his conduct (other than his long absences) ever gave her cause to complain, it must have been in some way that did not meet the public eye.

We had it from the lips of a female friend of Mrs. Palmer's, that Mrs. Palmer had told her that "she was very happy indeed; she had everything her heart could wish for, or that money could purchase."

Beyond this, we subjoin a couple of well-authenticated anecdotes in exemplification of Palmer's excessive fondness for his wife:—

Mrs. Palmer, and an intimate acquaintance, went (some little time before Mrs. Palmer's death) to London, and from thence to Ramsgate; after stopping a fortnight, they came back. The young lady, Mrs. Palmer's companion, asked Palmer whether they had not stopped too long? "No, indeed," replied Palmer, "I do not think you have stopped half long enough; if you had stopped another fortnight, it would have done Mrs. Palmer a great deal more good."

Palmer went up to London and came back the same day, bringing with him a present for his wife, in the shape of a wicker chaise. Mrs. Palmer was delighted; and said she should certainly ride out in it the next morning.

At this, Palmer was very angry indeed. "How can you think of such a thing?" said he; "the horse is not used to the wicker-work, he might run away, and you be thrown out—why, you might be brought home a corpse, and then what should I do?"

Palmer made a great show of religion: he would travel as much as fifty miles on a Saturday to reach Rugeley in time for Divine service on Sunday; and in his pew he would read the responses louder than anybody else in the church. He was exceedingly attentive; was the only person in Rugeley who took notes of the sermons, which he almost invariably did. In short, if his attendance at church would have gained him a good name, he might be said to have done every thing in his power to obtain it.

Rugeley, though a small place, has yet two churches—the one a "handsome fabric," kept like best clothes, to be used only on Sundays, and the other an old neglected ruin, a kind of every-day building, very picturesque and interesting—that, like an old servant, is allowed to keep its "place" because of past services. The handsome fabric cost a great deal of money, and is kept up in style, with gravelled walks leading to its oaken doors, and the turf about it well swept and trimmed. The deserted ruin is now nothing more than an old square tower, with empty holes for windows, that look deathly as the hollow eyes of a skull, and a large patch of ivy clinging like rags and tatters to its bleak grey sides. What remains of its chancel has



been roofed in with boards, and turned into a Sunday-school, where the children sit in rows beneath and around the old tombs, and read hymns when the mistress is looking, and when her eye is turned away, amuse themselves by watching the flies crawling over the quaint marble tablet of Ralph Weston, or the curiously-carved monument of Johannes Weston, "Senior de Rugeley."

The new church has an insulting air of prosperity about it, and holds its tall turret high in the air, as if it knew it owned more tombstones than its neighbour on the other side of the road. The windows are glazed with diamond panes, all free from cracks, and sparkling in the sun, and its inner doors are of red cloth, new and bright as a postman's coat in May.

The interior of the church is clean, and varnished, with the brown oaken pews ranged against the white-washed walls, and the narrow strip of matting leading to the altar. A long red curtain hangs before the huge window, and casts a warm glow upon the polished sides of the goblet-shaped pulpit.

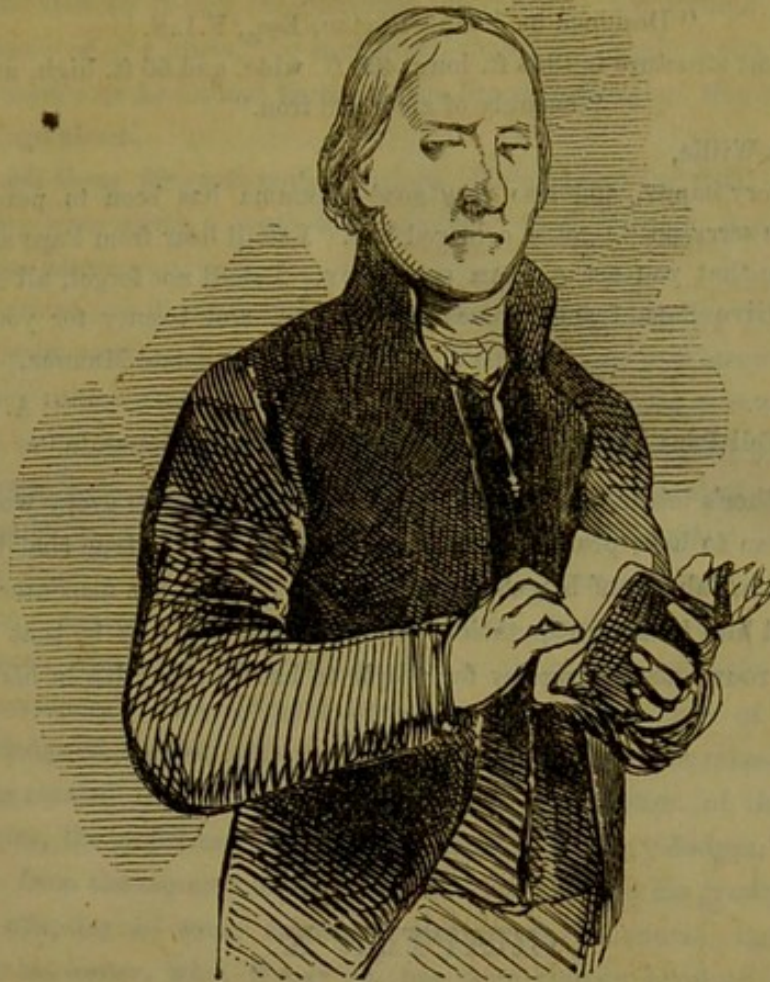
Palmer's pew has a row of dark-covered prayer-books and bibles resting on the ledge in front. On the fly-leaf of one of the books is written, in ink, "William Palmer, Rugeley, August 28th, 1837; the gift of his mother, Mrs. Sarah Palmer, Rugeley." Just nineteen years since he received the present! His father was living then, and the timber-yard was well stocked, and the business going on prosperously. What would the criminal give to call back those years?



In the bible are some pencil-notes taken during sermon time. The following are some of them:—"He was a teacher come from God." "Means—Prayer. God's word all the means of grace. Particular means—Faith in Christ. Faith has an heavenly influence."

Wretched man! Was he acting to the crowd around, when, pencil in hand, he took down these words? Was he hoping that it would be whispered after service, how attentive William Palmer had been to the sermon? Was he using religion that it might turn suspicion from him, and ward off the punishment due to the murderer? Or did he, in the desperation of fear, sincerely pray, hoping by three hours' worship to atone for a poisoned wife and brother? Or was he speculating upon "the forgiveness of sins?"





Palmer was a regular subscriber to the Stafford Church Missionary Association, and in the last report his name thus makes its appearance :—

W. Palmer, Esq. .... £1 0 0

We feel quite satisfied that William Palmer was a thorough hypocrite in religion, and we much question whether he was even a kind father. He would have wished to have appeared so, but he could not. We subjoin a copy of a letter from Palmer to little Willie, which is peculiar for two or three things. In the first place, it is written as if to a grown person ; in the second place, it does not (excepting the conventional commencement and termination) contain a single term of endearment ; thirdly, the commencement is written carefully (almost as if printed)—in fact, as if for a child ; but after the first line, it is evidently hurried over—words illegible, and, indeed, not nearly so plain as his usual hand :—

“ My dearest Willie,

“ Rugeley.

“ As your birthday is Thursday, I shall send for you home to-morrow, and shall be glad if you will ask Mrs. Salt to be good enough to have you ready for the 12 o'clock train to-morrow, and I will send Henry for you by the first train from here in the morning, and

“ I am, my dearest Willie,

“ Ever yours, most sincerely and affectionately,

“ Oct. 9, 1855.

“ WM. PALMER.

“ Please present my kind regards to Mrs. Salt.”

“ Ever yours, most sincerely and affectionately.” What an unfatherly ending—how differently do the letters of Mrs. Palmer read ! Here is one ; it is undated, and is surmounted by a copper-plate view of the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, executed by Arthur Walkley, Brompton, Nov. 9th, 1850. There is an engraved inscription under the view, viz. —



"PALACE OF GLASS FOR THE INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION, HYDE PARK,

"Designed by Joseph Paxton, Esq., F.L.S.

"This magnificent structure is 1848 ft. long, 408 ft. wide, and 66 ft. high, and is built  
"entirely of glass and iron."

"My dearest Willie,

"I hope you are very happy, and also *very* good—Mamma has been to purchase this little picture for you: I was sorry not to get a coloured one. I shall hear from Papa all about you, so let him have to tell me that you are a DEAR GOOD BOY. I shall not forget, all being well, some pretty toy for you. Give Papa twenty kisses for Mamma, and twenty for yourself, and with love ever—

"Your affectionate Mamma,

"London, Thursday.

"A. PALMER.

"Tell Papa I will write to him to-morrow from Ramsgate."

What a tender mother's letter this is—how it breathes affection in every word!

Palmer does not seem to have practised much as a surgeon. It is true that the confusion of names between William Palmer, of Rugeley, and William Palmer, the dispenser at the Stafford Infirmary, has helped him to some reputation that way; but the fact is, that his antecedents were too well known round about Rugeley for people to have much faith in his medical skill.

## CHAPTER X.

### PALMER QUITS PHYSIC FOR THE TURF—HIS RACING ESTABLISHMENT.



HE newly married surgeon either had not the application necessary to succeed in his profession, or else his antecedents were so much in his disfavour, that patients fought shy of employing him. Either his indolence, or the force of circumstance, inclined him towards turf pursuits; and from this time forward he indulged his passion for horses and horse-racing without restraint. Accustomed from his earliest infancy to live among horses—for Rugeley fair is famous throughout the midland counties—he was not long in acquiring the expensive habits and unscrupulous practices of the horse-dealing fraternity. He eventually became an owner and breeder of race-horses, and betted freely and largely.

Among the horses known to have been owned in part of whole by Palmer, the following are the most important:—"Goldfinder," "Doubt," "Mermaid," "Rip Van Winkle," "Polestar," "Chicken," and "Nettle." It is a great mistake to suppose that he had only one trainer, as has been represented; he had two or three.

The stables which Palmer had for his brood mares, are in the outskirts of the town of Rugeley. They present the appearance of a long well-built shed; the roof is thatched, and inside they appear to have been carefully fitted up with iron troughs, &c. In addition to the paddock where the stables are, several fields adjacent used to belong to Palmer, and were used for his horses.



The groom who showed us over the premises, informed us that Palmer never bred any horses to run, that he knew of. "I know," he continued, that "he bought a good many, and gave very large prices for them; he had about three or four brood mares, but there was generally a good many young things about.

"He used to sell them for most curious prices. He sold two for £10. He wanted money, I suppose; but they were worth a great deal more than that, you may depend. He bred some good horses, I can assure you, sir.

"He always seemed to sell his horses for a great deal less, and buy them for a great deal more, than they were worth. I don't think he betted well; he lost large sums of money.

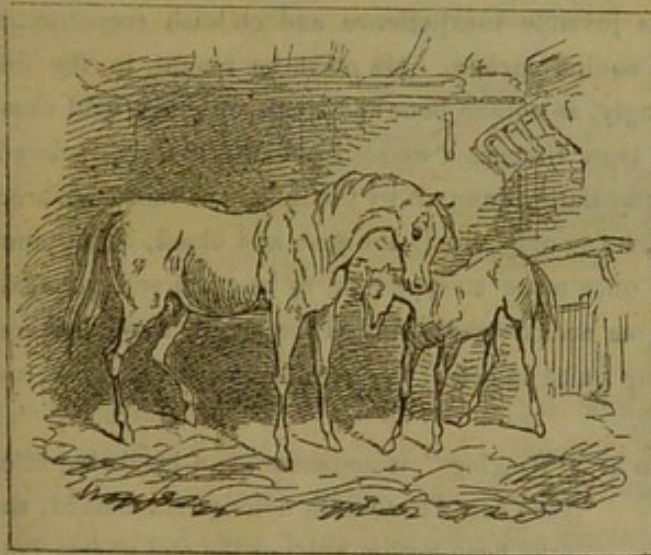
"He was a very singular man. He never changed countenance whatever happened. We used to notice it as he passed by. We never could tell whether he had won or lost.

"Palmer's horses were not all at Rugeley; he had some at Hednesford, at Saunder's, the trainers. He would have three mares at a time with colts at Rugeley.

"He did breed some horses, but he bought many. His race-horses were all purchases.

Those who know nothing about horse-racing except from what they see when the running actually takes place; who go to the Derby as they would to the first night of a new play, and criticise the performances of the different horses as they would those of the actors, without having any knowledge of the difficulties that have taken place at the rehearsals, or ever having been "behind the scenes" in either case, can form but a faint notion of the extraordinary preparations, the cares, the anxieties, the schemes, the tricks, the "dodges," which accompany the racer's career, from the moment of his birth until he starts for his great race.

The colt—the offspring of some celebrated winner—is, of course, the object of the most intense interest to his owner, who, it may be, has been heavily involved by previous losses,



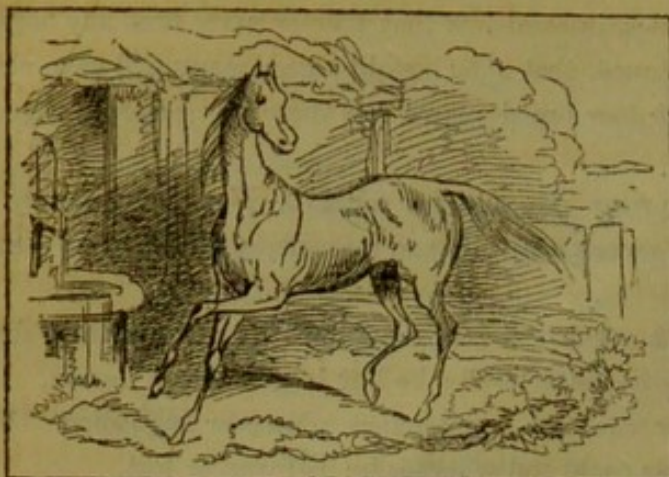
and who looks to this new comer as a drowning man would look to the rope thrown out to save him from the sea of difficulties, the waves of which are closing over him. With breathless anxiety he watches every movement of the colt; eagerly consults the groom upon the chances of success that this new adventure may present; and listens with delight to the flattering prophecies that the High Priest of the stable utters. The groom is satisfied—there never was a colt like this colt—he has known many, and may be allowed to judge. And

if the master will but take his advice and put the "pot on pretty strong," not only will all past disasters be remedied, but—

The picture that he draws of wealth and prosperity to come, is almost too dazzling a one for us to follow. What, though his master has already sunk some thousands, the money is not lost, but invested; and, with a colt like this in his possession, must come back again a hundred fold.

Well may the youthful aspirant for racing honours proudly toss his head as he gallops round the paddock in which his early days are spent. Such interests, such hopes depending on him, who shall dare blame him if, in the pride of conscious importance, he is a little wild, and now and then kicks out playfully and breaks the arms or legs of one or two plebian stabl





What are their vulgar anatomies compared with his importance. His mighty spirit must not be controlled; his high mettle spoiled by contradictions. Send the wounded stable-boys to hospitals, and rub the colt down carefully, and cover him up well at night, lest he catch cold after the exertions that attend the kicking exercise he has just been indulging in.

A name is next bestowed upon him—not, it is true, with any sacred rites, such as attend the christening of human juveniles—but still with solemnity and due deliberation. It is a matter of some slight importance certainly to choose a name, which it is fondly hoped will make a noise in sporting circles, and some day figure at the very head of the betting list. The colt is named, and becomes at once an individual member of society. We cannot look upon him as such before this period: the preliminary description of him by a reference to his progenitors is nothing. Our next door neighbour's little boy, till yesterday, could not be said to possess any individual rights of citizenship, or any personal existence. Yesterday morning he became, for the first time, "little Johnny," and acquired personal standing in society; before then he was only "Mrs. Jones's baby," just as the goods and chattles that surrounded him were Mrs. Jones's chairs and tables.

But we are wandering from the subject of the colt—the future race-horse. The time has come when something must be attempted towards his education. Although, as we have said, his haughty spirit must not be subdued, his juvenile inexperience and childish eccentricities must still be accommodated to the usages of equine society. He must be taught, in the first place, to carry riders on his back. Accordingly, as human bone and sinew, although held cheap enough in all conscience, still costs more than timber, a wooden substitute for a jockey is strapped upon his back. It is, of course, immediately flung off by the indignant thorough-bred. But the "dumb-jockey" as the log is called, being only wood, not flesh and blood, is not much hurt in falling; and is picked up again and once more strapped on, to be again and yet again flung off, until the colt becomes in some degree accustomed to it. Then, when the horse does not rear up, and plunge, or throw, or kick up quite so often, the log of wood is laid aside, and a cheap stable boy placed on his back instead.

About the same time the operation known as "Ringing" is commenced; a bridle is put on



the colt's head with a long rein affixed, and the head groom holding the end of this long rein, forms the centre of a circle, round the circumference of which, the colt, with the "dumb-jockey" before-named on his back, is made to run, to gallop, jump, kick, dance, or plunge, or get round any way he chooses, incited thereto by the occasional application of the groom's long whip. The groom still stands, his eye fixed on the colt, as the

Widdicomb was wont to stand at Astley's, (only that in this place the "ringing" is performed without the rein, except when very young children ride, and have to be tied on with

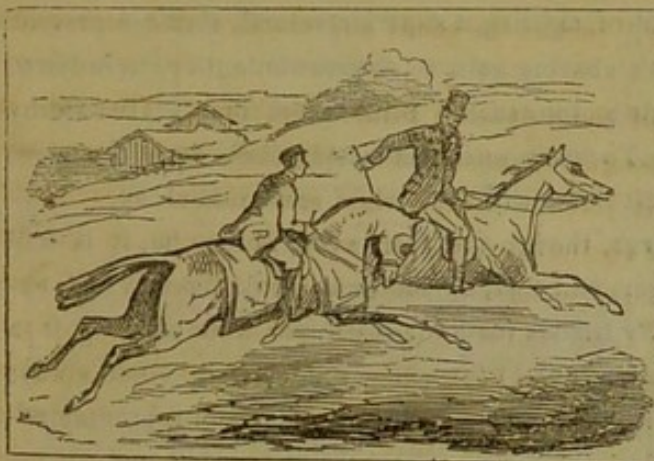


cords, as nearly invisible as possible, so as not to take off any of the spectators' pleasure at the fancied danger). The head groom is usually accompanied by one or more inferior stable-boys, who watch the operation with the same breathless interest that is invariably displayed by Mr. Merriman in the Astley's "ringing" before alluded to.

The colt is now sent to the "trainers," an establishment which may be regarded as a kind of college, for which the practice already gone through has served as a preparatory school. Here, as befits his high position amongst the aristocracy of horse-flesh, the future racer has a private footman or groom attached to his own person, whose duty it is to see to his food, to rub him down, sponge him well, and generally polish him off whenever necessary.

We have likened the trainers' establishment to a college. In one important particular, however, the routine of the two establishments varies materially; for whereas in colleges for the human race, the inmates lead a life that may be called, in some degree, irregular—not to say dissipated, do now and then drink rather too much wine, and smoke more cigars than is quite good for their juvenile constitution; at the trainer's, the quantity of food given to the horse at this point of his education is calculated to the grain of corn, the thread of hay, not one atom being given more or less, than is just suited to produce the finest possible state of health. His drink too, is, if possible, more closely looked to than his eating, and the allowance of water reckoned to the gulp, or "go-down," as it is technically called.

When the colt has been for some time in training, he is taken out for his first run to try his



paces. He is led out with several others, who are formed into a line—or rather let us be technical and say, are put "into the string"—and conducted to the exercise-ground to try a gentle gallop; or, in the language of the training stable, "a pipe-o-peace."

The trainer accompanies them, riding on one side and about the middle of "the string" so as to be able to observe each individual horse's doings. The colts are ridden by their own particular grooms, the trainer

sitting calmly by as umpire of the race.

The greatest care is taken of the horses after the "pipe-o-peace." Their legs and feet are carefully examined to see if any injury has been sustained, or any swelling brought on. They are bathed with hot-water, and then bandaged; and, instead of water, the horse frequently has gruel given him to drink, and a brand mash in lieu of corn to eat. They could not have more care bestowed upon them, even were they reasoning human beings in a workhouse.

But it will often happen that they—we mean the horses in training, not the paupers in the workhouse, by any means—gain too much flesh. This must be brought down by a course of perspiration; we will not use the stable term for it on this occasion, for the word is not a pretty one (it rhymes with "betting.") The horses' allowance of hay is lessened, and extra cloths are put upon such portions of his body (when practicable) as require bringing down. Thus he starts off to the exercise ground, at a good canter, accompanied by two or three other horses, and, on the word being given, away they start at the top of their speed, as though running a real race.

When, in the trainer's opinion, they have galloped long enough, the horse is taken to the "rubbing-house," where more clothing is piled on him, until the perspiration runs





from his limbs in streams. Then the smallest possible quantity of water is given him—from a bottle—just as a refresher after his exertions; his nostrils, lips, and face are well sponged, his body scraped all over, wiped down with wisps of straw, and subsequently rubbed until there is not a damp hair left upon it. A fresh, dry suit is then put on, hood, cloths, and all; another sparing draught of water given from the bottle, and the horse conducted back cool and comfortable to his stable.

During the greater portion of the period that a colt remains in training, his ordinary time of exercise is, on an average, about three hours daily. The exercise, like the food and everything else, is varied according to the individual temperament of the horse; the whole object of the training process being, of course, to get the animal into the best physical condition possible.

But we will suppose the training over, and the horse in the prime of strength and beauty, entered for some great race—we will say the Derby. Now there may be innocent and unsuspecting persons who conceive that after all this trouble and expense in preparation for the great event, there can be nothing but the obvious fact of meeting a superior animal, that can prevent the horse from winning. The owner may think, having gone to so great an outlay, in order to get his horse into first-rate racing order, having, too, such a prize before him as the Derby stakes, must at least *wish* his horse to win. To such unsophisticated minds, the statement, that it is not always absolutely sure that the best horse will win, might seem ridiculous.

And yet, if they would bear in mind that large, though the Derby Stakes may be, it is still possible to make the betting considerably larger, and that, by judicious book-making, and extensive wagers *against* his own horse, (laid by friends for him, of course; were he to do it in *propria persona*, the trick would be expounded at once,) the owner's interest may not always point to his horse's coming first in for the Derby—and it may turn out far more profitable—paradoxical though it may sound—for him to lose than win. Why all this trouble and expense then in the horses' training? To make him look as much like a winning-horse as possible, and lead those not in the secret to lay wagers on him.

And yet, to see the admiring glance his owner casts upon the noble animal—whose impatience to be off almost prevents his jockey mounting him, you could not in your heart believe but that that owner's whole delight was in his horse's powers, his every hope wrapped up in his success. You are not, of course, aware, that the jockey, now struggling into the saddle, has had instructions given him beforehand, to "rope" the favourite—or, in other words, to pull him short up in the middle of the race, and thus ensure his losing.

But even if the owner "runs his horse to win," has backed him heavily, and may per-





chance be ruined if he lose the race; even though, as far as he is concerned, everything has been conducted "on the square," there are a score of dangers that the race-horse has to run before the eventful day arrives. Though men are paid to watch and guard him night and day with the most jealous care, to keep off everything that could by any possibility injure him; though his health and safety are, to all appearance, more vigilantly cared for than that of the infant heir to kingdoms. What if these guardians should themselves find it their interest that their precious charge should lose the coming race? Such things may have occurred ere now. We have heard of a stable-keeper coming like a thief in the night, and when all was still, no eye upon him to detect his doings, administering deadly drugs—not in such quantities as to kill; that would spoil half the chances—but in sufficient doses to remove all possibility of the favourite's winning. This is the operation technically known as "making a horse safe," although we must confess we do not see the "safety," so far, at least, as the poor horse is concerned.

But there are other ways of making horses "safe,"—even supposing that his guards are faithful, and no druggist can approach to tamper with his food. One plan, a most effective one, insomuch as the horse comes even on to the course in full health and vigour, and is more largely backed in consequence—is the so-called "painted bit." Instead of the poison being given in the horse's food, it is smeared on the bit; so when the horse is saddled for the start, and every body looks with pride and hope upon him, the bridle is put on, the "painted bit" is placed within his mouth, and instantly the drug exerts its power. The horse starts, then suddenly foams at the mouth, staggers, turns sick, and ——— loses.

One highly effective method of preventing the best horse from winning, formerly much in vogue, has, we believe, been put an end to by an alteration of the laws of racing. This was the



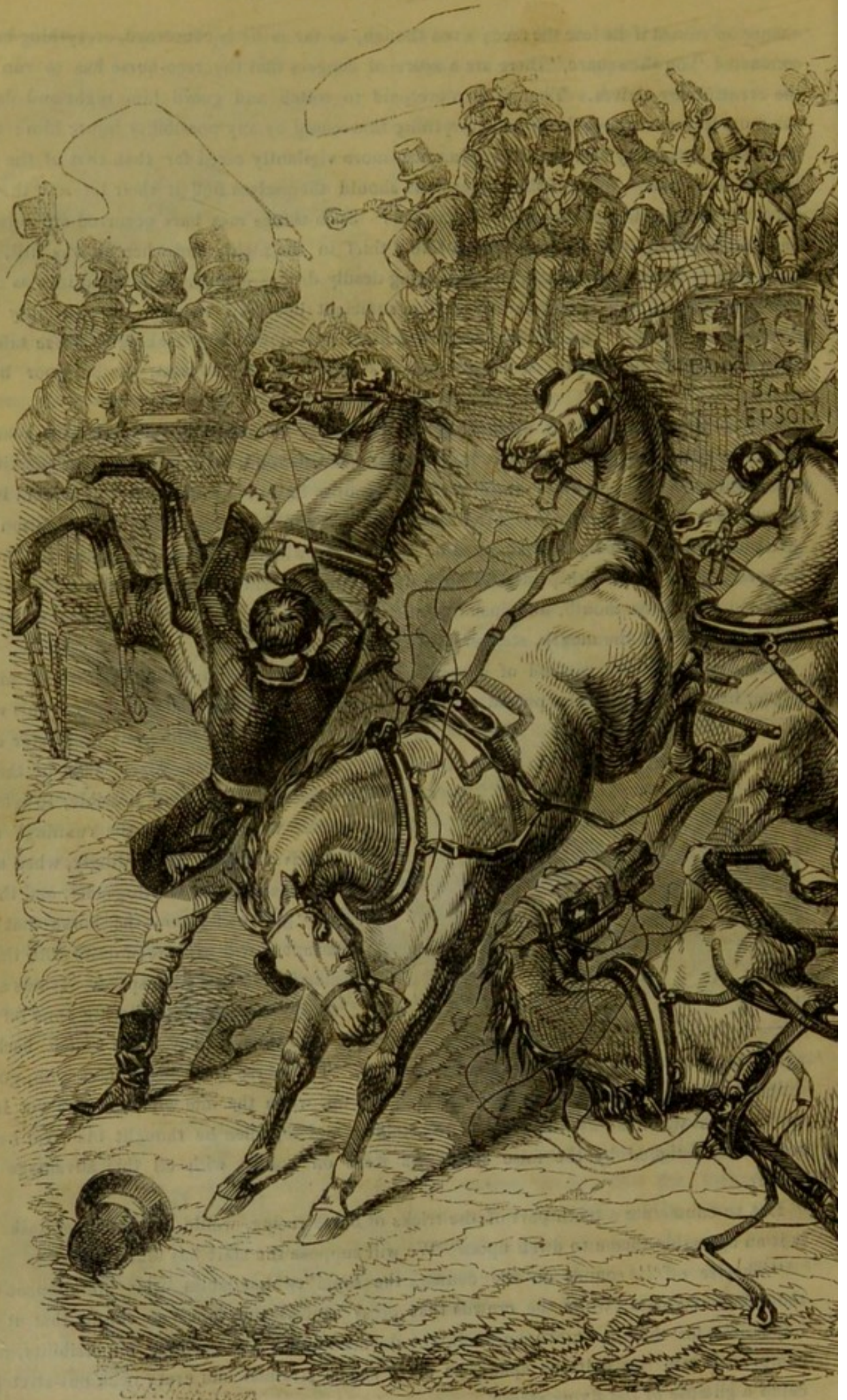
"false start." The same proprietor entered two horses for the race. One of these was intended, if it were possible, to win; the other was to "make the running" against the rival horse. Accordingly, when all were stationed at the starting-post, and the word to "go" was given, the horse that it was meant to win with stood quite still, the other starting off at a good speed. It was a "false start," the whole not having gone off at the same time. They were called back, and

again, and yet again the word to start was given. The horse that might have won, got thus fatigued and irritated by these constant pullings up, while the one who had not yet left the starting-post was fresh as when he left the stable; and so, when he thought his rival had been sufficiently fatigued by the false starts, he went off boldly, with all this advantage in his favour.

But to enumerate a tenth part of the tricks of horse-racing, would be an endless task. Nor is it an agreeable theme to dwell upon. We will suppose the start has taken place.

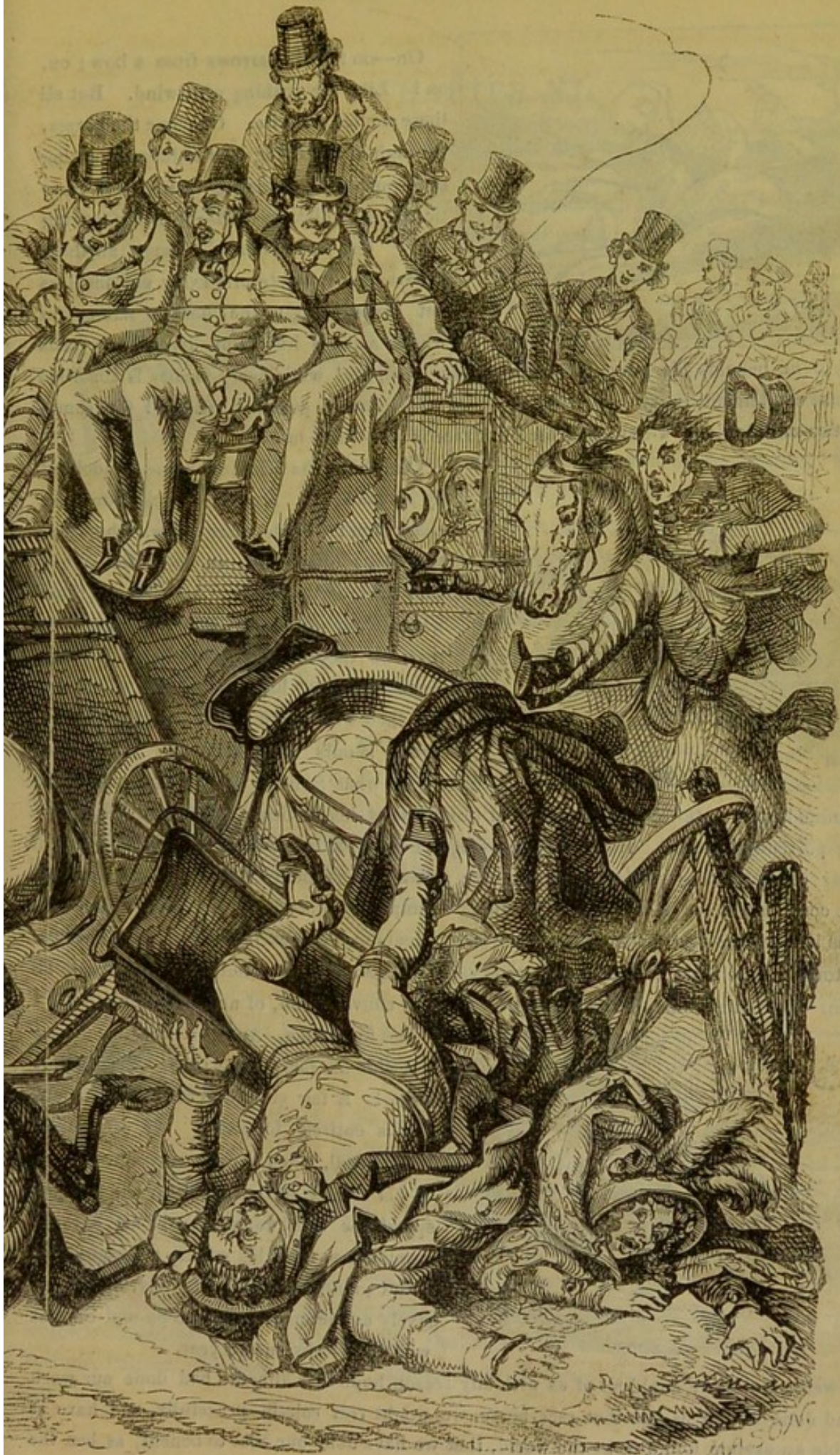
"They're off!" sounds on the course, the same two syllables cried simultaneously by thousands of voices, while the crowds that press against the ropes so closely that it seems impossible for them to move an inch, yet do accomplish the seeming impossibility, and are compressed into one-half the space, as every eye is strained and every neck out-stretched to catch a glimpse of the flying steeds.





PALMER AND PARTY IN



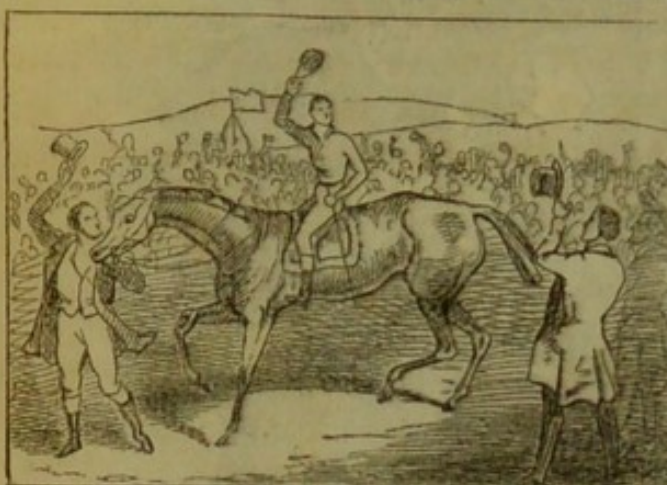


G FROM THE DERBY.





indignantly if he beholds his horse behind the rest. On, on! while every faculty is absorbed in the intense excitement, every nerve strung up to the extreme point of tension! for something like two minutes and a-half, and then the race is won—and lost!



On—on! Like arrows from a bow; on, on! Like the rushing whirlwind. But all these similes are trite. On come the horses, through a long living lane of intently gazing eyes—of wildly-cheering throats—of frantically gesticulating arms—of madly waving hats! On, on! While, amongst all those thousands of spectators, every one screams out encouragingly the horse's name, on whose success his gains depend, or yells

Oh! how the winning horse is idolised by his backers! How they flock round and cheer him! With what pride, what joy, they gaze upon him, as he walks slowly past towards the scales. And what of those who are *not* winners? Poor wretches! It may be they have risked their all—nay, more; they may have risked that which was not their own upon this race. How sound these shouts of triumph in their ears?

With what feelings do they look upon this splendid animal, now walking proudly along in the midst of his exulting admirers. What does his victory portend to them? Ruin, despair, disgrace! Well, let us drop the curtain—and, if we do hear of distressing suicides following the great race so nobly won, let us say nothing. Call in the coroner—swear in the jury. Verdict, “Temporary Insanity,” and there's an end!

The race is won and lost. The idol of the hour is conducted back in triumph to his stable. Fresh victories are in store for him. He wins another race, and yet another. He carries all before him. And, for a time, is the theme of universal conversation, of universal adulation!



But for a time. Another horse comes out and wins his races in his turn. Brief popularity! A few years and the former favourite is entirely forgotten. Or, if remembered at all, when a poor worn out shadow of his former glorious self, turned loose to spend the brief remainder of his days in ignoble ease after his mighty triumphs—he is but pointed at, half pityingly, half decisively as the once celebrated So-and-So that won the Derby such a year.

Well, well; would we could all of us with any reason hope that after we had done our work in life, and done it well as has that race-horse, we might rest calmly, peacefully, and have as comfortable an asylum found us by the world, that we have done our best to benefit, as has the superannuated race-horse.



## CHAPTER XI.

## PALMER AS A RACING AND BETTING MAN.



HAVING initiated the reader into the mysteries pertaining to the breeding and training of race-horses, we now return to our narrative of Palmer's career.

A gentleman, whose name we are not at liberty to mention, but who is well acquainted with the circumstances, furnished us with the following information:—

"Palmer, in the first place, has been on the turf for six years; he was a defaulter five years ago, and it is in consequence of that, that he is not admitted a member of Tattersall's. He was a defaulter again, I don't recollect in what year; but I do know, that, shortly after, he could not run 'Goldfinder,' in consequence. Buxton, of Stafford, and Ashton, of Birmingham,

lent him money to pay his bets. He ran 'Goldfinder' for the Chester Cup, and, with the money he won, bought 'The Hawthornes,' at Stafford, just over the railway bridge, close to Painter's. 'The Hawthornes' is a very pretty place, and formerly belonged to a clergyman of the name of Anglesark. Palmer gave 2,520*l.*; he might have bought it the night before for 1,800*l.*, but he waited for the public sale; told his agent to bid as long as he kept his hand in his waistcoat; when he took his hand out he was the last bidder, and the price was, as I have said, 2,520*l.* He mortgaged it, the very next day, to Cooper, of Newcastle, for £1,600. Palmer let it to Green, all except the land, and that Painter had."

"The Hawthornes" was lately sold to George Spilsbury, Esq., Solicitor, of Stafford, and Clerk to the County Magistrates, for £1,820.

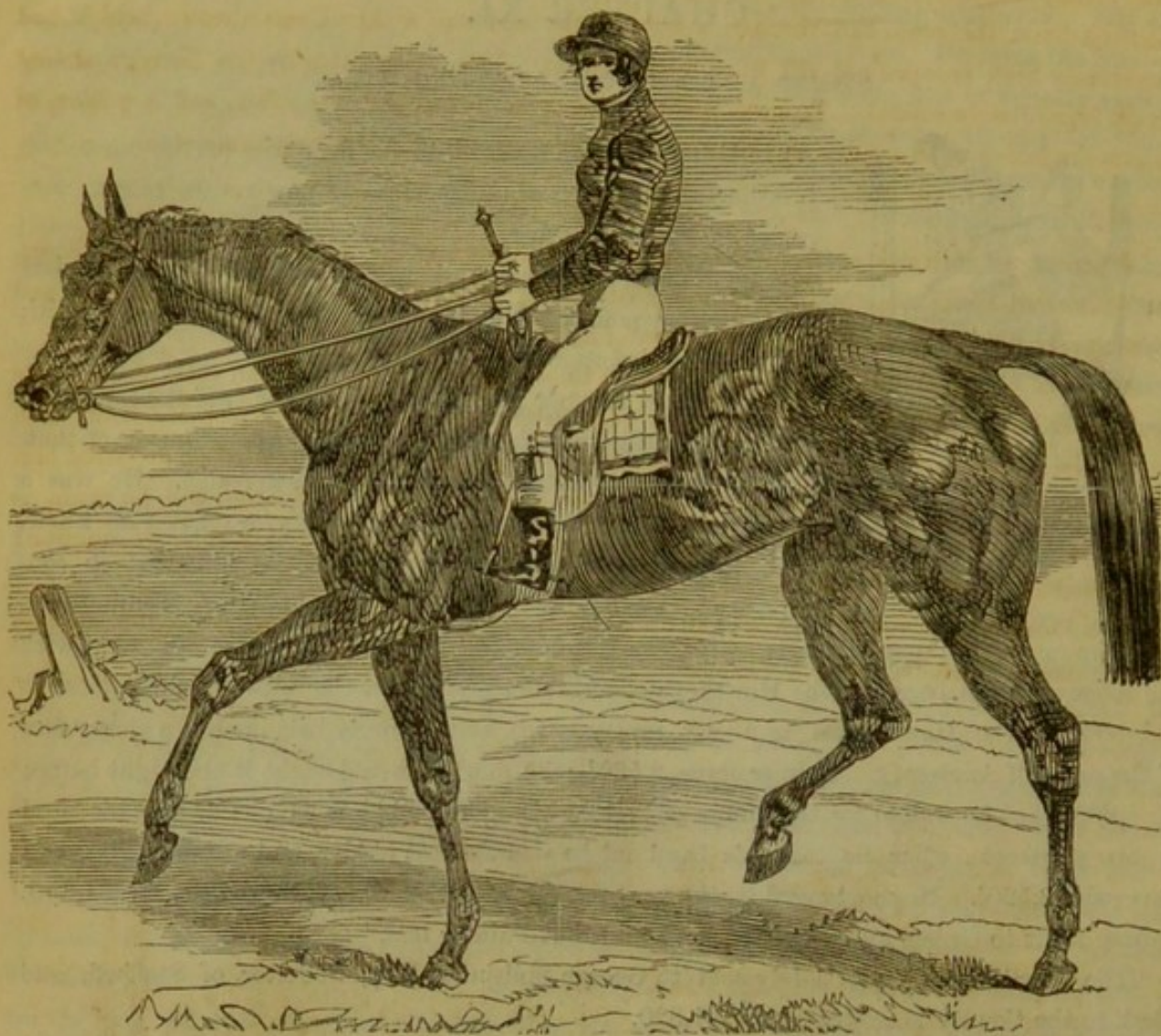
Another gentleman spoke of Palmer as follows:—

"I knew him, sir—I have done business with him—I had a great difficulty in getting my money—he was bad pay, sir—he was not admitted as a member at Tattersall's, nor was he received by the first-class betting men. I've seen him over and over again take his place in a sort of corner immediately under the grand stand just with two or three—and, amongst them, a little dwarf of a man, name of Dyke, who used to stick pretty close to him—but none of the nobs went anear him."

When Palmer ran Nettle for the Oaks, he stood to win a matter of about £10,000. At starting, the betting was 2 to 1 against her. Nettle, while second, just after passing the milestone on the brow of the hill, bolted to the left, fell over the chains, and afterwards made her way down among the furze bushes. Marlow, the jockey, was thrown, and unfortunately fractured his thigh.

Had Palmer won this race, the amount of his gains would have been nearly sufficient to have extricated him from his embarrassments. George Bate dates Palmer's ruin from this untoward accident. And yet when Mr. Dorling at the time commiserated him on his misfortune, Palmer, who seemed almost indifferent to it, merely remarked, "It is a bore though isn't it?"





Among the more disreputable portion of the racing fraternity, there is a practice which is more general than at first sight would be imagined, which goes by the name of "nobbling," and, means, in plain English, the doctoring of horses. Scarcely a race is run at which some cases or other does not occur. Of course the wealthy and unscrupulous betting man, who is the most interested in it, is not at all seen in the matter—he neither brings the poison nor administers it; in fact, he generally contrives to be fifty miles away, while the nobbler, who has quietly bought his favourite drug (possibly strychnia), waits about for days, until an opportunity occurring, the horse is found prostrate in his stable. It is more frequently noticed that the horses are "doctored" rather than poisoned, the object being not so much to kill as to disable.

It is said that Palmer was his own "nobbler," and this, if true, will at once account for nine grains of strychnia known to have been purchased at Apothecaries' Hall fifteen months ago by Palmer and Cook, under a certificate from a London surgeon.

"Nobbling" is a crime necessarily so mysterious, that but few records of it are obtainable; but the following is reliable:—

Mr. John Scott, the trainer, has extensive training stables at Malton, in Yorkshire, and also



a farm adjacent. At the farm, on the 26th of last December, a hack of the name of *AURIFFER* was poisoned under very curious circumstances. It seems that a portion of the farm stables abutted upon the road, and through a hole in the end wall a carrot was thrown, which had previously been scooped out and filled with arsenic. This being eaten by the horse, a violent death immediately ensued. Proceedings were taken to investigate the affair, and a poster, of which the following is a copy, was extensively distributed through the kingdom :—

#### £200 REWARD.

Whereas, on 26th day of December last, a *RACE HORSE* in the stables of Mr. John Scott, at Whitewall-house, near Malton, in the East Riding of the county of York, was wilfully and maliciously *POISONED* by the administration of arsenic.

A reward of £200 will be paid by Mr. Scott to any person or persons who shall discover the guilty parties ; or, if the party who actually administered the poison, will furnish Mr. Scott with such information as shall lead to the apprehension of the persons who incited or procured him to administer the poison, the reward shall be paid to him, and an application will be made to the Secretary of State, to obtain her Majesty's pardon for any person giving such information.

Whitehall House, Malton, February 14th, 1856.

This, however, proved of no avail ; an anonymous letter was received, suggesting that another £100 should be offered—which was accordingly done—but without success.





The detective skill of Mr. Field—the judgment and experience of Mr. Peart, John Scott's "right hand man," were, all alike, insufficient to discover the perpetrator—and we have heard that a reward of £1,000 would have had no more effect, such was the wealth of those who were parties to the crime.

A stranger unprovided with an introduction, and that of the very highest order, to be procured from a racing-man whose character was above all suspicion, might as soon attempt to walk into the Queen's boudoir, as into a racing stable-yard. Indeed, as soon as it is known that any stranger has arrived in the neighbourhood of a training establishment, the precaution of exclusiveness, which are always excessive, are re-doubled. We have heard from a reliable and perfectly authentic source, the following story of the "nobbling" of the favourite for a very heavy stake. The details were procured from the confession of the "nobbler" himself, who was afterwards transported for another crime. One evening in June, a tall, thin, spare-looking man arrived at the only inn in the village of ———, situated between Epsom and Ascot. He engaged a private room, and desired that any one asking for the name of Raven, should at once be shown up to him. Soon after dusk, a broad, thick-set man, dressed in a heavy overcoat, long leather leggings, and a wide-brimmed countryman's hat, enquired for Mr. Raven, and was accordingly shown up to the stranger's room. They were closeted for upwards of one hour; the countryman then retired, and the stranger retired to rest. From his subsequent confession, it transpired that, rising at about 2 a.m., he made his way to the stable in which he knew that the favourite, whom we shall call Blueskin, was installed. With the exercise of much natural agility, he climbed to the top of the stable, removed the slates, cut asunder the battens, and made a passage wide enough to admit his body. Creeping through this aperture he found himself in the loft over the stable, into which latter, he finally descended, sawing through two bars of the rack, through which he dropped on to the straw. His course was now tolerably clear; enticing the horse to him with a handful of oats, he slipped off its muzzle, and instantly pulled forth a twitch, *i. e.* a short thick stick about two feet long, terminated by a loop of stout whiplcord, into which the upper lip of the horse was at once inserted. A twist of the stick then produced such excruciating pain, that Blueskin opened his mouth in agony, and at that instant, Mr. Raven's hand containing the drugged ball, went half-way down the horse's throat and returned empty. Returning, by the same way that he had come, and replacing everything, even to the slates and rackbars, Raven made the best of his way to town, and told his employer of his success. In the race Blueskin was "no-where;" an immense amount of money changed hands, and the secret was never discovered until several years had elapsed.

Some years ago, and before the railroad was in use, Palmer was in the habit of attending the Derby with a friend, whom we shall call Watkins, and an uproarious party, and their return by the road was always made the scene for riot and row. We have heard the particulars of one such return.

The fun commenced at the very edge of the race-course, where a solemn-looking old gentleman driving quietly home in his four-wheeler was hit on the head by a pincushion thrown by a moustached swell on a drag, and, becoming indignant, was immediately assailed with a very frail storm of musical pears, snuff-boxes, pincushions, dolls, and all the variety of "knock-'em-down," prizes. There was a van filled with cheap crockery, a bad investment to bring to the Derby, and that is, of course, immediately stormed. Every carriage, cab, or omnibus that passed was



assailed with chaff, mild in the first instance, but growing stormy and abusive under provocation; long peashooters were produced, and volleys of missiles blown against the windows of the houses in Cheam and Sutton; post-horns, which during the day had, by the simple insertion of a cork in the mouth-piece, been turned into drinking goblets, now once more become post-horns, and blow defiant, sentimental, and drunken notes. Palmer's party were more uproarious than any on the road; and when they pulled up at the Cock, at Sutton, so much additional liquor was imbibed, that even the driver lost his head; and, just before they reached Kennington-gate, ran into a gig, in which a stout old gentleman was quietly driving home with his wife, and, to use Mr. Watkins's elegant expression, "upset the whole biling of 'em." Such an accident as this, however, was but little thought of on the Derby-day, and, after a few minutes, Palmer and his friends were again on their way to town, to wind up a day of excitement with a night of debauchery.

## CHAPTER XII.

SOME SUSPECTED CASES OF POISONING — AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD — MRS. THORNTON — PALMER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW — BLADON, THE SPORTING BAGMAN — BEAU BENTLEY — THE CHICKENS AND THE PILLS — THE YOUNG MAN NAMED BLY.



SOME time after his marriage, William Palmer had an illegitimate child by a Rugeley woman, of the name of Jane Mumford, and he had, in consequence, to pay for its keep. It is related that this child, a little girl, was brought to him that he might satisfy himself that it was still alive; he saw the child, and sent her home again. Shortly afterwards she died.

The case of Mrs. Thornton, Palmer's mother-in-law, is pregnant with suspicion. She resided, as we have before stated, behind St. Mary's church, Stafford, and was a person of rather eccentric habits, not keeping any servants, although possessed of considerable property. Palmer, it seems, came to see her for the purpose of borrowing money; he was in great difficulties from the want of a little ready cash, and it is fair to suppose that he had already tried to obtain some from his own mother; however, he came to Mrs. Thornton, and not only asked her to lend it him, but to come and live with him. She said she had a great objection to lending him the required amount, but a still greater one to living with him. He went away very angry, and the old lady, fearing that her daughter might probably be ill-used, sent him a cheque



for £20, drawn on Salt and Webb's bank, the corner-house in the Market-square; but Palmer, not satisfied with £20, again and again urged her to come and live with him;



and at last, over-persuaded, she went, using these remarkable words previous to her departure, —“I know I shall not live a fortnight!”

Nor did she.

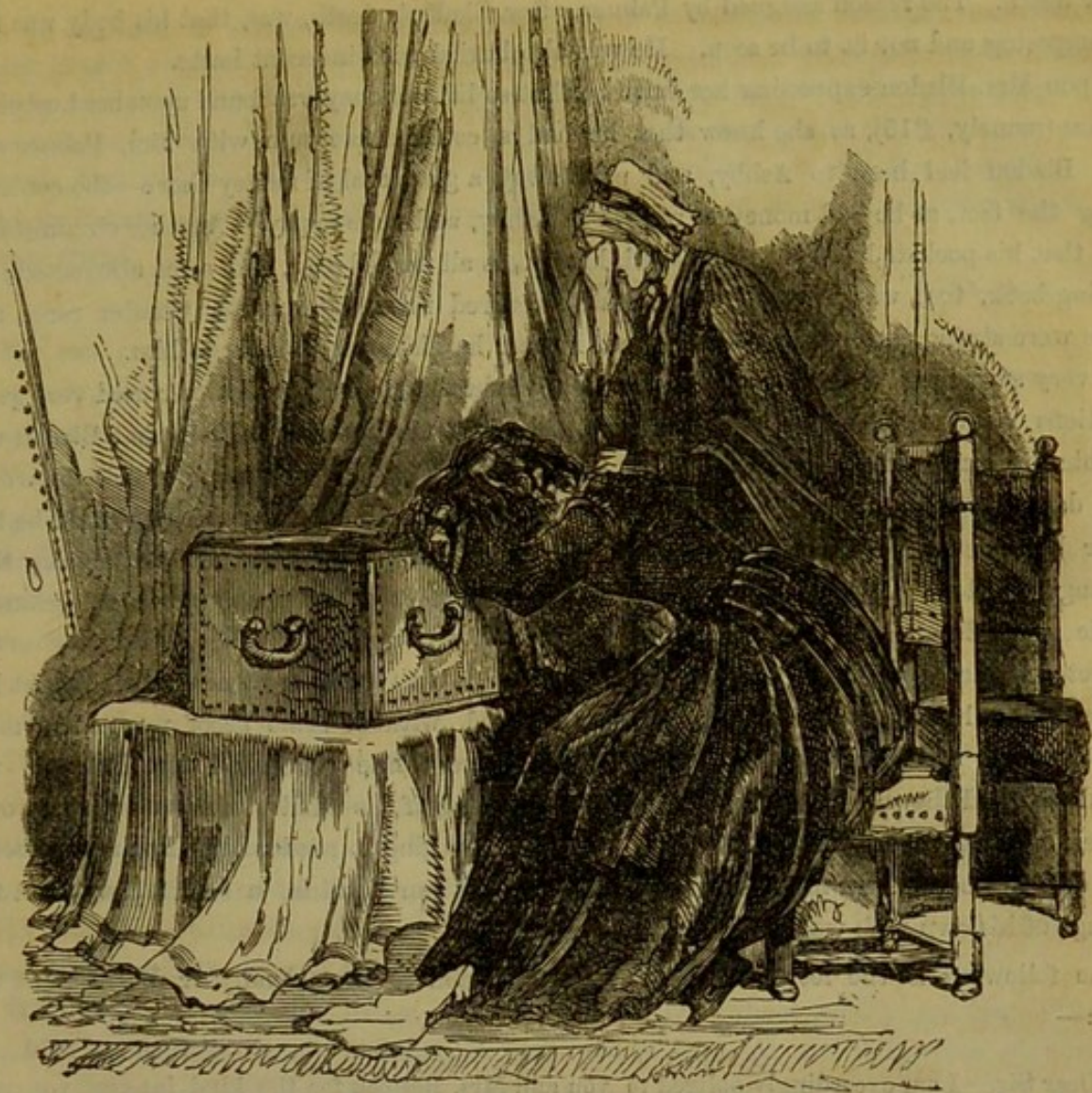
By her death Palmer became possessed of the nine houses behind St. Mary's church; but recently, by an order of the Court of Chancery, he has been obliged to disgorge them in favour of a Mr. Shallcross, proved to be Colonel Brookes's next heir.



Another suspicious case is that of Bladon, who came down to receive some money, £400, it is understood, and never went back.

“Come down,” Palmer is reported to have written, “and you shall have some sport. I will pay you before you go back.”





Mr. Bladon was a native of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and a brother of his still resides there. It was in May, 1850, that he visited Palmer at Rugeley; and, while there, was driven over from that place to Ashby by Jeremiah Smith. They spent the day with a Mr. Bostock, and returned to Rugeley the same evening. Bladon was at that time in good health, though not quite recovered from the effects of an accident he had met with. He had more than £100 on his person, and also a betting-book. In less than a week he fell desperately sick, and after William Palmer and his assistant, and subsequent partner, Mr. Benjamin Thirlby, had exhausted their skill, old Dr. Bamford was called in to "prescribe a mixture." Palmer never sent to Mrs. Bladon to acquaint her of her husband's illness; but a friend of Bladon's, named Merritt, on his return from Chester races, called to see him at Rugeley, and found him in so fearful a state of illness, that he thought it right instantly to proceed to London by the express train, and send her down. She arrived there to find him on the point of death and speechless, and having expressed a wish that her husband's friend, Mr. Bostock, or her husband's brother, should be sent for, Palmer made the excuse that Ashby was a long way off, across country roads, and would take two or three days for the journey, although he knew very well that Bladon had only a very short time before been driven to Ashby by Jeremiah Smith, spent the day there, and returned to Rugeley the same day. There were other suspicious circumstances: for instance, she was only allowed to see her husband for a very short space of time, and was then hurried out of the room, and was not allowed to see him again, neither whilst living nor



after death. The reason assigned by Palmer, after Bladon's death, was, that his body was fast decomposing and not fit to be seen. He was also buried with indecent haste.

Upon Mrs. Bladon expressing her surprise that so little money was found upon her husband's person (namely, £15), as she knew that he had a considerable sum with him, Palmer said that Bladon had been to Ashby, and paid away a good deal of money there—the contrary being the fact, as he had money to receive in Ashby, and none to pay. Another circumstance was, that his pockets had been rummaged, his papers all turned over, and some abstracted; his betting-book, too, was missing. His death occurred immediately after Chester races, and there were strong reasons for believing that Palmer had lost considerably to him.

A very suspicious circumstance connected with the affair was this: Palmer used very great exertions to induce Mrs. Bladon to sign a certain document, which set forth that Bladon was indebted to him in the amount of £59, whereas the fact was the very reverse. This she would have done in a moment had her affairs not been embarrassed, and had Palmer not said he had never borrowed a farthing from her husband in his life. The end of the matter was, that although Bladon's brother, and several of his friends, entertained very grave suspicions of unfair proceedings, and one went to the extent of writing to the police at Rugeley on the subject, yet Mrs. Bladon was disposed to feel pleased with such treatment she thought her husband and herself had received, and was opposed, without some proof more than mere suspicion, to accusing any one of so foul a crime. She counselled Mr. Bostock, the friend who had shewn himself most active in the matter, if his mind was not easy, to go over himself and make inquiries, but to pause ere he did anything to render Mrs. Palmer so uneasy as so dreadful a suspicion must make her, and exhorted him to think, in such a case, what the feelings of his own wife would be, and to consider hers.

The following is the letter written by Mrs. Bladon to her friend, Mr. Bostock, at the time:—

“ June 14, 1850.

“ Dear Sir,—I am exceedingly obliged to you and Mrs. Bostock for the kind interest you take in my affairs, and have no doubt, from the respect you bore my late husband, you would have done what you say; but if you take into consideration the afflicting circumstances I was placed in, with no one of my own friends round me to advise or counsel me, ignorant of the distance (which I considered much further,) bowed down by grief as I was, that I did not act with the coolness of after-reflection. In the midst of my trouble Mr. Palmer insisted on my signing a paper for £59, £50 of which he said Mr. Bladon borrowed of him, and the £9 he said he had paid him for twenty gallons of gin, which he had not received. The gratitude I felt for the kind treatment Bladon had, I thought, received from them, would have induced me to have signed it in a moment, could I have done so without distressing myself; but knowing the embarrassed state of my affairs, which I candidly informed them of, still Mr. Palmer insisted on my signing the paper, urging, if it was not in my power to pay, he would not compel me to do so; and I think I should have been induced to have done so had he not said he had never borrowed a farthing of Mr. Bladon in his life. I knew in that he told a falsehood, as I had seen a letter in which he acknowledged £100, and told him so. From that moment he ceased to insist on my signing the paper, telling me he would make me a present of it; and on Mrs. Palmer coming into the room, from which she had been absent a short time, he told her to throw the paper (which was lying on the table) into the fire. Now, as regards the notions that William and you seem to entertain of his brother's death, I entertained no suspicions. I felt, and still feel, extremely obliged to Mrs. Palmer for her kindness to me, which could not be greater if I had been a relative of her own. Consider how shocking it would appear, without some proof more than mere surmises, to accuse any one of a foul crime, which your letter ore than hints at. If your mind is not easy, go over yourself and make inquiries; but pause ere



you do anything to render Mrs. Palmer so uneasy as so dreadful a suspicion must make her. Think in such a case what the feelings of your own wife would be, and consider mine. That Mr. Palmer has acted unjustly in money matters I have good reason to believe; his letters I have placed in the hands of the Brewery firm, and if they think proper, and that there are sufficient grounds, they will, no doubt, investigate the matter. Thanking you and Mrs. Bostock for your kind invitation, of which I shall be happy to avail myself, allow me to subscribe myself your sincere friend,

“E. J. BLADON.”

We can readily sympathize in Mrs. Bladon's anxiety with respect to Mrs. Palmer. She, poor lady, was dreadfully agitated when she heard of Bladon's death, and exclaimed, “My poor mother died when on a visit here last year—and now this man. What will people say?”

What will people say, indeed! Beyond these deaths, there were also other grounds for suspicion, and rumour, with its thousand tongues was soon at work. People called to mind Abley's case, and then the sudden death of one of Palmer's uncles on the mother's side, under circumstances of grave suspicion. This uncle was one of the Bentley family, and brother to Mrs. Palmer, the old lady, and was known everywhere by the nick-name of Beau Bentley—for he was a great fop, and continued so to the time of his death. His real name was Joseph Bentley. He lived at Longdon Green, near Lichfield. All the Bentleys' were well off.

This man's first wife was a woman of property; she died, and he inherited it. He married again; and his second wife died very strangely. After the death of his second wife, he lived with a woman as his mistress, and by her he had a daughter. Horrible to tell, his own illegitimate daughter fathered a child upon him. From Longdon Green this Beau Bentley moved to Dodsley, near Uttoxeter; and, whilst there, married a third wife. She was a widow at the time, and very badly off, and there is no doubt she took him to get a home.

Whilst Beau Bentley was living at Dodsley, William Palmer went to see him. It is the general opinion that Palmer wanted his uncle out of the way, and it is reported that they drank some brandy and water together, and that next morning Bentley was taken ill, and three days afterwards died.

Palmer has another uncle who is possessed of a good property, and considerably advanced in life. He is a cripple, and consequently confined to the house. Mrs. Bentley, his wife, has always exhibited such care and affection for her lame husband, that her father-in-law, on dying, left her, in case of her husband's death, the property—so Mr. Bentley has no power of willing the estate away so long as she lives. One day, when the old lady was in town at William Palmer's, she complained of not being very well. He mixed her up a couple of pills, telling her to take them that night at bed-time. She, however, feeling better, and disliking pills, determined on “cheating the doctor,” and not taking them. Early the next morning came a message from Mr. Wm. Palmer, to inquire how the old lady was. The messenger appeared very much disconcerted that she had not taken this medicine, and said, Mr. William felt very anxious about her health, and that she was to be sure and take the pills the next night. Instead of that, however, the old lady thought it better to throw them out at the window. Unfortunately, she chose the window looking into the poultry yard, and the chickens, eating the pills, died after their meal.

Here is another case, which is put forward on the authority of the “Norfolk Chronicle:”—

“It seems that a few years ago a young man named Bly, residing near Beccles, had formed an unfortunate connection with the turf, chanced to be professionally attended by William Palmer, either at Rugeley, or at some town adjacent to a race-course, by many said to be Leicester. Bly



had, singularly enough, won largely of Palmer, when he was thus taken dangerously ill. His wife, on hearing from him, immediately hurried to his bed-side. On her arrival, Palmer tried to persuade her not to see her husband. She succeeded, however, in having an interview with him, and he told her he believed he was dying, and after expressing contrition for his ill-spent life, stated, that in the event of his death she was to apply to Palmer for £800 which he owed him. He died shortly afterwards, and after his funeral Mrs. Bly related to Palmer the conversation. Palmer replied, that it was only a proof of the state of mind in which the deceased had died, for instead of his owing him £800, it was just the reverse, the money being due from the deceased to him. He added, that he should never have applied to Mrs. Bly for it, if she had not mentioned the subject to him."

Beyond the above rumours of deaths by poison, it came to be noted as a singular circumstance, that Palmer's children, with the exception of the eldest, all died in earliest infancy. The last of these died in January, 1854. Ere, too, a few short months had gone by, it was destined to be the poor mother's turn.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE ILLNESS AND DEATH OF PALMER'S WIFE.—£13,000 NETTED BY THE TRANSACTION.



It was discovered by the legal fraternity some years since, that the language of Colonel Brookes's will, conveying the bequest to Anne Thornton, was not sufficiently forcible to convey it to her absolutely, but only to give her a life interest in it; consequently, at her decease, it was liable to be claimed by the heir-at-law to Colonel Brookes. Under these circumstances, there would be nothing unusual in Palmer's insuring his wife's life, in order to protect himself from the loss which would ensue in case of her decease. And since her property consisted of seventeen acres of land, valued at between three and four hundred pounds per acre, besides nine houses, and the interest of the sicca rupees—upon however, which he had borrowed largely from his mother—there could be no doubt of his having such an interest in his wife's life as would justify insurance, though certainly not to the amount eventually effected. In January, 1854, Palmer seems to have insured her life for £3,000 in the Norwich Union, and during the following March, in the Sun for £5,000; an insurance was also effected in the Scottish Equitable for £5,000. It is a remarkable fact, that the annual premium on the policies exceeded in amount the income which William Palmer's wife enjoyed in her own right. Supposing her to have died, the greater portion of her income descended to her son. Palmer, therefore, could have had no interest in her life which could have warranted an assurance to the extent of £13,000, though that was only half the amount he endeavoured to effect. In fact, the proposals declined by other offices amounted to more than £15,000.

On Monday, the 18th of September, 1854, Mrs. Palmer accompanied her sister-in-law, Miss Sarah Palmer, to a concert at St. George's Hall, Liverpool. The former lady ventured here in light summer costume, and fancied she took what is commonly called a chill. She slept at





Liverpool that evening, and spent the following morning there. After partaking of a luncheon of cold roast beef, she started with Miss Palmer in the train for Rugeley, and on her arrival there appeared to be very unwell and went to bed. Next morning her husband took up to her room a cup of tea with sugar in it, but no milk, and some dry toast. Soon afterwards vomiting commenced. Whatever substance she received, tea, gruel, and once a little arrowroot, was prepared by the servant girl Eliza Tharm, but administered only by Mr. Palmer, or Ann Bradshaw, a deaf old nurse subsequently called in. On Sunday, Dr. Bamford (aged 82, be it remembered) was sent for, and being given to understand that the case was one of English cholera, though the patient was then suffering from constipation, he prescribed some pills containing calomel and colocynth, and an opening draught. On Tuesday evening he again called, and found that only one pill had been taken, and that the bowels were still unmoved. This was the last time he saw her. She died on the following Friday; and at her husband's request, he, without a moment's hesitation, signed a certificate that she died of English cholera. Another medical gentleman, Dr. Knight—one of the antiquities of Stafford, he being also above 80 years of age—the deceased's very deaf guardian—also signed the certificate with equal facility. He saw the patient twice on Monday, when she was too much reduced to hold any conversation with him. However, her husband supplied the deficiency, and described all the usual symptoms of English cholera. It does not appear that he ordered anything but a small dose of diluted prussic acid to relieve the retching, nor is there any reason to believe that he made any further inquiries on the subject till Saturday, when he heard that the poor lady had expired on the previous day. A third medical man, Benjamin Thirlby, Palmer's partner, likewise saw the sick woman. It was on the day she died, and when she was so completely prostrated as to be unable to answer any questions. Thirlby recommended some arrowroot and brandy, which the nurse promised to give her. In addition to the medicines prescribed by the doctors, it appears that Mrs. Palmer frequently took effervescing draughts, which were given to her by her husband. "They were given in my presence," said the nurse, "in this way:—He brought some clean water in a glass, and a spoon with some powder in it. He put the mixture into the water, and when he stirred it



with the spoon it effervesced. It looked like the ordinary effervescing draughts, and Mrs. Palmer used to say that they were very refreshing, and did her more good than anything else. She took these draughts two or three times in the course of the day."

During the illness of the poor woman, her chief, and indeed only anxiety appears to have been for her little boy. When the clergyman came to visit her and to pray with her, she asked his prayers on her dear child's behalf. Of five children, the fruits of her marriage, he, the eldest born, was the only one that survived, and he had ever been to her a source of deep anxiety. Whether or not any dark suspicions ever crossed her mind as to the cause of death of her other dear babes, it is impossible to say. One lady, however, relates that while staying with Mrs. Palmer at the sea-side, whither she had gone for the benefit of her health, speaking of her child, she one day said, "My dear boy—I hope he is *safe*!" and then, quickly recalling her words, she exclaimed, "I mean, I hope he is *well*."

Shortly after the poor mother's death, Palmer placed the little fellow, then between six and seven years of age, under the care of Mrs. Salt. When he brought the child to her, he appeared greatly affected, and, with tears in his eyes, said, "I have brought dear little Willie to you. It was Annie's desire, and I wish to carry out my dear wife's last injunction, which was to place him under your care."

The nurse tells us that when poor Mrs. Palmer was at her last gasp she rang the bell, and Mr. Palmer came up. "He did not quite come round the bed. I said to him, 'I fear Mrs. Palmer is dying.' He appeared very much hurt, and went out into the next room, and returned again directly. I think that then she was gone. After she was dead, I stayed with her twenty minutes. I went into the next room to Mr. Palmer. He appeared quite unconscious of what had taken place. I asked him to take a little brandy. Upon this he looked at me, and said, he thought that he had been asleep, rubbed his hands, and he appeared a little better." Palmer chronicles his wife's death in his diary in this wise:—"Sept. 29th, (1854) Friday—My poor dear Anne expired at 10 past 1." Nine days after he writes—"Oct. 8th, Sunday—At church. Sacrament." The mortal remains of his dead wife were laid beside those of her mother and the sporting bagman, in the family vault of the Palmer's in Rugeley churchyard. According to all accounts, at his wife's funeral, Palmer appeared to be greatly distressed. The first time too that he saw Mr. Dawson, after his wife's death, he seemed very much depressed in spirits, and said, crying, "My poor Annie is dead; I shall not stop long after her!" Nine months subsequently, however, when his maid-servant, Eliza Tharm, gave birth to an illegitimate child in his own house, and of which there is little doubt he was the father, people naturally enough thought this grief had been assumed for the nonce.

We have heard it stated by people who knew William Palmer well, that although he most probably murdered his wife, he was nevertheless undoubtedly fond of her; but his aims and desires were so low and debased that he could not afford to let her live.

Mrs. Palmer being dead, application was made to the various insurance offices, who paid the amounts without a murmur, though not, it appears, without some suspicion; for it has since come out that the London manager of the Norwich Union communicated with the Sun Office, and suggested withholding payment until a full inquiry had been made into the circumstances attending the death of the deceased. The directors of the Sun Office, however, thought that, as three medical men had signed the certificate, pronouncing Mrs. Palmer to have died of diarrhoea, they would not be justified in postponing payment. Acting upon this impression, the Norwich Union and the Scottish Equitable thereupon paid the money. Nevertheless, suspicion was rife in the town, and the matter was even hinted at by sporting men far away from



the county of Stafford. One old Yorkshire trainer was heard to observe at the following Epsom meeting: "Hoi's noa going to win Oakes as hoi poison'd woife." Shortly afterwards, at Newmarket, too, where Palmer, as a betting man, was well known, an old man, in answer to an inquiry about Palmer, observed: "What, do you mean Palmer of Rugeley? Oh, yes, I know him; the man whom the little boys in Rugeley say poisoned his wife. Mind, it's only the *little boys* in Rugeley say so; *I don't.*"

Many people who knew Mrs. Palmer well, thought, that for some time preceding her death, she had become rather proud. They now believe that it was melancholy that made her so reserved; she had seen her children die, one after the other; and, after the death of Bladon and her mother, she instinctively seemed to dread the fate, seemingly reserved for herself and her boy.

## CHAPTER XIV.

PALMER FREED FROM HIS PECUNIARY DIFFICULTIES—HIS MAID-SERVANT ELIZA THARM—  
A FASHIONABLE "HELL" AND CASINO.



THE money received from the Insurance Offices was soon swallowed up in the discharge of pressing liabilities; the larger portion of the amount going into the hands of Mr. Pratt, a West End lawyer and bill-discounter, who had been advancing Palmer money from time to time, at ruinous rates of interest, on bills presumed to be accepted by Mrs. Palmer, sen. The death of the wife relieved him, therefore, from a load of pecuniary embarrassment, and, what was of equal consequence, it left him at full liberty to gratify his sensual appetites perfectly uncontrolled.

Eliza Tharm, the maid-servant, openly stated several months since, that she was certain Palmer would have taken improper liberties with her before his wife's death, if she had only given him encouragement. Whatever may have been the relations existing between the parties during the life-time of Mrs. William Palmer, Palmer's diary leaves us in no doubt as to the nature of their relations subsequent to this event. Whether or not he spent the night following his wife's decease in the guilty embraces of his servant-maid, is known, of course, only to themselves; but it is certainly pregnant with suspicion, that nine months afterwards Eliza Tharm gave birth to an illegitimate child in Palmer's own house.

Eliza Tharm was a pretty-looking girl when she first went into service at Palmer's. She was good-tempered, quiet, and unassuming, and was at all times doatingly fond of little Willie, never even checking him for things for which, in the words of our informant, "anybody else would have even shaken him well."

Palmer's racing pursuits, of course, continually carried him away from home, and much of his time was necessarily spent in London in reference to his betting transactions, and to procure the discount of "Sarah Palmer's" bills. It is not to be supposed that when a man of Palmer's temperament arrived in the metropolis on occasional excursions for betting purposes, that he

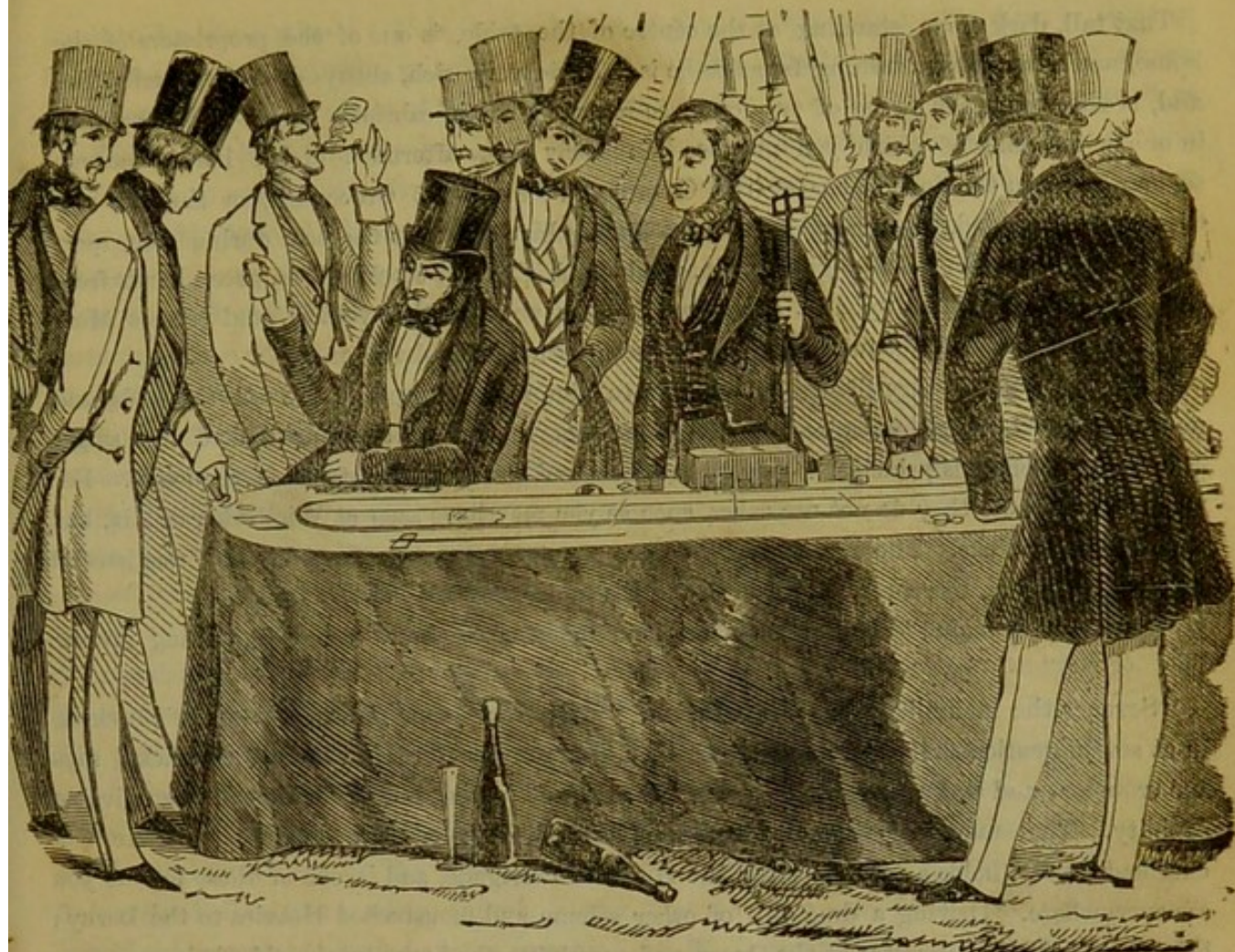




remained quietly in the coffee-room of his hotel until eleven o'clock, and then retired to bed, or that he favoured Exeter Hall or the British Museum with much of his company. On the contrary, though a small drinker, he liked good living, and had a taste for all those *quasi* loose places of resort which, although there is really nothing particularly objectionable in most of them, are seldom, if ever, hinted at before the female members of those families by whose sons and brothers the establishments in question are principally supported. Palmer, however, we are informed, did not confine himself to frequenting merely those places of public resort which most provincials, during a trip to London, seldom fail to visit. He required the excitement of the gambling-table or the equally vicious betting-room. With the first of these phases of London life we have the best of grounds for stating him to have been familiar, and he is well-remembered, as an occasional visitor, at certainly one first class 'hell,' in the aristocratic neighbourhood of St. James's-street, the characteristic features of which we will attempt to describe. It is a house with the usual bright fan-light over the door, with a couple of police constables generally standing in front of it, one on either side of the doorway. Some years ago the son of an eminent statesman, recently deceased, lost a very large sum of money in one of those places, and, since that time, the doors of all suspected gaming-houses have been watched by the police. They are supposed to take an accurate account of the number of persons who enter, their style of dress, and apparent position in life.

The chances are, that one or both the peelers will wish a quiet "good-night" to those who pull the ivory knob communicating with a spring bell that does not make the usual clatter, but sounds only once; and for that "good-night," should the visitor win, he will perhaps tip the peeler half-a-crown as he emerges into the cold grey light of morning. The sergeant passing on his rounds will, perhaps, see the coin slipped into the hand of his subordinate, and, in return for his "good-morning," will, in all probability, be paid with a cigar. On





the gay spirits of the metropolis do the proprietors of houses of this stamp mainly depend, and many little perquisites like these solace the arduous duties of the west-end night-policemen.

No sooner has the bell sounded, than, as in the story of the White Cat, the door is opened by an unseen hand; and, on the entry of the visitor, it is immediately closed behind him he finds himself faced by a second door, panelled with iron, and covered with green baize, with a small square aperture in the centre, at which a gleaming eye appears; he is recognised—an iron bar is swung back, two bolts withdrawn, and, having ascended a flight of most softly-carpeted stairs, he finds himself face to face with the mysteries of a London gambling-house.

The first floor is generally the portion of the house in which play is carried on. The basement may be a tailor's or bootmaker's shop; the mysteries of the upper regions have never been penetrated, but the drawing rooms contain the real Lares and Penates of the proprietors: and very handsome rooms they are; brilliantly lighted, warmly curtained, and plentifully mirrored. The table spread out in the back-room is covered with cold fowl, ham, tongue, beef, and salads: these, with wines, spirits, and cigars, are provided gratuitously; indeed, the more a visitor drinks, the better pleased are his hospitable entertainers.

He will generally find a knot of men lounging in the door-way, and discussing racing matters—(what an odd thing it is that your horsy-doggy-kind of men always congregate in door-ways!) this he will break through to make his way to the play-table, which is an ordinary billiard-table, furnished with pockets, cushions, &c.; and yonder, in the corner, stands a rack of cues—an arrangement which has been adopted recently, in consequence of the frequent visits of the police. And now let the visitor look round at the company.



That tall, dark man, standing at the centre of the table, is one of the proprietors of the house, and a handsome, dashing Israelite he is. He is very rich, always dresses to perfection, and, besides being the owner of two or three racers, keeps a cabriolet and a mail phaeton; in one or the other of which you may see him nearly every afternoon in the Park; and you seldom go down to dine, either at the Crown and Sceptre at Greenwich, or the Star and Garter at Richmond, on a Sunday, without finding his "trap" at the door during some portion of the evening. Idiotic guardsmen, would-be-aristocratic stockbrokers, green hands from the universities, and fast youths about town, have paid for that vehicle, and honest Moss gives them a subdued, but intelligent, nod of recognition as he drives in it.

The sharp-looking, wiry little man, opposite to him, is the croupier. He calls the odds, and never makes the slightest miscalculation; sees that the proper sums are staked at a single glance; and helps his principal to pay the winners and sweep up the stakes of the losers. For this latter purpose they do not use rakes, such as you may have seen at Wiesbaden or Aix, but small hooked sticks. The rakes would be too *pronounced* in the event of any magisterial interruption; and, moreover, from the size of the table, they are not required.

"Seven's the main!" shouts that tall, blond moustached, handsome man, taking up the box.

"Seven's the main!" repeats the croupier; "make your game please; the castor's backing in at seven, gentlemen!" Down comes the box, out roll the dice: "Eleven's the nick," says the croupier; and stakes are swept up, winners paid, and a fresh main called with inconceivable rapidity. That man with the dice-box in his hand is the type of a certain class. He is of excellent family, holds a commission in the Household Brigade, and is one of those fellows you see everywhere. Driving a drag full of other solemn and moustached Heavies to the Derby; leaning against the orchestra at the Opera, and examining the house by the aid of his enormous *lorgnette*; bestriding a beautiful horse in the park, or ponderously waltzing at Almack's; he is always "about." He does not come here for the purpose of increasing his income, or even for the sake of excitement; he has to pass the house on his way home from his club, and having a horror of going to bed, looks in merely to pass another hour.

Of a very different stamp is the man next to him, the old *militaire*, with the tightly-buttoned frock coat, well-clipped grey whiskers, and carefully brushed hat. They call him "the General," for he is an old Indian officer with a small annuity, to which he largely adds, by a systematic method of play. He is a regular attendant here; is never ruffled or put out; and is reckoned to win on an average three sovereigns a night.

That heavy-eyed, dissipated-looking man in the brown great-coat, was once one of the gayest spirits at Cambridge. Brought up to the church, he conceived a violent disgust for a quiet life, and determined on entering the army. Play, that dreadful demon, which had cast a cloud over his otherwise brilliant college career, pursued him still; he became irretrievably involved, and was at length compelled to sell his commission. Since then he has existed, one can scarcely tell how; but, from the terms on which he appears to live with the proprietors, and from the fact that he is always seen here—the first to risk his few shillings at the commencement of the evening—he is believed to be an *employe*; or, what is commonly termed, a "bonnet" of the establishment.

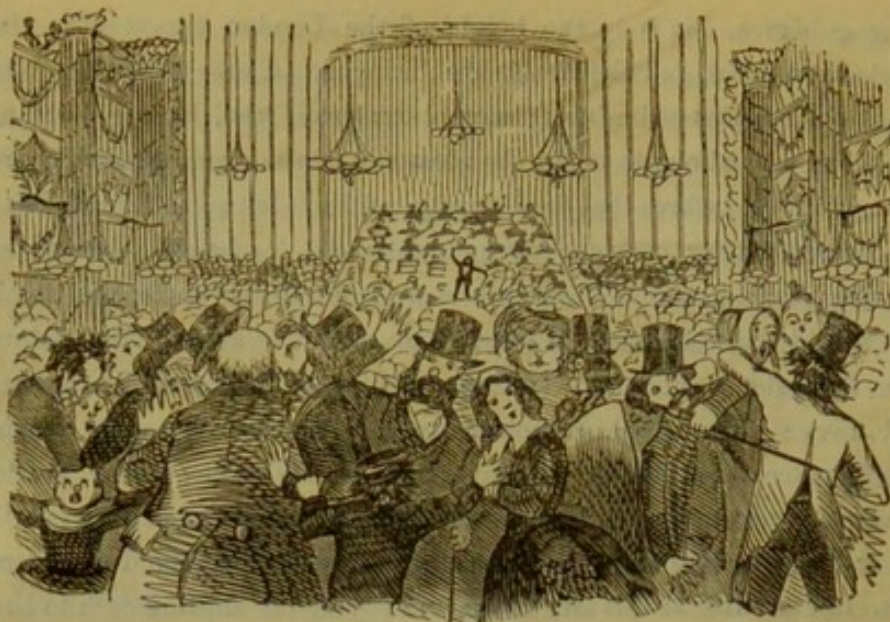
This is a fair description of one of those particular night-houses in which we *know* that Palmer occasionally passed his time when in London.

If the reader is desirous of being introduced to another favourite place of resort where Palmer, while in London, was frequently met with, we will give him the opportunity of visit-



ing it under our guidance. It is in the height of the London season—the time is between nine and ten o'clock at night, and the streets are thronged. Clerks returning homeward, after a long detention at their places of business; men about town, who, having dined at Simpson's or the Wellington, have turned out to begin the pleasures of the evening; thrifty matrons bent on making cheap purchases before the final closing of the shops; milliner girls toiling under heavy oil-skin-covered wicker baskets; young gents and 'prentices released from behind the counters of the neighbouring shops, dressed in excruciatingly bad taste, and smokes cigars, the odour of which would cause Messrs. Hudson, Benson, or Bryant, to faint; stout, broad-built, florid-faced men from the country, in wondrous-cut clothes, and hats, the long nap of which is all ruffled and awry; pale, roughish-looking men with sunken eyes; sharpers from the neighbouring billiard-rooms; shining beggars, male and female; dirty, shoeless boys, with brooms, with which they make vast pretence of sweeping nothing, at the same time imploring a trifle for "poor Jack"—all these fill the streets, and go eastward and westward in two ever-flowing streams. Let us enter at this large door, and paying our shilling each to the money-taker, proceed into the vast hall. How warmly it strikes! What a crowd there is! and what a dust arises! For an extra sixpence we can ascend into the reserved seats, and the money will not be ill-expended in escaping all the warmth and the crowding. Now let us look around us. At the further end of the gallery, and built across the hall, you see the orchestra. In it there are fifty performers, and the gentleman conducting it, in the white choker, standing upright in the midst of them, is M. Henri Laurent, the lessee of the establishment. The band is judged by *connoisseurs* to be the best in London for dancers, and is highly patronised too; for not only are its strains devoted to the enlivenment of the shilling public who frequent the Argyll Rooms (for it is to that locality, indeed, reader, that we have introduced you), but Majesty herself condescends to trip it to tunes composed by M. Laurent, and at every ball at Buckingham Palace his band is stationed in one of the principal rooms. A polka is going on, and looking over the balcony, you will perceive that nine-tenths of the mass let in the hall below is in motion. In capital tune, in the most decorous manner, the dance is carried on. You, gentle reader, from Bolton-le-Moors, might find it difficult to perform many terpsichorean feats with your hat on, and with your hand clasping the knob of a thick walking-stick, as well as your partner's digits; but the *habitué* of the Argyll scorns such slight matters, and can perform his favourite steps even when encumbered with the thickest poncho or the stoutest umbrella. You will perceive that there are several masters of the ceremonies, distinguishable by their levee evening dress, and by the gaudy rosettes on their coats, and that the slightest impropriety is instantly repressed—to the great astonishment of M. Cabriole, from Paris, the rival of Brididi or the Count Chicard, whose agile jumps and explanatory gesticulations are immediately cut short by the authorities. Here, in the corner of the gallery, you perceive a buffet for refreshments, but if you are not particularly thirsty, we would caution you to wait until you retire, as cheapness is not an item that has been overlooked by the proprietor in his catering. And now for the company: Here, in this gallery, where the more select are supposed to congregate, we have seen Peers of the realm, Officers of the highest rank in the army and navy, leading Members of the House of Commons; aye, and Judges of the land! This young man, lounging idly on the velvet-covered seat, and apparently absorbed in the conversation of his companion in the drawn bonnet, though in reality settling the curl of his moustache in the gilded looking glass; opposite to him is an earl and an officer in the Household Brigade. He has dined late, as usual, and has just come in here to kill an hour or two. He is utterly stupid, but perfectly good-natured, and is regarding with much more astonish-





ment than disgust the costume of his neighbour—one of Swan and Edgar's young men, who talks much louder, gives himself a great many more airs, and is altogether much more haughty and imperious than the peer. Mark those three men standing together in the corner of the gallery, heeding neither the dancing nor the crowd, but deeply engaged in their conversation. These are the men with whom Palmer associated while in town; turf-men, gamblers, legs, set forth in every line of those deeply-marked faces, every leer of those deep-set eyes—set forth in their cutaway coats, and trousers fitting tightly to the leg; in their bell-shaped hats, their blue and white neck-ties, their queer jargon, their muttered oaths.





## CHAPTER XV.

PALMER'S BROTHER WALTER—HIS HABITS—HIS ILLNESS—THE INSURANCES ON HIS LIFE—THE BOTTLES OF POISON IN THE STABLES OF THE JUNCTION INN—WALTER PALMER'S DEATH.



LIVING at Stafford was a brother of Palmer's, named Walter, who was possessed of his own unhappy taste for racing and betting. He was a great heavy drunken man, and seemingly very simple-hearted. He selected for his occupation that of a corn-merchant; and, when about sixteen, was placed with Messrs. Procter and Co., of Brunswick-street, Liverpool; and, after remaining with that firm for some years, he left Liverpool for Stafford, and entered into business in the latter town as corn-factor. He was at this time a great favourite amongst the members of the trade in both Stafford and Liverpool. He visited Liverpool on business weekly, and was well-known on the

Corn Exchange amongst the merchants generally. He married, in Liverpool, Miss Milcrest, a lady-like and accomplished person, still most pre-possessing in appearance, the daughter of a Liverpool ship-builder, and possessed of an income of £450 a-year. Her sister had married Mr. Joseph Palmer, and strongly dissuaded her from entering such a family; of course, in vain. Devoting more time to his betting-book than to his ledger, he became bankrupt in 1849. But, beyond his betting propensities, he was the slave of the most intemperate habits, and it cannot be a matter of surprise, that under these circumstances the union proved an unhappy one. While residing in the Isle of Man he had an attack of *delirium tremens*, during which he attempted to cut his throat. With great reluctance Mrs. Walter was compelled to separate from him, for, in spite of the unpleasantnesses resulting from his habits of indulgence, they seem to have been attached to one another.

Stafford, we have said, was Walter Palmer's place of residence. This ancient town, which has since obtained a painful notoriety in connection with his suspicious death, appears, when first seen from the railway, to be built of red bricks, with slate roofs, and a tall, square, white church tower standing up in the midst of them. Around it are flat meadows, covered with water, for the farmers are just flooding their fields to manure them. This takes away from the liveliness of the landscape, for the big patches of shining water give it a greasy look. The river has divided itself into about twenty rivers, making each ditch a stream, and it rushes tearing along with its yellow water as if it were mad, and in a hurry to throw itself into the Trent below.

Stafford is an ancient borough and market town, celebrated for its red bricks and for its shoes. It has about 13,000 inhabitants. It is a very ancient city, and used to be called Betheney; it was built in the year 219, by Ethelfleda, "the heroic widow of Ethelred, Earl of Mercia."

The town of Stafford contains some of the oldest and newest houses in the county. The new ones are in red brick, and hurt the eyes, like staring at a fire; but once cross the long wooden bridge, with the white railings (built by the railway), turn round by the flour mill, and follow the lane until you come into Greengate-street, and there you will find all the old houses standing on a row on both sides of the street, jumbled together, "the tall ones next the small ones," of all manner of different heights—some four, some two storeys—and with all



manner of shaped roofs—some high and pointed, others broad and sloping, with heavy carved gables. To be sure, the jeweller's house has been "repaired" in stucco, and adorned with wreaths over the windows and doors. The Dolphin Inn has also been newly done up and beautified: and they both look like bold-faced upstarts beside their ancient, respectable brethren, and seem cold and miserable in their coats of white paint, next the rich brown wood-work and warm-coloured plaster of the half-timbered houses.

There is a house next to the market-place, with a big forehead, that hangs half-way over the pavement, with large bay windows, like four-post bedsteads let into the wall. The yellow oaken beams that show through the plaster work, are arranged in all manner of lines, tattooing the body of the house with a half-savage grace. The firm of Jenkinson and Co., large linendrapers, occupy the premises now, and the shop window is decked out with every article "that fashion can require, or beauty desire," as the advertisement says. Festoons of pink and blue riband hang elegantly from side to side, and yellow driving-gloves are ranged in straight lines across the panes. At the entrance door is placed, like a stand of arms, a bundle of umbrellas; whilst, through those immense bay windows on the first and second floor, you can see piles of blue hat boxes, tall slabs of linens, and square canvas blocks of unpacked goods, bound round with bands of iron, as if to keep their figures in.

The Town Hall is a big Portland-stone building, situated far in the square, with a clock stuck up against it like a target. It is not a pretty building, for it has no more ornament upon it than a sheet of writing paper—indeed, the windows are more like holes than anything else. But then it has old houses, in their cocked-hat roofs, on each side of it, all half-timbered, till their fronts seem slashed like a soldier's uniform: and they impart to the square and the pale stucco dead-wall of the Town Hall a kind of dignity as if you could judge a house by the company it keeps.

Walter Palmer was, during his residence in Stafford, in the habit of frequenting the Bowling-green. Like the general run of drunkards, he had become very reserved in his habits, and would walk up and down for hours without speaking, except to his most intimate friends. That the reader may see what manner of man he was, we may mention that he one night took Mr. Yates and another friend home with him, and after dinner produced champagne, and made them dead drunk. He had a very thick glass for himself that held scarcely anything, while they were treated to glasses so thin as to hold twice the quantity.

In December, 1854, less than three months after his wife's death, William Palmer appears to have entertained the design of insuring Walter Palmer's life for no less a sum than £82,000. Proposals were made to six offices with this view, as follows:—

The Solicitors' and General . . . .	£13,000
The Prince of Wales . . . .	13,000
The Universal . . . .	13,000
The Indisputable . . . .	14,000
The Athenæum . . . .	14,000
The Gresham . . . .	15,000

Total . . . . £82,000

Of the six proposals above-mentioned, there is evidence that four of them, at least, namely, the Solicitors' and General, the Prince of Wales, the Universal, and the Indisputable, were intro-



duced directly or indirectly by a Mayfair solicitor, named Pratt. The Prince of Wales office accepted, and he gave his cheque for £710 13s. 4d., receiving back £106 12s., as commuted commission. A Mr. Greville, a solicitor in St. Swithin's-lane, brought the proposal to the Universal Office, and told the Secretary (Mr. Impey) to send the acceptance paper to him, and the policy and the renewal notices to Mr. Pratt. Mr. Greville also requested Mr. Impey to allow him to withdraw the proposal if the directors of the Universal resolved to decline it. The proposal referred to Mr. Waddell, surgeon, of Stafford, as medical referee, and to Mr. Cheshire, the postmaster of Rugeley, as a friend who had known him for some years. Mr. Waddell reported Walter Palmer to have been, on the 5th of April, "healthy, robust, and temperate;" but added in a note under the head of "Opinion on the Life"—"*Most confidential.* His life has been rejected in two offices. I am told he drinks. His brother insured his late wife's life for many thousands, and after first payment she died. *Be cautious.*" The proposal to the Indisputable Office originally came through a Mr. Webb, who said that a friend of his, a solicitor in Old Boswell-court, was requested by Pratt to get an insurance effected somewhere for about £14,000. Mr. Robertson, the secretary of the office, said he would make inquiry; and inquiry having been made, the proposal was declined. The united premiums upon the six policies, taking them all round at £5 9s. per cent., the per centage charged by the Prince of Wales Office, would amount to £4,469 per annum, a sum which it was very improbable that William Palmer could have paid, considering that he had to get a bill for £1,500 discounted by Pratt, to enable him to pay the premium on the Prince of Wales policy. On the 31st of January Pratt wrote to William Palmer, stating that he had got the £13,000 policy from the Prince of Wales, and that it was now all right. In other letters to Palmer he cautions him against pressing on the other insurances too fast, adding, "What would the Sun or Norwich Union say (these offices had not then paid the claims made upon them in respect of the death of Mrs. Palmer) of your speculations, if the Solicitors' and General Office were to offer them any of the risk?" The proposal was made to the Gresham on the 28th of July, 1855; but the office refused to accept it, unless upon the condition that no claim should be made, under any circumstances, for five years.

Walter Palmer was very anxious to have his life insured, as his brother William had promised to lend him a sum of money as soon as the insurance was effected. He had no idea, however, of the amount of the proposals that had been sent in. Mr. Waddell, the surgeon, who very properly gave the confidential caution to the Universal Office, says—"I met him out walking about the middle of July, when, in a conversation I had with him on the Castleknoll, he stated that he owed his brother William £400, and he wished to repay it; that I had prevented him insuring his life several times; that I must be aware his habits were entirely altered; that he then only drank three glasses of bitter beer in the day, and that he eat like a 'thresher.'"

Walter Palmer was not long, however, in relapsing into his usual drunken habits. Dr. Waddell again met him:—

"Well, Walter," said Dr. Waddell, "how are you now?"

"Why, lad, I'm very bad indeed," replied Walter; "I shall never get over it; I'm a very wretched man."

"Nonsense! nonsense!" said Dr. Waddell, "I'll guarantee your cure, if you will only obey my instructions."

"Well, I think not," continued Walter, shaking his head; "but my brother William is going to bring me over some pills to-morrow."





DR. WADDELL.

"Then," said Dr. Waddell, decisively, "if you take medicine from any body else, even your own brother, I give you up. Good morning."

Immediately after which his brother William removed him away from his lodgings in Earl-street, close to Dr. Waddell's, to a house beyond the railway station.

Walter is not seen for some time, till Waddell runs against Walkenden, who has a mourning band round his hat. Says Dr. Waddell—

"Good morning, Walkenden; and pray who have you been putting under ground?"

"Poor Watty," replies Walkenden.

"Poor who?" returns Waddell.

"Walter Palmer; I have just come from the funeral."

We can imagine the astonishment of the medical man, when he heard of the death of the patient whose health he had only the other day guaranteed. He was terribly shocked and cried out, "I will let the Assurance Office know of this," for the doctor had a presentiment that there had been foul play.

How the matter came about was in this wise:—It was in April, 1855, while these assurance proposals were flying about like hail, that Walter Palmer was removed from Earl-street, Stafford, to Castle-terrace, close by the railway station. A man named Thomas Walkenden, a broad-faced, powerful-looking man, with a singularly flat countenance and coarse features, received some 30s. a week to live with him. Walkenden's chief business seems to have consisted in supplying his friend and master with gin. Sometimes there was a cask in the house, but more frequently a bottle was procured as required. The average consumption exceeded a quart per diem, and a bottle, perhaps, three-quarters full, was placed by his bed-side every night, with a water-jug and a glass. Not unfrequently the wretched man would toss off half a tumbler of raw spirits at a gulp, and then turn quite black in the face. At an early hour of the morning Walkenden took him a cup of coffee, which he would swallow and cast up again. Then he would "set himself up" by drinking three or four glasses of gin and water. He was constantly complaining of pain all over him, but particularly





THOMAS WAKENDEN, WALTER PALMER'S BOTTLE-HOLDER.

under [the shoulder-blade; he also coughed every morning very severely, and expectorated a great deal.

The following statement respecting Walter Palmer was taken down from Walkenden's own lips:—

"As Mr. Walter Palmer felt he was falling ill, he repeatedly begged of me, in case I saw he was likely to have another attack of delirium tremens again, not to take his gin from him, as I did at my own house; for he said, 'If I had only had my gin then when I wanted it, as I had before, I should not have been half so bad as I was.'

"When he had the delirium, I would not give him any gin, because Dr. Waddell said he was only to have two or three small glasses a day. But I used to see that he was sinking, and perhaps I would give him a glass or two more than Dr. Waddell directed, when I saw there was any necessity. But what was I to do? the poor fellow used to beg and cry for it as if it was his life.

"He used to do all he could, and be cunning to get gin. One morning, after I had been sitting up with him all night, I thought he was so ill that he could not possibly leave his bed, and we went down stairs to the kitchen, which was under his bed-room. Whilst I was eating a little breakfast, I heard a noise overhead. 'Why,' I said, 'that sounds as if he was out of bed; but it's hardly possible.' I ran up stairs, and I found him crawling on his hands and knees, and searching for something under the dressing-table, in the same place where formerly he used to hide his gin, to prevent us taking it away from him. 'Halloa, sir,' I said, 'what are you doing there?' 'I cannot find it,' he answered. 'No,' I replied, and never will; and I lifted him up in my arms and placed him again in bed. He used to hide his gin bottle in all sorts of places—under his bed-head or under his mattress, or in his boots, or anywhere."

Mr. John Burgess, innkeeper and spirit-merchant, residing at Dudley Port, supplied spirits for the use of Walter Palmer, and also wine and porter. He commenced supplying him on the



13th of February, 1855, and continued till the end of July. He supplied *nineteen gallons* of spirits in that interval! The orders were given by Walkenden, and he was paid partly by Walter, and partly by William Palmer.

On the 3rd of August, Walter Palmer went to Liverpool and saw his wife, and remained with her for five days, keeping perfectly sober while his bottle-holder was no longer at his elbow. He returned on the 9th, and went to Rugeley, and spent the day with William Palmer. It must have been on this very day, or, at any rate, about this time, that he wrote the accompanying letter to his wife:—

“Castle-terrace.

“My dearest Agnes,—I left you last evening, and did feel I possessed a light heart; but on my arrival at Warrington I found the South Express was three-quarters of an hour late, owing to the flood washing away arches, &c. I was lonely—only myself in the carriage. The rain on my arrival was incessant. Thanks to God I had not very far to go. I have been home to-day; am truly sorry to say mother has been very unwell, but is better. I told Sarah you was going to the concert on the 27th, and she wishes to go. Please to write to her, and she can come with me. If I should bring little Miss Barber, you won't be jealous, dear, will you? But I don't know whether we shall meet or not. I should like you to know one steady and sensible creature upon earth, but not a teetotaler on principle. She says, ‘I never drink one glass of wine in twelve months, and have, therefore, no occasion to be a teetotaler.’ I will write you to-morrow, and explain a few little secrets. Good night, God bless you, and ever believe in the affection of

“WALTER PALMER.”

On Sunday, the 12th, Mr. Day, the surgeon, called at Castle Terrace, and found William Palmer there, and Walter Palmer intoxicated. He called again in the afternoon of the same day, when the door was opened by William Palmer, who said that his brother was so noisy and intoxicated there was no use in seeing him. On the following day, William Palmer went to the Wolverhampton races. On the Tuesday, Walter also went to Wolverhampton, accompanied by his evil genius Walkenden, and met his brother on the race-course. William Palmer has the following entry in his diary:—“14th August—Went by Stafford to see Walter; came home by gig from Wolverhampton.

George Whyman, assistant to Mander and Co., wholesale chemists of Wolverhampton corroborated on a subsequent day this entry in the diary, but suggested this little unpleasant addition to it, viz.: that William Palmer came to their shop on that day, between a quarter past twelve and a quarter to one o'clock, and purchased an ounce of prussic acid and some other articles of him. This statement Palmer firmly denied. Strange, however, to say, Tom Myatt, the “boots” at the Junction Hotel, Stafford, who knew Palmer well from his constantly calling at the house on the occasion of his frequent journeys to and from Stafford, was confident that it was on this day that Palmer gave him two bottles, wrapped up in white paper. “I could tell from the feel that they were bottles. They were about four inches long. He told me to keep them till he asked for them again, and not to expose them to the air. He came afterwards, on the same day, and fetched them away. He was away about an hour, and when he came back he told me again to take care of them. He said nothing more that day. He called the next morning and asked me for them again. I brought them down to the stable to him. He took one of the bottles out of my hand, and, taking a very small bottle, about one and a-half inches high, he poured a little of what was in it into the larger bottle, and then back into the smaller bottle. Mr. Lloyd, the andlord, came in when we were there, and I walked out of the stable door and left them together. Mr. Palmer only took the very small



bottle with him, and left me the others to keep for him. In the evening he came again, and told me to put the bottles in his gig."

The landlord of the "Junction," Mr. Lloyd, happened, by the merest chance, to go into his stables just at the moment Palmer was engaged in his mixing operations. His account of the affair is this:—

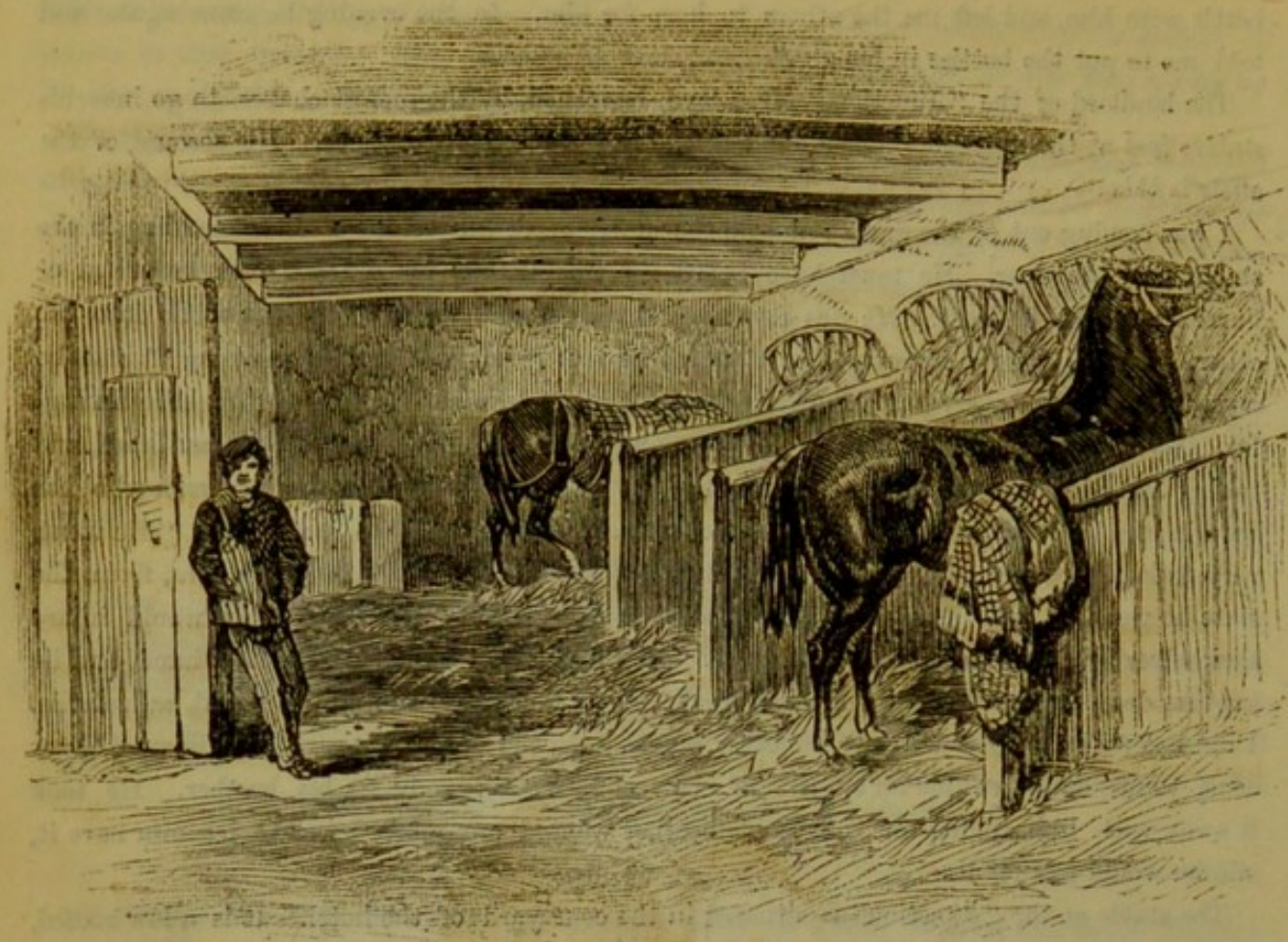
I was coming out of the garden and up the stable-yard, when I saw Palmer standing in the stable, near the door. He must have heard me coming, but he did not look surprised or flurried; not in the least. He was dropping it very carefully out of the one bottle into the other. I said, "Good morning, Mr. Palmer; how is your brother this morning?" and he says, "He's very ill, very low; I'm going to see him, to take him something more stimulating. Dr. Day is attending him, but he is not so well acquainted with his habits as I am, and taking his drink away from him and giving him medicine will not do for a person who has been in the habit of drinking, and I hope this will do him good." He also said, "He went, very foolishly, to the races yesterday, and it might have been the death of him, from the state he was in." He continued to say, what a sad thing it was that people would injure themselves by drinking themselves to death. He'd got the little bottle in his left hand, and he kept on dropping it all the time he was speaking. It was white, and, as I thought, *sal volatile*. I did not take the least notice of the other bottle. On the Saturday previous, William Palmer came to me, and asked me for a bottle of the very best old brandy for his brother. He took it away with him, telling me that if his brother wanted any more, I was to let him have it, and he would pay for it.

The stable at the "Junction" is situated in the courtyard of the hotel. It is a low roofed, white-washed stable, with stalls for five horses. On one side is a ladder flat against the wall, leading up to the hay-loft. Palmer is said to have stood close to the stable door in the most open manner so that all might see him, and to have held the bottles up in the air a little above his eyes, whilst he slowly dropped the contents of the small phial into the other and bigger bottle.

This scene with the bottles, it must be recollected, transpired on the Wednesday. Now let us see how Walter Palmer was going on in the mean time. On his return home from the races on the day before, he was quite drunk, but Walkenden did not the less supply him with gin to drink in the night. All next day, Wednesday, he was in liquor. Mr. Day called to see him, but was told by Walkenden that Walter was at the races. Walkenden has subsequently admitted that Walter Palmer was not at Wolverhampton races, but was at home, and did not go out all day. As regards William Palmer, he slept at Rugeley on the night of the 15th, and left home the following morning, stating that he was going to Ludlow races. He did not, however, go to the races, but went to Walter Palmer's house, at Stafford, where he received in the course of the day, a telegraphic message from Mr. Jeremiah Smith, solicitor, of Rugeley, his very intimate friend, stating that a horse of his (Palmer's) was likely to win the Ludlow stakes. This message, directed to Palmer at the Stafford station, showed that Smith was cognisant of his movements throughout the day.

It was exactly thirty-two minutes past two o'clock when this message arrived. At that very moment Walter Palmer, who had been drinking hard for the previous six-and-thirty hours, drew his last breath, his brother William and Walkenden being at his side. Twenty minutes previously he had been suddenly seized with an attack of apoplexy. Ere his brother's corpse was cold, William Palmer commissions the "boots" at the Junction Hotel, to take a message to the Stafford railway station to be telegraphed to London requesting a friend to lay £50 on





STABLES OF THE GRAND JUNCTION.

a particular horse—most probably his own horse entered at Ludlow; for, at a quarter-past four, despite the melancholy event that had transpired so recently before his eyes, his anxiety as to the results of the race is such that he must needs send this message to the clerk of the course—"Pray, Mr. Frail, send me word who has won the Ludlow Stakes."

The instant the breath was out of Walter Palmer's body, an undertaker was sent for, who assisted to take the body upstairs and place it on the bed. William Palmer said to him, "Poor fellow! Walkenden has suggested that you should make the coffin; make it, and make it quick. The shell was sent home that very night. He went to the house again on the Friday night, and on the Saturday night—when the shell was sealed up, and also the lead coffin—and again on the Monday, when the shell and the lead coffin were placed in the oak coffin. Nevertheless, the undertaker could not tell what the object was of having the shell made in such haste, for the body was not at all decomposed, even when the coffins were closed.



## CHAPTER XVI.

WILLIAM PALMER VISITS WALTER'S WIFE—SENDS THE INSURANCE POLICY TO PRATT—THE OFFICES REFUSE PAYMENT—MAKES A DEMAND ON WALTER'S WIFE—PROPOSES TO INSURE THE LIFE OF GEORGE BATE, ESQ.—MORE "HOT" BRANDY.



AUGUST 16th, 1855, was the date of Walter Palmer's death. The next day his brother William proceeded to Liverpool to make the wife of the deceased acquainted with the melancholy event. She naturally asked him why he had not written or telegraphed to her, for up to this time she had been in ignorance of her husband's illness even. To this Palmer replied, that Walter told him he could write himself if he wanted her. Mrs. Palmer proposed to go off to Stafford instantly to see her poor husband before he was buried, but William Palmer observed that they had been obliged to close him up in lead, and that her going would be of no use, for she could not see him. Under the head of



SIR FITZROY KELLY.

the 27th of August is the following entry in Palmer's diary:—"Went to Stafford with George and Tom to follow Walter to his grave at Rugeley." Walter Palmer was buried in the same grave with Mrs. William Palmer, Palmer, senior, Mrs. Thornton, William's four children, and Bladen.

Now that the brother, hermetically closed in lead, was under the green turf of Rugeley



churchyard, it was time to see about the £13,000 due from the Prince of Wales Life Insurance Office. The necessary papers were accordingly despatched to Mr. Pratt; Dr. Day, who had attended Walter Palmer a short time previous to his death, but who had been refused access to him by the officious Walkenden the day before it took place, certified that his patient died of apoplexy. This time the Offices not merely hesitated, but positively withheld payment. They had been told that the insurance was intended to cover an advance made by Mrs. Palmer; but it now transpired that the assignment had been made in favour of William, in consideration of an assumed loan of £400, though the deceased had received no more than £60. Other circumstances occurred to excite suspicion, and the result was, that the different Offices combined for their mutual defence, and refer Mr. Pratt to their solicitors. Pratt upon this lays a case before Sir Fitzroy Kelly, who gives it as his opinion that William Palmer did not recover on the ground of want of consideration, but advises that some member of the family should take out administration to the estate of Walter Palmer. The first person entitled to take out administration was Mrs. Walter Palmer, the widow, but as it was known that she would not take out administration, and as it was necessary to obtain her formal renunciation, Mr. Pratt procured two copies of renunciation from Doctors' Commons, and forwarded them to Palmer, one to be signed by Mrs. Walter Palmer and the other by Mrs. Sarah Palmer, the prisoner's mother, who by law was next entitled to take out letters of administration.

Baulked at the unexpected turn affairs had taken, Palmer, who was dreadfully pressed for money, knew not which way to turn. He, first of all, writes to Walter's wife, asking her to pay him sundry sums, which he stated he had advanced to his brother. First of all, "£85 lent on the drawing-room furniture;" then a mysterious £40, which "you know all about;" next, bills amounting to £200. "I feel certain poor Walter must have told you how very, very often, and on very many occasions, I had stood his friend, and I believe I and his dear mother (except yourself) were the only friends he had on earth. I only wish his career through life had been a different one. He *might have been alive*, but, poor fellow, he is dead and buried."

But we will give the letter in *extenso* :—

"Rugeley, Sept. 27, 1855.

"Dear Agnes,—I hope the change of air and scenery has, by this time, done you good, and that you are more quiet and reconciled than when I communicated to you the painful, the sorrowful, news of the death of poor dear Walter. Ah, poor fellow, I often think of him, and only wish I could have done now for him that I did while he was alive; and, I assure you, I did a very, very great deal for him—perhaps, a great deal more than you are aware of.

"I know not whether Walter told you that I had advanced him on the drawing (room) furniture £85—of course, I was aware that some of it belonged to you, but he, poor fellow, told me that you would repay me the money—which I feel sure you will after I have told you—and I shall have much pleasure in sending it to your orders. There was also one other item you must, if you please, assist me to—viz., £40 for a bill, which you knew well of the circumstance, and I must be excused going into particulars. This amount I should not ask you for, but Walter said if I would only take up the bill you would pay me, and I feel sure you will after all the money I have before paid. I have received bills amounting to £200, which, I suppose, must be paid by some one. What say you to this? You cannot for one single moment think but that I ought to have assistance from some one, and I crave yours, because I feel certain that poor Walter must have told you how very, very often, and on very many occasions, I had stood his friend; and, I believe, I and his dear mother (except yourself) were the only friends he had on earth. I only wish his career through life had been a different one; he might have been alive; but, poor fellow, he is dead and buried, and I hope and trust he is gone to heaven.—With kind regards, yours ever truly,

"WM. PALMER.

"Mrs. Walter Palmer, Edith Lodge, Graham-road, Great Malvern, Worcestershire."



To this letter Mrs. Walter Palmer replies in the following terms :—

“Edith Lodge, Great Malvern, Sept. 28, 1855.

“Dear William,—I have just received your note, and must say I am *much surprised* at its contents. What right had you to lend your money, supposing that I would repay it, without consulting me on the subject? Poor Walter’s explanation to me *over and over* again, was, that you had insured his life for, I think he said, £1,000.; and that you had promised to advance him £500 of the money, but that you had put him off from time to time, and were just giving him a few pounds now and then to go on with, until you could find means to pay him the whole. Now, if that is true, and I am much disposed to believe it, you are the proper person to pay all that he owes; but if you make that out to be incorrect, and I have no way, I am very sorry to say, of proving it, I still should not consider that I am the person to be looked to to pay his debts, never having received a farthing from him, or being kept by him, in the whole course of our married life. I should not think your mother can be aware that you are applying to me for payment of her son’s debts, and I will not have it for a moment supposed that I am the responsible person. In conclusion, I beg of you to remember, and beware how you belie the dead.—I am, truly yours,

“A. A. PALMER.

“Mr. William Palmer, Rugeley, Staffordshire.”

From the above, it is very evident that neither husband nor wife knew that the life had been insured for £13,000, or that proposals had been sent to different offices for as large a sum as £82,000.

It was now that Palmer sent his friend, Jerry Smith, to Mrs. Walter, to get her to sign a surrender of her interest, as Walter Palmer’s wife, in the policy. She, however, prefers that her solicitor should see it, to which Jerry Smith replies, “by all means;” nevertheless, he takes the paper away with him.

As Palmer gained nothing by this move, and liabilities were pressing on, he casts about for another life, and fixes on that of George Bate, a decayed farmer, employed by him as a kind of farm-bailiff on a small scale, but whom Palmer describes in his proposal papers as a gentleman and an esquire, desirous of insuring his life for £25,000. John Parsons Cook, and Cheshire the postmaster, were the two referees, and his friend Jerry Smith, was to have the solicitor’s commission of five per cent. usually allowed by the offices, and not Mr. Thomas Pratt, of Queen Street, May Fair. Smith writes up to the “Midland,” and gets appointed its agent, and it is reported that he then submitted the name of William Palmer, as the medical referee. This being approved of, Mr. Jerry Smith, very soon afterwards, forwards to this office a proposal for an insurance on the life of “George Bate, Esq.” for £10,000, being, of course, merely a part of the aggregate sum of £25,000, which it was intended to raise, but which was probably considered as much as any one office would be likely to take on the life of a gentleman in the position of Mr. Bate.

According to the account which Bate himself gives of how the affair came about, Palmer was very friendly towards him, and the reason why he wanted to insure his life was this :—“He wanted,” said Bate, “to better my position, and to do something for me, and he proposed to insure my life, and advance me some money;” but, candidly, if I had known that he was going to insure my life for £25,000, I would never have had anything to do with the matter. I think Palmer was a friend of mine, and as he never did me an injury, but rather tried to do me a service when he could, I cannot imagine that he would have served me badly; but yet circumstances are so strange, that I am grateful that the assurances were never effected.

When I signed the application-paper, Cook was present, and witnessed the signature. On that day, I, and Cook, and Jerry Smith, and Saunders (the trainer), dined with Palmer at his house. We didn’t talk about it during dinner. A week before, he had talked to me about



assuring my life, and I said something joking about my life not being worth much; and then, after dinner, Jerry Smith and Saunders went out shooting, and Cook says, "Palmer, I think George had better sign that paper," and I signed it; but then the amount was not filled up, you see—that was the grand secret. I never asked him what amount he had filled up; for to tell the truth, I didn't see him for several days after, for he and Cook went off to some race meeting or other.

The insurance offices were by this time thoroughly well up to the class of customers they had to deal with, and they therefore engaged a detective to visit Rugeley, and to make some inquiries.

"Inspector Field, of the Detective Force," as he is generally called, though he is not only not an inspector, but also not a detective, according to the meaning attached to that word was the individual fixed upon. It seems that Mr. Field, since his retirement from the police force, has been in the habit of undertaking confidential inquiries of almost every description; and the insurance company, to which the life of Bate had been proposed by William Palmer, thought Field would be the proper person to carry out the investigation.

At this period every one in Rugeley appeared to be a friend of Palmer's. The postmaster, Cheshire, was, as we have already mentioned, one of the referees for Bate. Of him, Mr. Field first made inquiries, and, in answer to questions put to him, Cheshire stated Bate to be possessed of an income of three or four hundred a-year, free from debts and all incumbrances, and that he was leading the life of an independent gentleman. Particular attention was called by Cheshire to Mr. Bate's fine cellar of wine. Field, who would appear to have a slight weakness for port—or, at all events, to have affected it on this particular occasion—inquired whether the bins containing the wine in question, could be specially recommended. Cheshire assured him that they were celebrated in Rugeley; at which Inspector Field expressed his gratification, adding, that that was the hour at which he usually took a glass.

The individual known as "G. Bate, Esq.," was next visited, and found hoeing turnips in a field, and the misrepresentations which had been forwarded to the insurance office, were at once made evident. Bate was living in a farm-house, occupying a room for which he paid a few shillings a-week—or rather for which he owed them—for, at the time of the inquiries being made, there was six months' rent unpaid.

In answer to Field's questions, as to the amount to which his life was to be insured, Bate said for £6,000. Of this sum, he stated that he himself was to have £2,000; and asked Mr. Field whether he considered that a fair share. "G. Bate, Esq.," we need scarcely add, was entirely ignorant of the nature of life insurance, and hardly understood the meaning of the word. The real sum for which William Palmer was endeavouring to insure Bate's life was £25,000, but Bate was ignorant of this, and indeed, knew so little about the matter, that he could not tell the inspector whether he himself or Palmer had signed the letter of application. The people in the neighbourhood seemed to fancy that Bate was about to become a very important person, and Field had been asked whether he would be entitled to a vote for the county.

After Field had called on Bates, Bates told Palmer of it; and he said if they came again, he was to say he should not proceed any further with the assurance, but let the matter drop. Palmer did not seem at all put out, or angry, or disappointed. "He was a man" says Bate, "of such a kind that I never saw his nerves shook."

Whilst the detectives were on the spot, they thought it advisable to investigate the circumstances under which Walter Palmer departed this life. The inference they arrived at was, that he had been made away with, and they communicated as much to their employers. It



seems that when they called on William Palmer and told him of the suspicions that Walter had not been fairly dealt with, and that they were going to make inquiries, Palmer replied "Quite right," and never even changed colour. Then they thought they would try him further, and said they also had their doubts about his wife's death; but he never said anything beyond "Very right and proper."

Simpson, one of the detectives in question, is reported to have said, that he never witnessed such an impassibility in all his life. He expected Palmer would have jumped up and knocked them down, but he never even stirred, but went on sipping his wine and cracking his walnuts as unconcerned as possible.



THE "BOOTS"

AT THE GRAND JUNCTION HOTEL, STAFFORD.

Among the other individuals whom Simpson and Field questioned on the subject, was Tom Myatt, "boots" at the Junction Hotel, Stafford. Palmer, who, of course, knew these gentlemen again, could not see them engaged in deep conversation with Myatt, without feeling somewhat curious on the subject. When the officers had left, he asked Myatt therefore what they had been saying to him; and as Myatt hesitated—not being quite so ready with a cool answer as Mr. William Palmer would have been under similar circumstances—Palmer, with a view, we will suppose, of unloosing his tongue, asked "boots" what he would take to drink. "Boots's" favourite liquor being brandy, Palmer brought him a glass, which "boots" swallowed, and quickly threw up again; nevertheless, he was ill for some time afterwards, and now protests that he is certain he was poisoned.

This is what he himself says on the subject.

"Now, Tom, tell us all about Palmer poisoning you."

Tom therefore rubs his hair, as if he were shining up his thoughts, and then, whilst he is speaking, picks his nails, or hugs his boots—which latter articles, for a "boots's" boots, are singularly devoid of blacking.

"It was some time about October, that Palmer met me on the road, 'twixt here and the station, and he says, Tom, what'll you have?" I says, "A drop of brandy, if anything."

Then we came back here and had it. He mixed the brandy-and-water. "Have it



here?" he says. To which I said, "Well, I'd rather have it outside!" "No! have it here," he says; and I had it. It didn't taste queer, but was just like common brandy-and-water, as is made hot, with sugar. I shouldn't have drunk it if it hadn't tasted all right.

After I'd drunk it, I went into the yard, and then I was took bad. I felt drunk, like. I didn't know where I was, like. I certainly had some recollection, but very little; my senses were gone, like. Directly I'd drunk it, I knew there was something queer in it. I clapped my hand over my mouth, and run out that way into the yard, when I threw it up. I never was took that way before after drinking brandy. I don't drink so much of it. I generally drinks brandy neat. At one time I used to drink a good deal of brandy, all day, like. I used to begin in the morning and carry it on till night, and I kept this game up for pretty near eight year. I was never sick in my life afore, after drinking.

I went and lay me down in the kitchen, I think, and the missus says, "Good God! why, what's the matter, Tom?" and I says, "Well, I think I'm poisoned." "Why, what have you been having?" "Some brandy-and-water along with Palmer," says I, and then something was said, I think, about having a doctor; but I hadn't no doctor. I went and lay me down in one of the stalls of the stable. I felt queer for three or four days afterwards. I remember very little about when I awoke, nor how long I lay there. The ostler come and look at me, and covered me up with rugs. I was "as black as soot in the face," he said, and he couldn't hear me breathe no how nor nothing, so he thought I was dead.

I never named it to Palmer. I couldn't positive swear that he gave me anything, you see."

## CHAPTER XVII.

PALMER'S CONNEXION WITH MR. PRATT, THE WEST-END BILL DISCOUNTER AND SOLICITOR.



HE refusal, on the part of the Insurance Office, to pay the £13,000 claimed on the policy on the life of Walter Palmer, and the further refusal of other offices to bite at new proposals on the life of Bate, placed Palmer in a position of extreme embarrassment. He had found it extremely difficult for some months past to make his accounts square. The money that came to him on the wife's death, had made matters comfortable for a time, but Palmer was pursuing a reckless downward course of speculation, and a few months sufficed to bring on the same extreme degree of pecuniary pressure as that from which he had so recently escaped.

He was borrowing money from Pratt, a west-end bill discounter and solicitor, at the ruinous rate of sixty per cent. per annum. It certainly requires no great arithmetical genius to calculate what £1,000 at sixty per cent, payable monthly, will amount to in a given term of years, nor is there much forethought necessary to show a man that, with the most unceasing and fortunate exertions, he is hardly likely to extricate himself from debt which increases with such terrible rapidity. Palmer's connexion with Pratt is an old tale, and often told,—the first small loan duly repaid, then a larger sum, then the borrower's acceptances; then those presumed to be his mother's, bills renewed, interest payable monthly, threatening letters,



entreaties for delay, falsehood, forgery, appropriation of another man's money, and then the final crash. It is worthy of attention in all its naked simplicity.

About two years and a half since, the acquaintance between Palmer and Pratt began. Mr. Pratt, we should mention, is a tall, large man, rather fashionable in his style of dress, with an enormous pair of brown whiskers, and having the face of a small London boy, and the low voice of a retiring female. The first transaction he had with Palmer was the loan to him of £1,000, which was, of course, duly repaid. More seems to have been borrowed during the ensuing year from Pratt or other persons, for when Anne Palmer died, and Mr. Pratt received £8,000 from the offices on account of the policies on her life, £6,500 was at once applied in payment of bills due. In April, 1855, Mr. Pratt was again applied to for a loan of £2,000, on a bill purporting to be accepted by Mrs. Sarah Palmer, and by November, 1855, there were eight bills held by Mr. Pratt or his clients, the total amount being £12,500. Some portion of this amount had been advanced to enable Palmer to purchase two race horses—"Nettle" and the "Chicken." The interest was paid monthly. With two exceptions, these bills were discounted at the rate of sixty per cent. Thus the interest to be paid by Palmer for money borrowed within seven months was probably upwards of £6,000 a-year, the income of a leading barrister or physician. If Palmer had become possessed of an annuity equal to the salary of a Judge or a Minister of State, it must have been swept away yearly during his whole life in merely paying the interest of this temporary "accommodation." And yet Pratt, when questioned by the coroner at the inquest on the body of Walter Palmer, with regard to any loss he would sustain, makes the following reply:—"Oh, do not ask me that question, I am a young professional man, with a wife and three children, and I have been nearly ruined by this man. How can you ask me such a question?"

Mr. Pratt, nevertheless, looked sharp enough after his money, if we are to judge by the urgent letters he wrote, and to which evasive answers were returned by his client. Walter Palmer is dead, but, even if the Prince of Wales Insurance-office will pay the £13,000, it cannot be received directly; so Pratt writes, "Do pray think about your three bills so shortly becoming due. If I do not get a positive appointment from the office to pay, which I do not expect, you must be prepared to meet them, as agreed. You told me your mother was coming up this month, and would settle them." Again, on the 2d of October, "bear in mind that you must be prepared to cover your mother's acceptances due at the end of the month." On the 18th, "I send copies of two letters I have received. As regards the first, it shows how important it is that you or your mother should prepare for the payment of the £4,000 due in a few days." What is the position, then, of Palmer? He has £4,000 to pay, and can only pay £250, and promise £250 more.

It is on the 28th October that Palmer, in answer to a letter of Pratt's, threatening proceedings, writes thus anxiously:—

"I will send you the £250 from Worcester on Tuesday, as arranged. For goodness's sake do not think of writs; only let me know that such steps are going to be taken and I will get you the money, even if I pay £1,000 for it; only give me a fair chance, and you shall be paid the whole of the money."

On the 31st of October Pratt wrote to Palmer:—

"The £250 in registered letter duly received to-day. With it I have been enabled to obtain consent to the following:—That, with the exception of issuing the writs against your mother, no proceeding as to service shall be made until the morning of Saturday, the 10th, when you are to send up the £1,000 or £1,500. You will be debited with a month's interest on the whole of



£4,000 out of the money sent up. I impress upon you the necessity of your being punctual as to the bills. You will not forget also the £1,500 due on the 9th of November."

On the 6th of November Pratt issued writs against Palmer and his mother for £4,000. He sent them to Mr. Crabbe, a solicitor at Rugeley. On the 10th of November Palmer called on Pratt and paid him £300, which, with the two sums he had before received, made up £800. £200 was deducted for interest, leaving £600. Palmer was to endeavour to let Pratt have a further remittance. It is possible, Pratt states, "that writs were mentioned, but I have no recollection of it. No doubt Palmer knew of them." Let us now quit for a while Mr. Pratt's office on the ground-floor of a smart house in Queen-street, May-fair, and betake ourselves to the Shrewsbury race-course.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

SHREWSBURY RACES—POLESTAR, THE WINNING HORSE—"BURNING" BRANDY AND WATER.



Among the strange admixture of company that thronged the Shrewsbury race-course on the morning of the 13th of last November, were two individuals, both of whom appeared to be deeply interested in the results of the forthcoming race. One of these had more the cut of the gentleman about him than the other; in fact, he was what is commonly styled aristocratic looking; and, had the reader seen him, he would have guessed him to have been much the younger of the two, although there was only a few years' difference between their respective ages. He was rather tall and slim—his face was thin and pale, his complexion dark. His hair was long, and he wore a slight whisker, and a small moustache. He wore a loose overcoat with large sleeves. A gold cable guard chain dangled from his watch, and two or three rings might be noticed on his fingers. He resided at Lutterworth, in Leicestershire; was supposed to be possessed of some little property, and kept a few race-horses. He had been brought up as a solicitor, and at one time had offices at Watling. It is very certain, however, that he was a constant frequenter of the various race-courses in the Midland districts, both in term and out of term, and that he was not unknown at the different sporting taverns in the metropolis.

Among his tolerably large circle of friends he was a universal favourite, for his easy good nature and the mildness of his disposition.

The companion of this gentlemanly-looking young man, was an individual some thirty years of age, but appearing several years older. He was of a largeish build, though not more than five feet seven inches in height, very broad about the shoulders, and with rather a thick bull-neck. His complexion, which was florid, gave to his features a slight expression of coarseness; his scanty hair was of a lightish-brown, and was worn brushed back; his whiskers inclined to red. The top of his head was almost bald. His style of dress was not remarkable further than that he was in mourning, and his hat was encircled with a deep black band.

There was a something about the heavy figure of this individual which gave him, perhaps, more the appearance of a gentlemanly farmer than of a practitioner of the science of medicine,



which he really was. He had a pleasant nod and an agreeable smile for almost every one; and yet, despite this apparent cheerfulness, he must have been sadly wretched at heart, for he was at that moment involved in deep pecuniary difficulties, which threatened, unless his "book" on the forthcoming race turned out well, to deprive him of house and home, and banish him for a time from the society of his fellow turfites, of which he seems to have been passionately fond—oh! far worse than this—to place him in the felon's dock. Need the reader be told that the younger of the two individuals, whose portraits we have attempted to sketch, was John Parsons Cook, and that his friend was William Palmer, the sporting surgeon of Rugeley.

Cook and Palmer were on what may be styled intimate terms. Cook had lost a small independence on the turf, and he looked to the turf to restore him what it had deprived him of. He and Palmer indulged their dreams of success together. They owned race-horses in conjunction; occasionally betted for each other; and raised money on joint accommodation bills. They were at this time both in embarrassed circumstances; nevertheless, the liabilities of Cook were trivial in the extreme, compared to the heavy burthen of difficulties that Palmer was ordained to bear. During their racing trips they invariably frequented the same hotel, and would occupy the same sitting-room.



Cook's horse, named Polestar, was entered for the Shrewsbury Handicap. The race was run somewhere about two o'clock, and Polestar won. The owner was naturally enough elated with his triumph, for, as happens at all races, a good deal of money changed hands, and Cook's pocket-book was crammed full of bank-notes. It is said that for two or three minutes he could not speak. Good fellow as he was, to commemorate his luck, he gave a dinner at the Raven, at Shrewsbury, and treated his guests to foaming beakers of provincial champagne.

The same evening he accompanied Mr. Jones, the friend with whom he usually resided when at Lutterworth, to see him off by the last train. The next day he was on the course, as usual, and, apparently in perfectly health. After the race he returned to the Raven Hotel, where he dined.

A singular incident transpired at the Raven about eleven o'clock that evening. It seems that a person of the name of Mrs. Brooks, had occasion to see Palmer at the Hotel. She,



though a female, was connected with the turf, and betted on commission. She had at her disposal an establishment of jockies, for whom she acted as a sort of register, and for whom she made engagements. Palmer's horse was to run the next day; and she came to speak to him about a jockey whom he wanted to employ; and having ascended the staircase, turned into a lobby into which Palmer's room opened. As she turned into the lobby she saw Palmer, whom she knew perfectly well, holding up a tumbler to the light of the gas which was burning in the passage, and looking at it with the caution of a man who was watching to see what was the condition of the liquid. Having looked at it through the gaslight, he withdrew to his own room, and presently returned with the glass in his hand, and then went into the apartment where his friend Cook was sitting.

Later in the evening, Mr. Fisher, who went in the room in which Palmer and Cook were, and found them sitting in conversation at a table, Cook having a tumbler, half-full of brandy-and-water, before him. Fisher went in and sat down, and Cook invited him to have something to drink; at the same time, saying to Palmer, "You will have some more." "No;" says Palmer, "not unless you finish your glass." On which Cook said, "That is soon done." He took up his glass, half-full of brandy-and-water, and tossed it off at one gulp, leaving a tea-spoonful at the bottom of the tumbler. He had scarcely swallowed it, when he said, "Good God! there is something in it that burns my throat." Palmer took up the glass and drank what remained, and said, "Cook fancies there is something in the brandy-and-water; taste it." On which they said, "It is very easy to say taste it; but you have left none." Within a few minutes Cook suddenly left the room. He returned after a few minutes, and called Fisher out, and told him he had been violently ill! adding, that he thought "that damned Palmer had dosed him." He then gave Fisher the money he had about him, between seven and eight hundred pounds, to take care of. He was then taken with violent vomitings. After a little while he was so bad that it was necessary to take him to bed, where he vomited again and again, in the most violent way. It became necessary to send for a medical man. These vomitings continued for a couple of hours, the man retching with the greatest violence; the medical gentlemen proposed an emetic, which Palmer would not hear of. They got him warm water, put a tooth-brush to his throat to make him eject what he had taken. However, there was no occasion for that, for the vomiting went on. After that, some stimulants were given to him, some comforting matter, and, then a pill and a purgative dose. After two or three hours he became more tranquil, and about two or three o'clock he fell asleep, and slept till the next morning.

"On Thursday morning, the 15th," says Mr. G. Herring, (another friend of Cook's)—"Mr. Cook came to my room while we were waiting for breakfast. He drew me to the window, and began speaking to me about money and racing matters. During the conversation, the name of Palmer was mentioned, but I cannot recollect by which of us." I remarked, 'how about that brandy-and-water you had?' And he replied, Oh! that villain did me. From the previous conversation I remarked, 'You mean Palmer?' and he said 'Yes;' I then observed, 'It's a very serious thing to accuse a gentleman of such a thing; what could be his motive?' and he replied in a sorrowful tone, 'You don't know all. He then continued talking about racing matters, and I interrupted him by saying, 'Good God, if you suspect this man of such a thing, how can you go back and breakfast with him?' He again replied, in an absent manner, as he was walking towards the door, 'Ah! you don't know all.'"



## CHAPTER XIX.

COOK AND PALMER AT RUGELEY—COOK'S ILLNESS—THE PILLS—A DEATH-BED SCENE.



IN spite of what we have narrated above, Cook and Palmer were very soon friends again, and brother sportsmen. In the afternoon of Thursday, November 15, they started together for Rugeley, where Mr. Cook engaged a room at the Talbot Arms, exactly opposite to the snuggery inhabited by Mr. William Palmer. Thursday, in other respects, seems to have been a *dies non*, but on Friday Mr. Cook dined with Palmer and Jeremiah Smith, at Palmer's house, returning to the Talbot in a state of perfect sobriety. On the following morning he felt qualmish and uncomfortable. He threw up a cup of coffee administered by the chamber-maid, and afterwards a basin of broth sent by Mr. Palmer. It seems that Palmer desired a woman of the name of Rowley to go to an

inn in Rugeley, the Albion, and get some broth. The woman got the broth, took it to Palmer's house, and put it in a saucepan on the kitchen fire to warm. She had something to do in the back kitchen, and went into the back kitchen—she saw no more of the broth, or Palmer, until Palmer, having poured it into a basin, brought it to her, told her to take it over to the Talbot Arms, and to tell any one to whom she might give it to take it up to Cook, and say Mr. Jerry Smith had sent it.

Throughout the whole of that day Palmer was constantly in and out, ministering to Cook a variety of things, and whenever he did administer anything to him, sickness invariably ensued. Dr. Bamford, aged 82, is called in, and sends a couple of opiate pills. The next morning he is again sent for. On this day (Sunday) some more broth is brought over from Palmer. This time it is tasted by the chamber-maid before it is taken into Mr. Cook's room. She merely drank a couple of tablespoonfuls. Within half an hour of that time the woman was taken violently ill; vomiting came on, which lasted five or six hours; she was obliged to go to bed at 12 o'clock in the day; she could not get up till 5 or 6 in the afternoon; and she vomited not less than twenty times.

Palmer, during the Sunday, writes the following note to Mr. Jones, of Lutterworth, the friend whom Cook had seen off to the train on the day of Shrewsbury races.—

“November 18, 1855.

“My dear Sir,—Mr. Cook was taken ill at Shrewsbury, and obliged to call in a medical man; since then he has been confined to his bed here with a very severe bilious attack, combined with diarrhoea; and I think it advisable for you to come to see him as soon as possible.

“WILLIAM PALMER.”

On Monday morning Cook was better, and able to eat something, but he still lay stretched on his yellow-curtained bed at the Talbot Arms. In the afternoon he gets up for an hour or two, and talks to his trainer and jockeys. After seeing Cook for a few minutes in the morning, Palmer, it appears, hurried up to London to get his friend's accounts settled with respect to Shrewsbury races. Mr. Herring, to whom Cook had hinted his suspicions regarding the brandy-and-water, called on Palmer at his town lodging, 8, Beaufort-buildings, Strand, in compliance with a letter received from Palmer that morning. “I inquired of him,” states





SHREWSBURY RACES.



Mr. Herring, "how Mr. Cook was;" when he said, "Oh, he's all right; the physician has given him some calomel, and recommended him not to come out, being a damp day;" and added, "What I want to see you about, is settling his account," holding out half a sheet of note-paper. I rose slightly to take it, when he said, "You had better take it down," tearing some letter-paper, and pushing it towards me at the time, with pen and ink, saying, "What I have here will be a check against you."

Mr. Herring, it appears, held three £200 bills of exchange, one drawn by Mr. Cook and accepted by Palmer, the others drawn by Palmer and accepted by Cook. One of these had been settled at Shrewsbury; the remainder were now paid and cancelled. The various sums to be received amounted to £1,020, but of this £110 was refused, on the plea of a set-off. He therefore wrote word to Mr. Cook, at Mr. Palmer's, Rugeley, to the effect that he had not been able to remit £350 he was to have sent to Mr. Padwick, but that he had duly sent a cheque for £450 to Mr. Pratt, the lawyer usually employed by Palmer in his monetary transactions. A telegraphic reply was directly returned by Palmer from the nearest station to Rugeley, requesting him to advance the amount necessary to make Mr. Padwick all right, and that he should be repaid on the Thursday. Mr. Herring prudently declined. Subsequently, when the original memorandum sent by Palmer to Colwich was sought for, it appeared that his influence had availed to procure its restitution. Consequently, no legal proof exists that it was in his handwriting.

It was near upon 10 o'clock at night when Palmer arrived at Rugeley from London, yet at this late hour he hastened to call on a Mr. Newton, assistant to Mr. Salt, a surgeon at Rugeley,



whom he asked for three grains of strychnine. Newton weighed it accurately and gave it to him, enclosed in a piece of paper. Palmer said nothing further but "Good night," and hurried off, taking it away with him.

On this same night Cook took two pills, which made him excessively ill. He screamed wildly, rolled his eyes about, and beat the bed-clothes with his hands, while his head moved convulsively, and his limbs soon after straightened. Mr. Palmer, being sent for in haste, gave him some comforting words, two more pills, and a thick, dark-coloured draught, which smelt like



opium. The sick man vomited almost immediately, but there was no appearance of the pills, and presently he fell into a refreshing slumber. The laudanum, if such it was, had been administered in too large a dose for the state of the stomach after so much irritation—otherwise it might have soothed him into a sleep from which there would have been no awaking. During Tuesday, the 20th of November, Palmer, known not to have any large practice, goes to a chemist's shop in Rugeley, and buys 6 grs. of strychnine, and 2 drs. of prussic acid. In the afternoon of the same day, Mr. W. H. Jones, of Lutterworth, arrives to look after the sick man.

Old Dr. Bamford again called, and after seeing his patient, goes away with Palmer to prepare the necessary medicines. When he had made them up and put them into a box, Palmer asked him to write upon them the direction of how they were to be taken. This struck Bamford as being extraordinary, because, as Palmer himself was a medical man, and was going to give the pills to the patient, there could be no necessity for writing the direction, which a medical man usually does when another medical man does not intervene to see the dose administered; but by Palmer's desire he did write the direction—"pills to be taken at bedtime." He put the box into a paper and sealed it up. Three-quarters of an hour elapsed between the time the prisoner left Bamford and came to Cook. When he did come he gave Cook two pills; but before he gave them he opened the box, and called the attention of Mr. Jones to the direction, saying, in allusion to Mr. Bamford's handwriting, "how wonderful it was that a man of eighty should write so good and strong a hand." Vomiting ensued immediately after the pills had been administered, but the pills remained on the stomach. This was at a little past eleven o'clock. Mr. Jones slept in the same room with his friend; the foot of the beds were opposite to each other, the room being sufficiently large, and Mr. Cook lying between the door and the window. About midnight Mr. Jones undressed himself and turned in. He had not laid down above twenty minutes, when his friend called to him in alarm, and begged that Mr. Palmer might be sent for immediately. That gentleman was by his bed-side within three minutes, foolishly volunteering the remark that he had never dressed so quickly in his life before. He then gave him two pills which he brought with him, saying, that they were ammonia pills—a preparation never kept ready made up, because of evaporation. A terrible scene now ensued. Wildly shrieking, the patient tossed about in fearful convulsions; his limbs were so rigid that it was impossible to raise him, though he entreated that they would do so, as he felt that he was suffocating. Every muscle was convulsed; his body bent upwards like a bow; they turned him over on his left side; the action of the heart gradually ceased, and he was dead.





## CHAPTER XX.

COOK'S STEP-FATHER COMES TO RUGELEY—THE MISSING BETTING-BOOK—POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION—PALMER ATTEMPTS TO BRIBE THE POSTBOY—IS MORE FORTUNATE WITH THE POSTMASTER—TRIES IT ON WITH THE CORONER—IS ARRESTED FOR DEBT—IS FOUND GUILTY OF WILFUL MURDER.



COOK being now dead beyond all question, Palmer sets to work to possess himself of his remaining effects. He had already appropriated his winnings at Shrewsbury, with the exception of the Handicap Stakes; these he could not touch, as they were not payable till a week after the race, and then only in London. The evening that Cook expired, but before his actual decease, Palmer posted a cheque, which purported to be signed by Cook, to the secretary of the Jockey Club, for £350, on account of the said stakes. The day following, he writes off to Pratt, saying, "Mind, I must have Polestar;" and further, "should any one call upon you to know what monies Cook ever had from you, don't answer the question."

The breath was hardly out of Cook's body, before Palmer orders some one to be sent for to lay the body out. The women on entering the room, find Palmer searching the pockets of a coat, which, there could be no doubt, was Mr. Cook's; they saw him hunt under the pillow, and under the bolster; they saw some letters lying on the mantel-piece, which there was every reason to believe had been taken from the coat; on the following day, Palmer again rummages among Cook's things, under the pretence of seeking for a paper-knife which he had borrowed for him.

The death of Cook was communicated to his relatives in London. Palmer, when he heard what had been done, is reported to have exclaimed, "Good God! why, he has no relatives!" On Friday, the 23rd, Mr. Stephens, who married Cook's mother, came down to Rugeley, and, after viewing the body of his relative, to whom he had been tenderly attached, asked Palmer about his affairs. Palmer assured him that he held a paper drawn up by a lawyer, and signed by Cook, stating that, in respect of £4,000 worth of bills, he (Cook) was alone liable, and that Palmer had a claim to that amount against his estate. Mr. Stephens expressed his amazement, and replied, that there would not be £4,000 shillings for the holders of the bills. Subsequently Palmer displayed an eager officiousness in the matter of the funeral, taking upon himself to order a shell and an oak coffin. Mr. Stevens ordered dinner at the hotel for Bamford, Jones, and himself, and finding Palmer still hanging about, thought it but civil to extend the invitation to him. Accordingly they all sat down together. After dinner, Mr. Stephens asked Jones to step upstairs and bring down all books and papers belonging to Cook. Jones left the room to do so, and Palmer followed him. They were absent about ten minutes, and on their return Jones observed that they were unable to find the betting-book or any of the papers belonging to the deceased. Palmer added, "The betting-book would be of no use to you if you found it, for the bets are void by his death." Mr. Stephens replied, "The book must be found;" and then Palmer, changing his tone, said, "Oh, I dare say it will turn up." Mr. Stephens on this rang the bell, and when the housekeeper came, desired her immediately to go and take possession of whatever there might be of Mr. Cook's; to lock the door, and allow no one to have access to the place until his return from London, where he had made up his mind to go to



obtain the assistance of a solicitor. On his arrival in London, he consulted his solicitor, who gave him a letter of introduction to Mr. Gardner, a respectable gentleman practising in Rugeley. In returning from London the next day, on the train stopping for refreshment at Wolverton, he met Palmer, who was a passenger by the same train, having been up to London to pay some more money to Pratt, and Mr. Stephens communicated his determination to have a *post-mortem* examination. Palmer was particularly anxious to learn who were the persons who would be employed; Mr. Stephens did not inform him, but he did tell him he intended to employ a solicitor to inquire into his step-son's affairs; on which Palmer offered to recommend him one, an offer which Mr. Stephens thought proper to decline.

On Sunday, the 25th, Palmer goes to Dr. Bamford, and asks him for a certificate of the cause of Cook's death. Bamford replies, "Why should you ask me for it? he was your patient." "No," said Palmer, "I would rather you gave the certificate." It was thereupon discussed what the certificate should be, and finally it was entered "apoplexy."

On the same day, Palmer sent for Cheshire, and producing a paper purporting to bear the signature of Cook, asked him to attest it. Cheshire glanced over it. It was a document in which Cook acknowledged that bills to the amount of £4,000, or thereabouts, had been negotiated for his (Cook's) benefit, and in respect of which Palmer had received no consideration. Cheshire refused; whereupon Palmer carelessly observed, "It is of no consequence; I dare say the signature will not be disputed, but it occurred to me that it would look more regular if it were attested."

On the evening of the same day, Palmer writes another note to Pratt, urging him to be silent with reference to Cook's affairs. Here is the note in question:—

“(Strictly private and confidential.)

“My dear Sir,—Should any of Cook's friends call upon you to know what money Cook ever had from you, pray don't answer that question, or any other about money matters, until I have seen you. And oblige yours faithfully,

“WILLIAM PALMER.”

About seven o'clock the same evening he sends for Mr. Newton, the person from whom he obtained the strychnia on the previous Monday. Newton thereupon goes to Palmer's house. Palmer was sitting by the kitchen fire reading. No one else was present. He asked Newton to have some brandy and water, and then enquired of him the proper dose of strychnine to kill a dog, and also as to what would be the appearance of the stomach after death. Newton told him that there would be no inflammation, and that he did not think it could be found. Upon that Palmer snapped his finger and thumb in a quiet way, and exclaimed, as if communing with himself, "All right." On the following day—Monday, the 26th of November, the *post-mortem* examination took place. Palmer, hearing that Newton was to assist, invited him beforehand to have some brandy, and persuaded him to drink a couple of glasses, neat. Palmer was present at the *post-mortem*, and seeing that the intestines and stomach presented a healthy appearance, could not refrain from observing to Dr. Bamford in a loud whisper, "Doctor, they won't hang us yet!" The stomach and intestines were taken out and placed in a jar, and it was observed that Palmer pushed against the medical man who was engaged in the operation, and the jar was in danger of being upset. It escaped, however, and was covered with skins, tied down, and sealed. Presently one of the medical men turned round, and finding that the jar had disappeared, asked what had become of it. It was found at a distance, near a different door from that through which people usually passed in and out, and Palmer exclaimed, "It's all right. It was I who removed it. I thought it would be more convenient for you to have it here, that you might lay your hands readily on it as you went out." When the jar was recovered it was found that two slits had been cut in the skins with a knife. On the evening of the



same day. Mr. Stephens having made up his mind that the stomach should be submitted to analysis by Professor Taylor, engaged a fly to convey him from the Talbot Arms, Rugeley, to the Stafford railway station, intending to carry the jars up to London himself. The fly was already horsed and waiting, and while the postboy who was to drive it was hurrying from his lodgings to the hotel, he encountered Palmer, who offered him a £10 note to upset the vehicle. The postboy firmly refused the tempting bribe. According to rumours, which, however, we do not credit, Palmer was afterwards, in company with others, seen following the fly.

Mr. Stephens reached London safely, and gave the jars into Professor Taylor's custody. The same evening that Mr. Stephens started off, Palmer was observed walking about the streets of Rugeley drunk!—drunk, too, as they say, for the first time in his life!

While Dr. Taylor was engaged with his analysis, the Coroner summoned a jury together, and opened an inquiry. At the first meeting the proceedings were merely formal, the body being only viewed and identified. Palmer appears by this time to have felt his position to be a doubtful one. He was a very reserved man to those who were not intimate with him; nevertheless, while the inquests were going on, he treated everybody at the Talbot Arms to anything they would have. His main trust was in his friend, the postmaster of the town, Mr. Cheshire, who, it will be remembered, was one of his referees in respect of "George Bate, Esq." It seems that Palmer used to place his carriage at the disposal of Mrs. Cheshire on Sundays, on which day that lady indulged in an afternoon drive, so that Cheshire owed him a good turn; this Cheshire proceeded to acquit himself of in the following fashion. Of course, from Cheshire's position, the correspondence passing to and fro between the solicitors and Dr. Taylor could be easily tampered with, and none but himself be the wiser. It was tampered with; and no doubt every letter that passed through the post-office referring to the case was shown to Palmer by Cheshire. At any rate, we learn from Cheshire's own lips that Palmer called on him on Sunday, the 2d of December, and gave him a hint which he was not slow to take. He goes to Palmer next morning to tell him that nothing was up. Palmer was then in bed ill. Cheshire visits him again on the Wednesday, and this time with the joyful intelligence that no poison had been found; he having opened Dr. Taylor's letter to the solicitor to ascertain that fact. "I knew they would not," said Palmer, "I'm as innocent as a baby."

No doubt this little bit of information helps to raise Palmer's spirits. He thinks that all he has to do now is to make it right with the Coroner, W. Webb Ward, Esq.; so, on the 8th December, he writes first of all a note to Mr. Frantz, poulterer of Stafford, ordering some "nice pheasants and a good hare," and then a note to the Coroner to accompany the said game. In this latter note he lets out, that he had seen "in black and white," Dr. Taylor's statement to the effect, that no poison had been found, and he coolly enough suggests to the Coroner, that he should like a verdict, "died of natural causes, and thus end it." These notes Palmer commits into the hands of Mr. George Bate, who starts off to Stafford. He goes to Mr. Frantz, the dealer in game, who says he is a pheasant short of the order, but will send the other things to Bate, at the Junction Hotel. Bate re-directs the parcel, and gives a lad 3d. to carry it to Mr. Ward's office. He next goes in search of Mr. Ward, whom he unearths in the smoking-room of the Dolphin Inn, which owns the only billiard-room in Stafford. George, having "tipped him a knowing wink," the Coroner came out to the foot of the billiard stairs, and there received the said letter.

On Thursday, the 13th, George Bate is again wanted on a similar errand. The adjourned inquest meets on the morrow, and Taylor's evidence will then come out. Palmer is still ill in bed, and when Bate arrives, he is sent to Thirlby (Ben that used to be at Salt's), to borrow a



£5 note. This he came back with, but Palmer, in the meanwhile, seems to have thought the amount too little for his purpose. He therefore sets Bate to hunt for bank-notes in a looking-glass drawer. George can only see one for £50, which Palmer, we suppose, thinks too much, and yet it is a question of life and death with him. At this juncture, a sheriff's officer is announced. So it has come to that at last; these bills, which he had set afloat, paying as much as 75 per cent. per annum for discount, have at length entangled him in the meshes of the web. Bate is now ordered to retire while Palmer holds some little conversation with the officer. When he comes back again, Palmer hands him a letter to take to W. W. Ward, Esq., which he is to be sure no one sees him deliver. George did not like so much secrecy, and he asked Mr. Palmer if he could not send some one else. Palmer replied, "Why, George, as to this poor fellow Cook, they will find nothing in him; for he was the best 'pal' I ever had in my life; and why should I have poisoned him?" and he added, "I am as innocent as you, George." George thereupon goes off to Stafford. This time he catches William Webb Ward on the road between the Station and the Junction Hotel, and there slyly slips the note into his hand. Not a word passed; both of them no doubt understood each other.

The next day, Friday, Dec. 14th, was a day of deep anxiety for William Palmer. Although matters looked black enough as they stood, still, until the Nemesian, Dr. Alfred Taylor, came down to Rugeley, and threw the weight of his evidence into the scale, there was nothing more than vague, though serious, suspicion attaching to our sporting surgeon. The witnesses had described Cook's death, with its minutest particulars; the medical evidence agreed that these particulars unmistakeably indicated tetanus. Dr. Taylor proved that that tetanus was produced by strychnine; and Charles Robert, in his turn, proved that he sold strychnine to Palmer only a day before Cook's death.

Palmer is summoned; the answer given is, that he is too ill to attend—perhaps the sheriff's officers feared an escape. Next day a verdict of "Wilful Murder" is returned, and Palmer's friend—the recipient of the "fine pheasant and a good hare"—the suspected recipient of the £5 note—W. Webb Ward, Esq., coroner for Staffordshire—makes out his warrant of commitment to the county prison.

Mr. Hatton, the local police superintendent, proceeds to Palmer's house, and arrests him. He is still in the custody of the sheriff's officers; and still too unwell to be removed. A guard of police officers is therefore left behind. So thoroughly did Palmer's friends believe in his innocence, that when notice was given him of his arrest on the charge, a familiar companion of his, who was in the room at the time, was about to seize the officer by the throat, declaring that he would never allow Palmer to be taken away on such a diabolical charge. Such a proceeding would have availed Palmer nothing. The police officers proceeded at once with their duty. Every article in the room was strictly examined; and a crowd of persons, whose murmuring voices could be distinctly heard in the miserable man's bed-chamber, congregated around the house till midnight, in expectation of seeing him carried away to gaol.

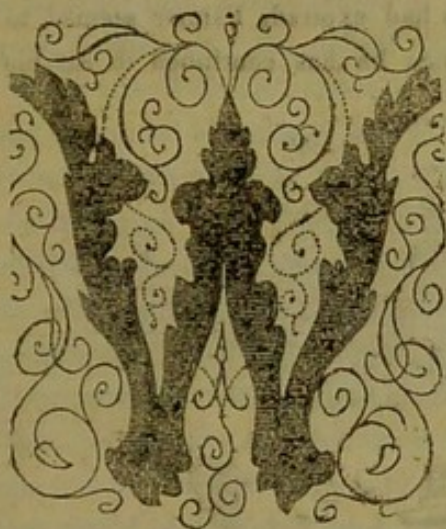
Jerry Smith, the lawyer, saw him on the morning after the Coroner's jury had returned their verdict. He sent to see Jerry. It was some time before the latter could make up his mind to go; for, as he said, the news made him fall sick. At last, when he recovered himself, he entered the room. Palmer was surrounded by policemen. Jerry, pointing to them, said, 'William! William! how is this?' Palmer could not answer him, but the tears trickled down his cheeks. This, the police say, is the only time they ever saw him affected, or betray any symptoms of emotion.



He, doubtless, did not pass one of the calmest nights in that well-known room in the old familiar house where he had lived so long—that room where he had, about a twelvemonth previously, gazed, though but for a moment, on the pale features of his dead wife for the last time. What would he give now to be able to re-call her—that she might whisper one word of comfort in his ear in his dire misery!—she who would have believed him innocent, though twenty juries pronounced him guilty; and, if guilty, would have brought him to repentance by the deep power of a woman's love. Alas! instead of her by his side, he sees the officers of justice crowded around his bed, watching for that slight change in his disorder which will warrant them in carrying him off a prisoner to Stafford gaol.

## CHAPTER XXI.

PALMER'S FAREWELL—PALMER IN PRISON—HIS VOLUNTARY STARVATION—HIS FURNITURE SEIZED AND SOLD.



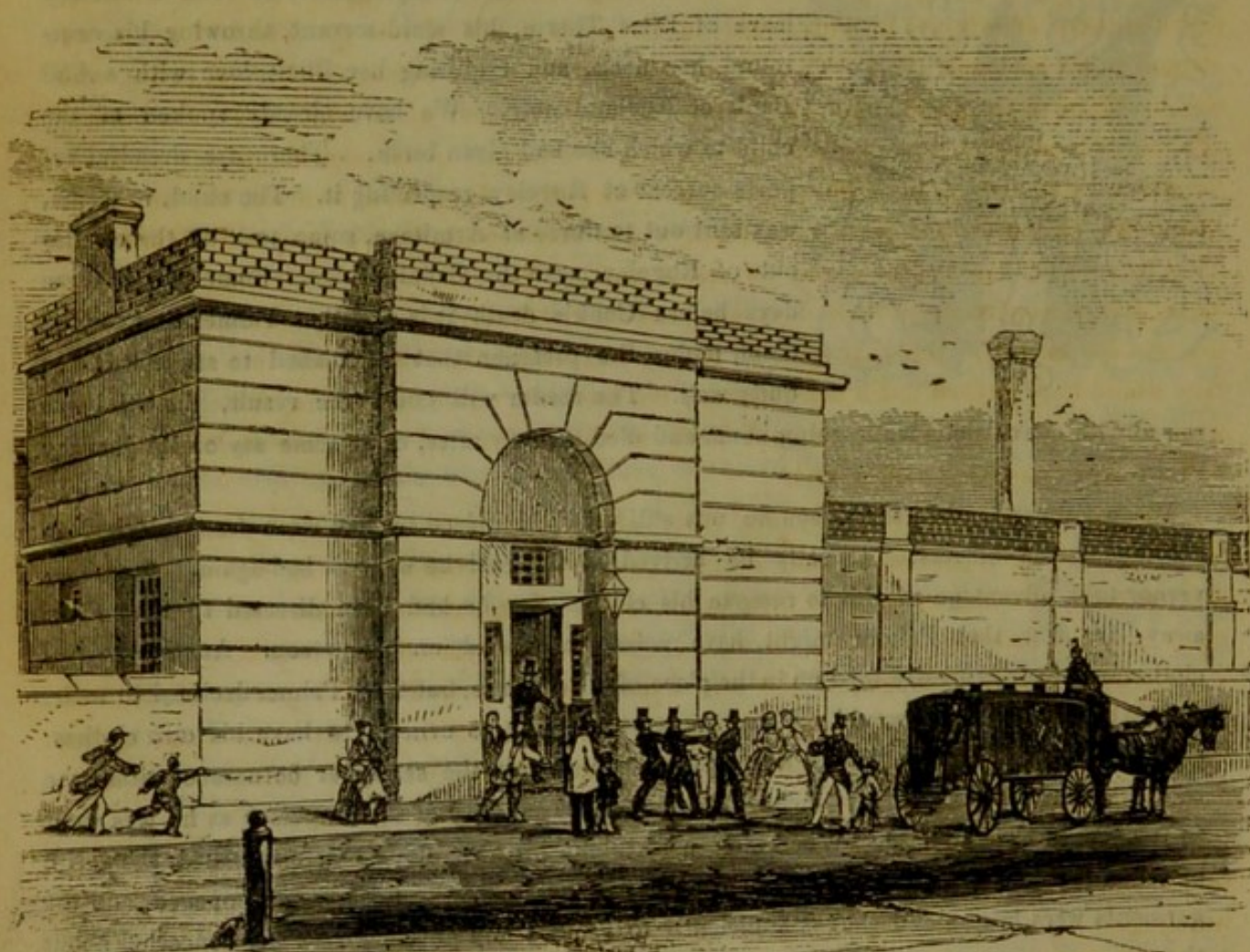
WE next hear of William Palmer as a prisoner in Stafford gaol. Before, however, he was conveyed there, he took a farewell leave of Eliza Tharm, his maid-servant, throwing his arms round her neck, and requiting her illicit love with a £50 Bank of England note. We have already spoken of the child to which she had given birth. There are dreadful reports current at Rugeley respecting it. The child, it seems, was sent out to nurse at Armitage, some two or three miles out of Rugeley, near the Canal Bridge. Some two or three days before Cook's death it is said that Palmer sent for the child, under the pretence that he wished to see that it was quite well. The reader will guess the result, the child was

seized with convulsions while going home and died shortly after, or as some say on its journey back.

When Palmer reached the prison he was still very ill; indeed he had risen from his bed to accompany the officers. Directly he arrived at the gaol he went to bed again. The Governor took advantage of this to remove his clothes, for he had been directed to take them away, for fear that Palmer might have poison concealed on his person. Another suit of clothes was made expressly for him in the place of the old ones, but these Palmer declined to wear, and stated that he never would. From the great anxiety he evinced to have his own clothes, the officers felt persuaded that he had poison concealed in the seams or corners of either the coat, waistcoat, or trousers. Of course, a very small quantity of such a poison as he was wont to use, would have sufficed. When after a fortnight his own clothes were returned, the entire suit had previously been searched as carefully as possible. The seams were opened, and the garments were beaten and shaken sufficiently to remove any powder, were any concealed about them.



Palmer in his despondency appears, on his first entry into the prison, to have determined on self-destruction. He remained in bed, refusing to take any food, simply swallowing a little water from time to time. On the sixth day the Governor became alarmed by this obstinacy, and, at his morning's visit to the prison, he spoke to him, as he did, indeed, every day, arguing with him, and endeavouring to persuade him to take his food. Palmer constantly replied that he did not want anything, and that he was not hungry. The Governor, finding him so determined, and seeing that the danger was imminent, resolved on forcing him to take nourishment. He procured a stomach-pump, and, ordering a basin of soup to be made, visited the prisoner. He once more asked him to take his food. Palmer again answered that he had no appetite. The Governor replied, that his looks were those of a healthy man, that his pulse was good, and that there was no apparent reason why he should not make the effort. Palmer still persisted in saying he should not eat. The Governor reasoned with him, and told him, that if he did not take his food quietly, he should have to place the tube of the stomach-pump in his mouth, and inject the soup into his stomach. He pointed out to Palmer that his resistance was useless, for that in less than five minutes—if he was forced to have recourse to compulsory measures—he could oblige him to swallow the soup, as all he had to do was to summon his officers, (of whom there were fifty in the building), to place a small gag in his (Palmer's) mouth, and introduce the coil, and in less than five minutes the soup would be down his throat. "In fact," added the Governor, "I shall just allow you the five minutes to consider whether you will take the food in the ordinary way or not." After the five minutes had expired, Palmer seemed to think better of the matter, and took the soup, and ever since he has continued to eat his



GATEWAY OF STAFFORD GAOL.



meals. At one time he requested that food might be sent to him from his own house, but of course this request was at once refused, in order to guard against any attempt being made to convey poison to him. He was told that he might order what he liked, but that it must be cooked in the prison.

The County Gaol and House of Correction of Stafford has very much the appearance of a large, squat brick castle. At the corners of the building are round towers of red brick, and there are two outer walls of red brick adjoining two red outer walls. There is a red-hot glare about the pile, as if you saw it through red glass. The principal entrance is entirely built of stone, and it is quite refreshing to get near it, for it is like being in the cool shade.

The Governor's house is exactly opposite the porter's lodge, and has a little bit of a garden before it to enliven it; but the grass seems to know it is in prison, or else the ground is on criminal allowance, and allowed no luxuries, such as manure; for the Governor's garden is not flourishing, and, beyond some remarkably fine flint stones, seems to grow nothing worthy of notice. A pathway from hence leads to the debtors' airing court, a large piece of ground, surrounded by wooden railings. The bake-house is next to the debtors' court; and through the windows, may usually be seen a vast amount of bread, not in square loaves such as freemen usually eat, but slabs of bread, like three-inch deal-planks, sawn in small lengths of three feet, and piled together with the greatest order. A kind of grinding noise is heard, together with the hum of machinery. The power by which the mill-stones are put in motion, is no other than a tread-wheel of 32-felon power, with poor wretches dressed in their prison gray, walking up "the endless stairs," which turns away beneath their feet.

Soon after Palmers's arrest, a solicitor of Birmingham arrived at Rugeley early one morning, and demanded admittance into his house, in virtue of a bill of sale for £10,400, given by Palmer in the spring of 1855. The request was refused by the superintendent of police, who was in charge of the papers and other things in the house, and an entrance was subsequently effected by breaking a pane of glass and opening a window. Arrangements were soon made for selling off the effects by public auction, and we gather from Mrs. Bennett, the next-door neighbour, that if it had been a nobleman's sale there couldn't have been more folks there. They came from Birmingham, and all round about. The sale, which, according to the catalogue, was to have occupied three days, was passed over between a morning and a night. "The sale was too hurried," this lady said. "If they had brought the things out into the open air, they would have fetched much more money; but they didn't give the bidding time. The books were almost given away. Loads and loads of things went off from here to Birmingham. The furniture was very good indeed."

"His house was very handsomely furnished;" observed an informant to us, "I know he gave forty guineas for a sideboard, and sixteen pounds for a cheffonier; his chairs cost four guineas each. He had a very good taste in furniture. I am a cabinet-maker, and I have made many pieces of furniture under his directions. He had a very good taste indeed."

According to the catalogue of the sale, Palmer was possessed of 222 gallons of ale, and 67 dozen of port, and 43 gallons of spirits. He had more bottles in his cellar than in his surgery. He had 800 in the one, and only 137 in the other; but what matter where they were kept, since, doubtless, all were equally employed in his drugging business?

During the sale while the police were looking on, a deal box was put up, with some fishing tackle and some pills. The auctioneer emphasized "pills," but the police did not think it worth their while to interfere. It is not at all improbable but that these might have been Bamford's pills thrown aside in a great hurry; for a medical man is not likely to keep his pills in a deal fishing-tackle box.



A prayer-book was purchased by a lady at the sale which, had been presented to Palmer's wife by Colonel Brooks. Under the inscription, written in pencil, in Mrs. Palmer's handwriting, there was a long prayer for the safety of her child, beseeching most earnestly that he might not be cut off suddenly, like the other four.

We wonder who bought "the handsome mahogany German bedstead, with panelled foot-board, carved cornice, fringe, and figured damask hangings," on which poor Mrs. Palmer died!

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE SALE OF PALMER'S STUD AT TATTERSALL'S.



OPPOSITE the grand entrance to Hyde-park, where the carriages and horsemen enter, and where the mob stands to see the Queen go by, down by Decimus Barton's arch, with the horrible equestrian statue of the late lamented F.M., on the top of it, is Tattersall's, the *sanctum sanctorum* of sporting men; a haunt as familiar to the juvenescent Yorkshire tyke as to the best swell in London, a name as suggestive of good faith, honour, prompt payments, splendid horse-flesh, and noble company, as it is of swindling, robbery, "non est's," defaulting, levanting, screws, and blackguards. There is a sporting air about the whole place, from the red-jacketed touts, who hang round the entrance, to the shrewd look of the auctioneer himself. Come down the yard, filling already, for the news that Palmer's nags are coming to the hammer has spread abroad; and hundreds whom business would never have tempted, have strolled here through curiosity. Here they are, gentle and simple, young and old, peers, gentry, tradesmen, and legs. That tall old man, with the fine aristocratic face, and neck swathed in the thick white choker, is a clergyman, and as thorough a sportsman as ever stepped; the dirty little man in the brown coat, is a Viscount, and the tall, handsome roman-nosed man in the great coat with the fur collar, a butcher. Here comes the leviathan of the ring; this tall thin man, dressed entirely in black, with a blue-speckled handkerchief round his throat—he was a carpenter once, and his word is now good for £50,000. In the stables you will find the *acme* of neatness and cleanliness; here to the right, is the subscription room, into which we must not go, and here, a public-house, for the bodily solace of these little grooms and jockies sprinkled here and there among the crowd.

It is Monday, January 14, 1856. The Rugeley poisoning cases are, of course, the ruling topic of conversation, and great was the interest excited by the presence of Mr. Hatton, chief of the Stafford constabulary, who, accompanied by Mr. W. V. Stephens, executor of the late John Parsons Cook, had come there to make inquiries relative to the money received of or paid to Mr. Cook. Notes, with certain indorsements on them, were known to have been in the possession of Mr. Cook, and information was requested respecting them. Ere Mr. Hatton takes his departure he causes the subjoined notices to be posted in the room, and a crowd, of course, soon collects to read them.



"Any gentleman who saw William Palmer in London on Saturday, the 24th of November, is earnestly requested to communicate with J. H. Hatton, Esq., chief of the county constabulary, Stafford; or with Mr. W. V. Stephens, No. 11, Campden-grove, Kensington, executor to the deceased."

"Any gentleman who paid the late Mr. Cook money at Shrewsbury races, or who had, or witnessed any money transactions with him at that time, is earnestly requested to communicate with J. H. Hatton, Esq., chief of the county constabulary, Stafford, or with Mr. W. V. Stephens, &c."

It was on the Monday following that the brood mares, horses in training, and yearlings belonging to William Palmer, of Rugeley were put up to auction at "the Corner." Many of the leading patrons of the turf, and most of the trainers from the north and south of England, were, of course, present; but a large majority of the miscellaneous assemblage consisted of persons whose motive was to satisfy a feeling of curiosity, which the circumstances connected with the sale had excited.

In certain instances competition was sustained with much spirit, and high prices were realised. In the aggregate, the sale amounted to £3,906.

Major Grove, Her Majesty's commissioner from the Royal paddocks, bought Trickstress for 230 guineas; but, strange to say, although he appeared to bid anxiously for Nettle—a decidedly superior animal—he at last let her go, Mr. F. L. Popham purchasing her for 430 guineas. Nettle, it will be remembered, was first favourite for the Oaks last year, but she fell over the chains soon after starting, and her jockey had his thigh fractured. The Chicken was "knocked down" for 800 guineas; the first bid was 300, and Mr. H. Hill spiritedly advanced the price, until he reached 780 guineas, when he stopped. The horse was ultimately sold to Mr. Harlock, who, it was understood, bought him for a "noble lord." For the 3 yr-old filly by Melbourne, out of Seaweed, Mr. Sargent gave 500 guineas. Staffordshire Nan was purchased for 300 guineas.

With regard to the 2-year old brown colt by Sir Hercules, the auctioneer announced that a paper, signed by Palmer, had been handed to him, containing a promise on Palmer's behalf to pay the breeder of the colt 100 guineas on the first occasion of the animals winning. This promise, however, the auctioneer stated, would, in no way, affect the sale, as the purchaser could pay the money or not, as he pleased.

Subjoined is a marked catalogue, with the names of the purchasers of the different lots affixed:

Doubt (foaled in 1846), by Gladiator, 81 guineas (Mr. Blenkiron).

Trickstress, 8-yrs-old, 230 guineas (Prince Albert).

Duchess of Kent, 200 guineas (purchaser's name omitted).

Goldfinder's dam (foaled in 1843), 71 guineas (Mr. Parker).

Bay yearling colt by Touchstone—Duchess of Kent, 230 guineas (Mr. Padwick).

Bay yearling colt by Melbourne—Goldfinder's dam, 225 guineas (Mr. Blenkiron).

Brown yearling colt by Faugh-a-Ballagh—Doubt, 51 guineas (Mr. Nicholls).

Brown yearling filly by Touchstone—Maid of Lyme, 250 guineas (Mr. Padwick).

Brown colt 2-yrs-old by Sir Hercules—Lurley's dam, 105 guineas.

Bay filly 2-yrs-old (sister to Staffordshire Nan), 82 guineas (Mr. Hadland).

Brown filly 3-yrs-old by Melbourne—Seaweed, 590 guineas (Mr. Sargent).

Rip Van Winkle 3-yrs-old by the Flying Dutchman, 70 guineas (Mr. Sargent).

Staffordshire Nan, 3-yrs-old, 300 guineas (Mr. Bryant).

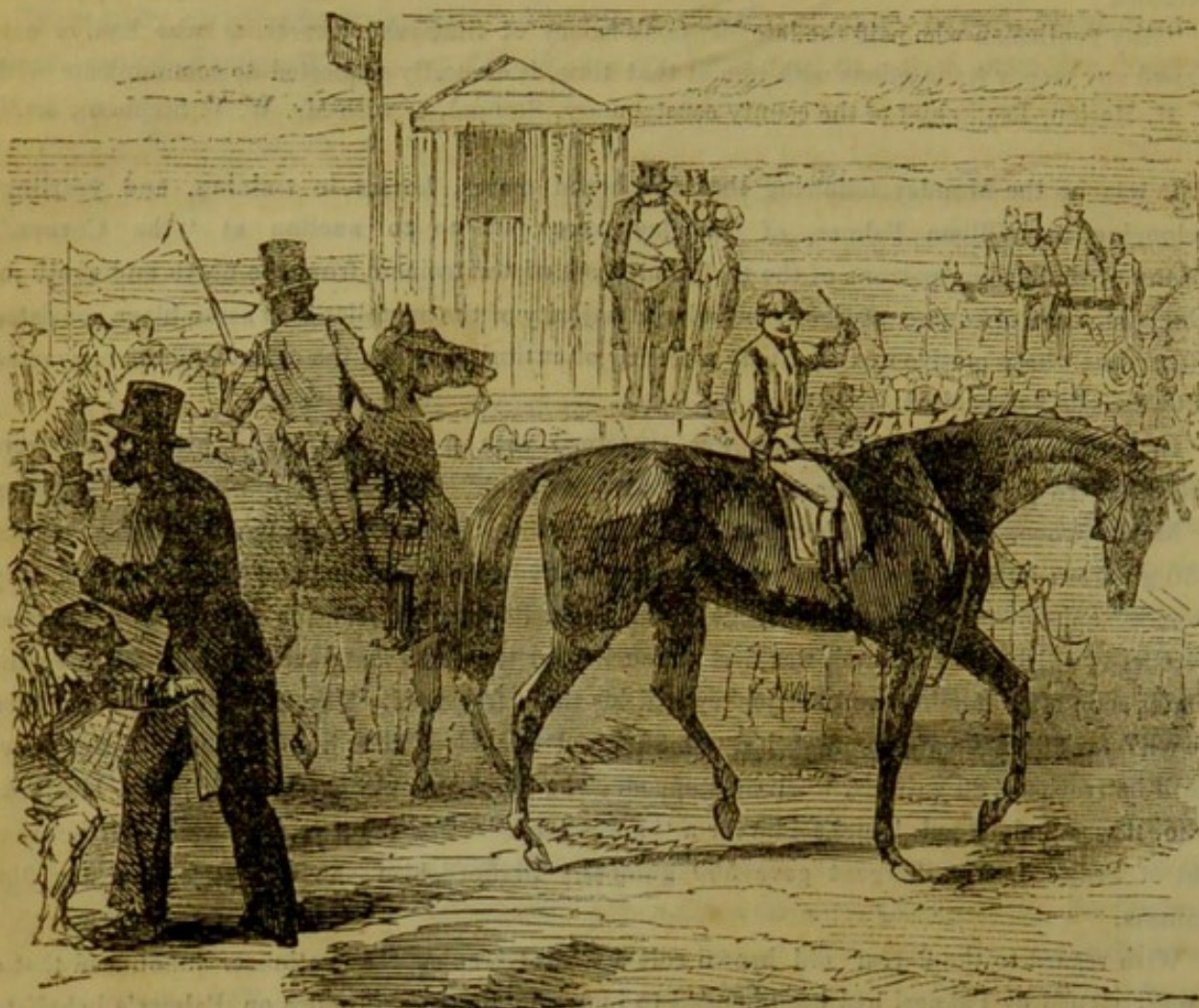
Nettle, 4-yrs-old, 430 guineas (Mr. F. L. Popham).



The Chicken, 4-yrs-old, 800 guineas (Mr. Harlock).

Lurley, 5-yrs-old, 120 guineas (Mr. Alexander).

Morning Star (Brother to Pole Star), 71 guineas (Mr. Serston).



THE CHICKEN.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### PALMER'S HOUSE AT RUGELEY.



THE house in which Palmer lived, stands exactly opposite to the Talbot Arms Hotel. It is a two-floored dwelling, with broad, modern windows, and faced with what builders call "rough cast," painted stone-colour. It is a comfortable place for an honest man to live in, and has, so says a neighbour, "some capital roomy rooms at the back."

It is not such a large house as that of Mr. Bennett, the shoemaker next door, nor has it so many outbuildings as those at "The Bell," on the other side; but it has been painted and done up, and has a more "genteel" look, as if the surgeon wished to make some difference between his residence and the shops around. It has evidently been built as a superior kind of dwelling, for it stands back a few yards from the footway; a bit of turf, not bigger than a billiard-table, and a few evergreens, being enclosed by the iron railings in front.

Between the two front windows is the street-door, on which is still the brass plate of



"Mr. William Palmer, Surgeon," but now grown rusty and dull, since Eliza Tharm has given over attending to it. Close against the party-wall of "The Bell" is the entrance to the surgery, with the knob of the night-bell sticking out from the door-post. After the sale, all the shutters were closed, and as people passed by they used to look up at the windows, and point the rooms out to each other. "I've had many a glass of champagne in that room," says one. "That's where the devil used to sleep," says another; and all, cursing him, pass on.

The large window to the left of the door was that of the drawing-room. Here were "the handsome chimney glasses," and the fine-toned semi-grand pianoforte, on which poor Mrs. William Palmer used to accompany herself when singing,—“for she was a sweet singer,” as



the people say. The room was well furnished. There was, to quote the words of the catalogue the "rosewood couch, with spring seat, squab, and pillow, in blue damask, and the six elegant rosewood chairs *en suite*, and the very handsome mahogany bookcase, with plate-glass and sliding shelves," that Mrs. William used to sit and look at the long evening through, when her husband left her so much alone, and was away at the race meetings.

The window to the right, on the first floor, belongs to the room in which the amiable and unfortunate lady expired. There she lay, extended on the "handsome German bedstead, with panelled foot-board, carved cornice and fringe, and figured damask hangings," with the half conviction upon her that her husband had taken away her life, and fearing for the fate of the poor boy of seven she was parting from for ever. Did Palmer ever sleep in that bed again? Did he see no other figures on the damask hangings besides those worked by the loom? It is known that he never would sleep alone from the time his wife died, and, perhaps, the prickings of his conscience forced him to make that partial confession of his guilt.

Palmer had a good cellar. He was a man who won hearts; and what begins a friendship so



soon as a bottle of good old port? "He never drank himself, but he liked to see his friends enjoy themselves." In the dining-room at the back, where, against the wainscoting, hung the portraits of "Marlow, the jockey," who broke his leg while riding "Nettle" for the Oaks, and "Goldfinder, the winner of the Derby," Palmer, seated on the plush velvet seat of one of the "Elizabethan carved oak chairs," would press the jovial group to try just one more bottle. Here it was that he thought "that just one glass of weak brandy-and-water wouldn't hurt Mrs. Thornton." Here, also, he sat and laughed with Bladon, passing round the bottle of "Fletcher's old port," and joking about heel taps!

At the back of the house stretches out the garden, which covers some half-acre of land. It was well kept up—"in very good fettle," as a labourer called it. The low hedge that divided the courtyard from the garden was clipped with care, and the small garden in front of the stable, with a little bit of imitation rock-work, "to spruce it up," was thoroughly well attended to. Palmer appears to have been a man who did not much care for flowers. He was more fond of leeks and spring onions, of which there are at least six beds. Cleanliness he liked, and so he kept his house well painted, and his garden in order. A little patch, some twenty feet long and eight feet wide, was all the space he devoted to his flower-garden. The beds, cut out of the turf, are arranged in curious shapes, such as stars and lozenges, but beyond a few roots of pinks and drooping wallflowers, he did not attend to its floriculture.

There is a stable and coach-house, with a peartree against the bricks, and a horse-shoe nailed to the door. In the courtyard before them Palmer's love of horses caused him to have every improvement introduced that was useful and good. The large tank was of slate, and the rain water flowed into it, for he was too much in the society of grooms not to know that soft water was necessary to the animals' health. In one corner next a pigsty a manure tank was sunk, into which the slush of the stable and piggery drained, and there was a pump to raise up the liquid as it was required for the cultivation of the garden. The house is larger than would be imagined from its frontage. The dining-room runs far back, and has a little bit of grass and a few beds of flowers arranged before its window.

The whole of the building was locked up. Not a window, but the catch was turned over the sash to prevent the curious from raising it; not a door but the bolts were drawn and the lock fastened. The place seems to have been lately painted and done up. The whitewash was excessively clean, the little palings had been freshly pitched, and the woodwork repaired.

There were all the evidences of the house having been lately occupied. The brickwork partition outside the kitchen door, where the coals were kept, was still half full, and the old scuttle, in which they were carried into the house, was quietly rusting itself away into powder. On the top of the coal-heap was the wooden top of an oyster-barrel with the card nailed to it, and the printed portion of "Lynn's oyster and fish warehouse," and the addition in ink of "7 paid," were still fresh and new. Old rope mats turned out of doors as worthless, and a broom-top with the hair worn off, were lying rotting in the yard.

Following the walk down the kitchen garden, where the clothes' poles and the cord along them form a kind of imitation telegraph, a bed of rhubarb was come to, just pushing with its new stalks and pale green leaves through the black mould. The bed was covered with manure, as if Palmer had prided himself on his rhubarb. Here was also to be found the first bed of leeks. A gooseberry and raspberry plantation of some forty trees appeared kept and pruned. The fruit-trees trained against the wall had not a bough loose.

On June 2nd, in the present year, a peripatetic photographer took up his quarters in the rear of Palmer's house, who forthwith issued the following announcement:—



FOR A FORTNIGHT.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS.

C. ALLEN,

Respectfully informs the Ladies, Gentry, and Inhabitants of Rugeley that he can produce

**A VERY SUPERIOR PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT,**

In Gilt and other Frames,

*From One Shilling to One Guinea,*

And solicits their patronage at the rear of the

**Premises lately occupied by W. Palmer.**

*Specimens may be seen at Mr. James's, Bookseller.*

Commencing at 10 o'Clock Mornings, until 6 in the Evenings.

RUGELEY, June 2nd, 1856.

The number of fashionably-dressed persons who journey over to Rugeley from the surrounding districts to obtain a sight of Palmer's house, is positively astounding. The photographer, no doubt, calculates upon a large proportion of these being seduced into returning home with such an interesting souvenir as their own portraits, actually taken off in Palmer's back garden.

It is not unlikely that Palmer's house will be pulled down. Old Masters, the landlord of the Talbot Arms, saw Lord Lichfield a day or two before Palmer's execution:

"Well, Masters," observed he, "What am I to do with that house?"

"I think, my Lord," replied Masters, "that you will have to pull it down."

"And I think so too," replied his lordship.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERDICTS OF WILFUL MURDER IN THE CASES OF ANN AND WALTER PALMER—PALMER AS A WITNESS AT WESTMINSTER—HE CHARGES HIS WIFE WITH FORGERY.



had been used to destroy Walter Palmer's life.

URING the time Palmer was attempting suicide, by voluntarily starving himself, in Stafford Gaol, the bodies of his wife, Ann Palmer, and of his brother, Walter Palmer, were being exhumed, and, after several adjourned inquests, verdicts of "Wilful Murder" were returned in both cases. With respect to Mrs. Palmer, there is no manner of doubt but that she was poisoned by continual doses of antimony. No poison was found in the body of the brother; the lead coffin, and the length of time that had elapsed since his death, were sufficient to account for the evaporation of all traces of prussic acid—supposing that this deadly poison



The body of John Parsons Cook was also again exhumed, in order that a more minute examination might be made of the condition of the spinal cord. The examination was proceeded with by Dr. Harland, Dr. Monckton, and Mr. Dawford, in the presence of two medical gentlemen, named by Mr. George Palmer, viz., Professor Bolton and Mr. Pemberton, of Birmingham. Both the body and coffin exhibited symptoms of decomposition. The spinal cord (which was alone the subject of investigation) was in a state of preservation, which allowed a full and proper examination of its whole length. The spine was proved to be entirely free from disease.

On January 21 of the present year, Palmer appeared at Westminster as a witness on a trial, in which Padwick was the plaintiff, and Palmer's mother the defendant. The action was to recover the amount of a bill of exchange for £2,000, which bill apparently bore the mother's acceptance. She was called to deny the handwriting, and other members of the family deposed to the same effect. Clerks in banks, and solicitors, were agreed that the bill was a forgery. Palmer, it seems, had put this bill into circulation, and he was at length called as a witness. The scene was dramatic in the extreme—the court was crowded to suffocation, and most of those present were nervous with excitement, in their eagerness to obtain a view of this individual. The door of the judge's private room was thrown open, and Palmer appeared in court in the custody of an officer. He entered the witness box in a perfectly cool and collected manner, surveyed leisurely the crowded audience, to some of whom he nodded in a familiar way, and appeared to fix his attention on some person located near the learned counsel, who conducted the plaintiff's case. He was then sworn, and in a low, yet firm and distinct voice, answered the following questions put to him, betraying not the least hesitation or trepidation, and not at all moved by the gaze of the numerous audience, collected together to obtain a glimpse of so notorious an individual.

Mr. Edwin James, handing the bill of exchange to the witness, asked:—Is the signature "William Palmer," as the drawer of that bill, in your handwriting?—Palmer: Yes. And you applied to Padwick to advance you money on it?—I did. Who wrote Sarah Palmer's acceptance on it?—Anne Palmer. Who is she?—She is now dead. Do you mean your wife?—Yes. Did you see her write it?—Yes.

The witness was then removed in custody of the officer.

At this startling denouement, the counsel for the plaintiff saw no other course open to him than to retire from the case. A verdict was, therefore, returned for the defendant, and Palmer was hurried back to jail.

Shall we believe the statement which Palmer made with such cool deliberation—a statement, which every one present listened to with almost a shudder, while the man who made it was perfectly unmoved? No tender reminiscence connected with his dead wife could seal his lips if she were guilty; as no sense of justice—setting love altogether aside for her memory, could check him from calumniating her, in the face of the world—if she were innocent. The secret lies between themselves, and the lips of both are now sealed. Scoundrel as William Palmer was, he may, on some false pretence, have succeeded in persuading his wife to write the name of Sarah Palmer, in a feminine hand, across a blank piece of paper; or, he may have returned home some day, from one of his racing expeditions, and told her that he was a ruined man—that he had staked his all on this last chance, and that fortune had not favoured him—that writs and lawyers' letters were pouring in upon him like hail; and, that to save their home, and what was dearer to her still, his good name, but one course was open; and, when he explained to her what that course was, we can imagine how she clasped her hands together in a fit of horror; but





still, how in her love for him, trusting too as she did in him, as only woman trusts in man, and believing his protestations that the criminal act, he required her to perform, was the only way



to save him, she was at length persuaded to write the requisite name with all the feminine skill she could command.



When, however, his increasing difficulties made it necessary for him to issue more of these, so called, "securities," it was equally necessary that the signatures should all be the same hand writing. Did it so happen that the wife of William Palmer, in her deep affection for him she had sworn, at the altar, to love and obey, was once tempted to commit the crime of forgery, we can well conceive that in the hands of such a desperate and determined scoundrel as he has proved himself to be, it would have been impossible for her to recede. Henceforth she was in his power; and as the old proverb says, "Needs must when the Devil drives."

## CHAPTER XXV.

### WILLIAM PALMER IS TRIED FOR MURDER.



THE excitement in reference to the Rugeley poisonings, for such was the designation given to the crimes with which Palmer was charged, rose to such a pitch in the immediate neighbourhood of Stafford, that it was considered the accused would not meet with a fair trial if tried at the assizes. An application was therefore made to the Court of Queen's Bench, to allow the trial to take place in London, or at any rate in another county to that in which the crime was committed. This application was granted, but to admit of the trial taking place at the Central Criminal Court, it was necessary to pass a special Act of Parliament. Sergeant Shee thus alluded to the circumstance at the opening of his speech in Palmer's defence:—

"The very circumstances under which we meet in this place are of a character to excite in me mingled feelings of encouragement and alarm. Those whose duty it is to watch over the safety of the Queen's subjects, felt so much apprehension lest the course of justice should be disturbed by the popular prejudice which had been excited against the prisoner—they were so much alarmed that an unjust verdict might, in the midst of that prejudice, be passed against him, that an extraordinary measure of precaution was taken, not only by her Majesty's Government, but also by the Legislature. An Act of Parliament, which originated in that branch of the Legislature to which the noble and learned Lord who presides here belongs, and was sanctioned by him, was passed to prevent the possibility of an injustice being done through an adherence to the ordinary forms of law in the case of William Palmer. The Crown, also, under the advice of its responsible Ministers, resolved that this prosecution should not be left in private hands, but that its own law officer, my learned friend, the Attorney-General, should take upon himself the responsibility of conducting it. And my learned friend, when that duty was entrusted to him, did, what I must say, will for ever redound to his honour—he resolved that, in a case in which so much prejudice had been excited, all the evidence which it was intended to press against the prisoner should, as soon as he received it, be communicated to the prisoner's counsel. I must therefore tell my unhappy client, that everything which the constituted authorities of the land—everything which the Legislature and the law officers of the Crown could do to secure a fair and impartial trial has been done, and that if unhappily, an injustice should on either side be committed, the whole responsibility will rest upon my Lords and upon the jury."



On Wednesday, May 14, this long-deferred trial at length took place. We need not speak of it here,\* further than to say, that after twelve days' protracted proceedings, the jury, on a brief consultation, came into court with a verdict of "Wilful Murder."

A letter has appeared in the "Times" newspaper, written by one of the jurymen, in correction of a report that was prevalent, to the effect that the jury remained out of court for a certain period of time, with a view to give a greater appearance of decorum to their proceedings. The jurymen in question writes:—

"On reaching the room there was a dead silence for about twenty minutes. A discussion of the facts that had been laid before us was then commenced, and it lasted for about ten minutes, after which each man took pen and paper, and wrote his decision and name, it having been agreed that no one should pronounce his opinion lest any other should receive a bias. The papers were then laid on the table; the foreman opened them and read them aloud, when "Guilty" was found to be the unanimous verdict. An earnest conversation then ensued, having no relation to William Palmer. This is a precise account of the proceedings of the jury.

"It is very material to the dignity of justice, and the jury's credit, that it should be known that no portion of our time was spent in sham; that no hollow pretence to appear decorous, on such a solemn occasion, was resorted to. Our situation was too dreadful, and too solemn to admit of humbug.

"It is quite untrue that we were absent a long time for the mere sake of appearances."

After sentence had been pronounced, and Palmer had been removed back to his cell, he complained to the Under-Sheriff that he had not received a fair trial. The Under-Sheriff observed that he had no reason to complain, and reminded him that all the Judges agreed in the finding of the jury. Palmer's reply was, "Well, Sir, but that don't satisfy me." During the charge of Lord Campbell, he repeatedly communicated verbally and by written messages, with Mr. John Smith, his solicitor, and the counsel conducting his case. After the learned Judge had concluded, he addressed a note to Mr. Smith, in which he stated that Lord Campbell's summing up was very unfair towards him, and that, consequently, the jury must be prejudiced against him. He added, however, the expression of his belief that they would find a verdict of not guilty. When informed by the Under-Sheriff, after the sentence was passed, that he must prepare immediately to return to his former quarters in Stafford Gaol, he asked by what railway he was to be conveyed; and on being told that the London and North-Western was the usual and most direct route, he begged that he might be taken by the Great Western Railway, as he was so well known on the North-Western that he would be recognised all along the line. The Under-Sheriff informed him that his request could not be complied with, and he acquiesced without any further observation. As it was suspected that the prisoner might attempt to commit suicide, and thus defeat the ends of justice, a new suit of clothes was prepared for him, which he was directed to put on immediately after his return to his apartment at Newgate. No person was allowed to see him, or to communicate with him, after the sentence was passed, except the Under-Sheriff and the authorities of the prison.

During the trial, the prisoner expressed a belief that one at least of the jurymen, whose "personnel" appeared to attract his attention, was not the man to return a verdict of guilty, and on more than one occasion, in his communications with his counsel and his solicitor, he alluded to this gentleman.

Before quitting the bench, the learned Judges signed the warrants for the removal of the

\* See the Illustrated and Unabridged Edition of the "Times" Report of Palmer's Trial (184 p.p.)



prisoner to Stafford Gaol; and at twenty minutes to eight o'clock on the evening of his condemnation, two cabs drove up to Newgate, one of them entering the gaol gates, and the other remaining outside the governor's entrance. In a few minutes after, Palmer was brought out of the governor's door, placed in a cab, which, after the entrance of Mr. Weatherhead (the governor) and two officers, drove off as rapidly as possible. A great crowd had collected round the gaol gates, and when, a few seconds afterwards, the second cab was brought out empty, they saw that they had been deceived, and immediately ran after the first cab, and hooted the prisoner in the most excited manner. The cab arrived at the Euston station in time for the eight o'clock train. At the station there was much excitement, Palmer having been recognised at the instant he arrived on the platform. He was thrust into the middle compartment of a first-class carriage, and the blinds were at once drawn across the windows. He was dressed in convict's costume, his feet were ironed, the irons also being attached to one of the keepers, and his hands handcuffed. A cloak covered the whole.

Palmer arrived at Stafford late at night. Woollaston, the superintendent of the Stafford police, who was waiting to receive him, took one of his arms, and Weatherhead, the governor of Newgate, the other. Palmer looked rather fagged; but it was difficult to distinguish faces, the night was so dark. Palmer was almost the only one who spoke; he stepped in a puddle; "Dear me," said he, "it's very wet; have you had any rain down here?" Says Woollaston, "Yes, we have." After a lapse of nearly five minutes he said, "I've had a wearying trial of it: twelve long days;" and when he stumbled he said, "Bother these chains; I wish they were off; I can't walk properly."

On Saturday, May 31, he was visited in his cell by his two brothers, George Palmer, the solicitor, and the Rev. Thomas Palmer. The latter begged earnestly that the prisoner would confess, if guilty. "I fell on my knees before him," writes the brother in a letter to Lord Campbell; "I implored him, by our past love and kindred, by our early recollections and hopes by our common faith, by all the duties which he owed to man and God, to disburthen his conscience if he were guilty, and not to enter before the presence of his Creator with a falsehood upon his lips. I adjured him to say, if he were guilty, or not guilty. Oh, my Lord! he did not wince; he did not change his noble composure: he spoke and looked all innocence. Calmly, earnestly, and solemnly he answered, and the seriousness of his words went into our hearts with the fullest persuasion of his perfect guiltlessness of blood." On a subsequent occasion the Rev. T. Palmer again visited the convict, and more recently his sister, Sarah Palmer, came to see him. The interview between the prisoner and his sister was most affecting. She exhibited great distress, but he retained his usual composure of manner. He had some conversation with his sister respecting his little boy, expressing his anxiety respecting his welfare and prosperity in life. The poor little thing was ignorant of the doom awaiting his father, or, indeed, of his confinement in gaol, he being led to believe that he was ill at Birkenhead. He says he is sure there must be something dreadful the matter with him, or that he would be certain to come home.

Poor little Willie Palmer is a nice boy, about seven years of age; he lifts his hat in an old fashioned way when he is spoken to. He seems to be a general favorite with all who know him.

His father's miserable position was, of course, studiously concealed from him; and he did not become acquainted with it, until within a few days of Palmer's execution. It seems that a little boy (attending on his father, who was thatching a barn for old Mrs. Palmer) was playing with him. Willie made some reference to "Papa."



"Papa," said his little playmate; "your Papa is in Stafford jail."

Thomas Wright, the philanthropic foundryman, came over from Manchester, to see William Palmer in Stafford Jail, and, immediately after the old gentleman had gone, a rumour was spread about that Palmer had confessed; but one of the gaolers, speaking about his confession, said:—

"Well, sir, I havn't much to wager, but I'll bet every stick and stump I possess that Palmer does not confess after all. Why, he ate half-a-pound of steak last night for his tea, and complained of the milk not being good. I shall never forget the look he gave me when we took away his brush and tortoiseshell pocket-comb. We thought, you know, he might hurt himself with the comb. He went into such a passion. 'Send for the hairdresser,' he said, 'send for the hairdresser; I'll have every bit of my hair cut off.' And he did too. He looks so different, you can't imagine—so sharp. Yes, Mr. Wright may be a very good man, but I cannot imagine Palmer saying so much as he says he did. You mark my words, sir—and I've seen a good deal of him—he'll die hardened, and a coward."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE EXECUTION.

During the last few days of his existence, Palmer's general demeanour in no way changed. He took his meals regularly, and slept well. He maintained his self-possession; and the little conversation he had with those who visited him, or were in attendance upon him, evinced that his mind was somewhat subdued, but not depressed. It seems that he attended chapel in the gaol twice on the Sunday preceding his execution, and these were the only occasions since his condemnation. The seat he occupied was screened from observation. The Rev. Mr. Goodacre, the chaplain of the prison, was with Palmer at frequent intervals, and did not cease to impress upon him the futility of expecting any remission of his sentence. The prisoner's brothers, George and Thomas, saw him several times during the week.

On Tuesday a beautiful Bible was received at the gaol, as a present to the prisoner by Mr. Serjeant Shee. The Bible was accompanied by a most affecting note from the learned serjeant. The Bible and the note—melancholy *souvenirs*—will be kept by the family of the prisoner.

On Wednesday, June 11, Palmer expressed an anxious desire to see the Rev. Mr. Atkinson, the vicar of Rugeley, who has filled that office for many years, and who was, of course, well acquainted with the prisoner and his family. An intimation having been given to the rev. gentleman, of the prisoner's wish, he promptly acceded to it, and at once proceeded to Stafford, and was admitted to the prisoner's cell. The interview lasted for a considerable time, and the conversation was believed to have reference to some of the prisoner's family affairs. Palmer was a good deal affected, and appeared to evince a state of mind much more in accordance with his fearful position than he had shown at any period since his trial and condemnation. Mr. Atkinson saw him again on the following day, and they had another long and earnest conversation. The prisoner was also visited on the same day by his brother-in-law, Mr. Heywood.

The prisoner's solicitor was extremely energetic in his endeavours to procure a reprieve,



mainly on the plea of no strychnia having been found in Cook's body. Sir George Grey, however, replied that he could "see nothing in the points pressed upon his attention to justify his interfering with the due course of the law."

Palmer when told by his solicitor that Sir George Grey had refused to grant a reprieve, his face grew suddenly pale, and it was some minutes before it recovered its usual florid expression. Mr. Wright, the philanthropist, of Manchester, returned to Stafford again on Wednesday, on which day he had two interviews with Palmer, whom he saw again on the Thursday and Friday. The Rev. H. Sneyd also visited him. Each of these gentlemen endeavoured to bring the wretched man to a sense of the awful position in which he was placed. Palmer listened to everything the rev. gentleman and Mr. Wright said, with great attention marked by respect, but beyond this there was nothing to indicate that he was impressed by their exhortations. Palmer having spoken to the rev. Mr. Goodacre in high terms of Mr. Davis, the Ordinary of Newgate, Mr. Goodacre communicated the fact to Mr. Davis, and that gentleman wrote to Palmer in a spirit of kindly advice. The letter wound up with a solemn but fruitless adjuration to Palmer to confess the justice of his sentence, and so make his peace with God and man.

Like all other appeals of a similar character, this appeal fell upon a deaf ear and a hardened heart. There was no perceptible emotion occasioned by its perusal, and probably no feeling at all was excited on his mind. But to talk of making peace with his Maker, under such circumstances as those in which Palmer found himself the day before the execution, appears to be an absurdity; for his cell was never empty for any length of time—visitor succeeded visitor in rapid succession; and the mind of the wretched criminal must have been too much occupied with them and their conversation, to fix his attention upon the things that appertain to another world. The day was fully taken up by the things of this life—the night only remained for religion and repentance. And night was devoted to sleep. On Friday evening the final interview took place between Palmer and his brothers George and Thomas, who were accompanied by their sister. At this period all hope of a reprieve seemed to have passed away. Palmer appeared cheerful and serene; still there was now and then observable a slight twitching of the muscles at the corners of his mouth, and that restless play of the fingers which often seemed to occur involuntarily while he stood at the bar of the Old Bailey. The brothers took a sad farewell; the convict committing to their future care his only child; and it is rumoured that he extorted a promise from them that they would, for the sake of that child, quit their native country, and change their name. It is said that the Rev. Thomas Palmer earnestly entreated the prisoner to confess, if he were guilty, but he firmly and distinctly replied, "I have nothing to say, and nothing I shall say."

Contrary to expectation, no interview with his mother or his child took place, and it was believed that this was so by the prisoners' own desire.

In the morning Mr. Smith, his solicitor, was summoned by telegraph from London to Stafford, at Palmer's earnest request, and he arrived there at half-past 10 o'clock at night, when he had an interview with the convict, in the presence of Major Fulford, the governor of the gaol.

Palmer had declined to retire to rest until Smith came, and from that circumstance and the anxiety he had shown to have him sent for, it was supposed that he had some important communication to make to him; but it was not so. On going into the cell, the Governor informed Palmer that if he had anything confidential to say on family affairs to Mr. Smith, he (the governor) would keep it a secret. The prisoner replied that he had not, and he hoped the governor would lose no time in publishing all he had said. He also added, all he had to say was to thank Mr. Smith for his great exertions—the officers of the prison for their kindness to



him—and that Cook did not die from strychnine. Major Fulford expressed a hope that in his then awful condition he was not quibbling with the question, and urged him to say "Aye" or "No," whether or not he murdered Cook. He answered directly, that Lord Cambell "summed up for poisoning by strychnine." The governor retorted, it was of no importance how the deed was done, and asked him to say yes or no to the question.

Palmer said he had nothing more to add. He was quite easy in his conscience, and happy in his mind. This is the governor's version of the conversation; but upon the material point, Mr. Smith stated, just after leaving the convict, that what Palmer said to him was, "I am innocent of poisoning Cook by Strychnine; and all I ask is, that you will have his body examined, and that you will see to my mother and boy."

Mr. Smith promised to fulfil his last behest, and parted with the prisoner, who presented him with a book, in which he wrote in a fair hand, "The gift of Wm. Palmer, June 13, 1856." The book is headed "The Sinner's Friend," and a prelude, to which the prisoner referred, ran thus:—

"Oh! where for refuge shall I flee,  
If Jesus had not died for me?"

Immediately after he had parted from the prisoner, Smith wrote to a friend as follows:—

"My interview ended in Palmer's making me pledge myself that Cook's body should be exhumed, and that he was never poisoned by strychnia. Palmer was as cool as though any ordinary question had been discussed.

"God help him!"

The convict retired to rest early in the morning, and slept two hours and a half, when he was visited again by Mr. Goodacre, the chaplain. Between five and six he took his breakfast, and made his gallows toilet with an unwavering serenity. There was no sign of repentance about him—no thought apparently, of confession, possibly no feeling, not even the slightest, of compunction or remorse.

Breakfast over, the chaplain made his appearance in the cell, to offer the final consolations of religion to the condemned, who was still quiet and resigned; and shortly afterwards came in the sheriff and other officials. As he was about to leave his cell for the last time, he said, in reply to the high sheriff, that he denied the justice of his sentence, and that he was a murdered man. These were about the last words he uttered.

Palmer walked (in the company of the sheriff) to the press-room, where he met Smith, the hangman (from Dudley), and submitted as quietly to the final preparations for his execution as if he had been under the hands of a valet dressing for a dinner-party. In that sad place some of his relations met him. They had told him on the previous night that they would see him no more, alive or dead, and, save a few brief words of parting courtesy, he said nothing to sheriff, chaplain, or any one.

His bearing in the last supreme moments of his life elicited the amazement of all who witnessed it. When the fatal hour arrived, the prison bell tolled forth the hour of his irrevocable doom, and the melancholy procession was formed which conducted him from his cell to his doom, he marched along with a junty air and a tripping gait, and, though the distance he had to traverse was considerable, he maintained this bold front to the last, stepped lightly up the stairs leading to the gallows, took his place on the drop, and confronted the vast multitude below, not without emotion, but without anything like bravado.

Palmer was received with a deafening round of curses, shouts, hootings, oaths and execrations from a crowd of from 20 to 30,000 people. Cries, shrieks, groans, rose from the raging



mob. The populace, infuriated, tore the air with clamours—"Murderer!" "Poisoner!" were loudly shouted and screamed in hideous mockery. The miners and colliers seemed maddened with excitement.

Palmer cast just one look at the vast multitude around him. After a brief prayer with the chaplain, he turned to the hangman, had the rope put round his neck, and the long cap drawn over his face. He then shook hands with his executioner, said, in a low voice, "God bless you;" and as the last word issued from his lips the bolt was withdrawn, the drop fell, and, after a slight convulsion of the limbs, he hung lifelessly from the gallows. So well had everything been managed by the hangman, so nicely had the fatal cord been adjusted, and so clear was the fall of the drop, that death was all but instantaneous.

Palmer, contrary to all usage, was hung in the prison dress, but that was not intended as an indignity; it simply arose from the circumstance that the clothes in which he was tried were left in London, and no others had been since supplied.

His body hung the accustomed time, and then being cut down, was carried inside the prison, where Mr. Bridges, of Liverpool, immediately took a cast of the head, which he says is, phrenologically, decidedly bad.

The body was afterwards, according to the letter of the sentence, buried within the precincts of the prison, and so passed from the sight of men for ever, the mortal remains of William Palmer, the poisoner of Rugeley.

Early on the morning of Friday the intense anxiety with regard to it was manifested by the numbers pouring into Stafford from all directions. The trains were crowded, and every successive arrival at the railway station augmented the number of visitors. During the day the town assumed more the appearance of some anticipated festivity, than of the fearful judicial spectacle which was so shortly to take place. The streets, despite the torrents of rain which fell during nearly the whole of Friday, were unusually crowded. The public-houses were full, and in many of them the jocund song and merry dance were kept up with untiring energy, by numbers who had travelled far to glut their eyes with the death struggles of a fellow-creature. One place of resort was the house where the hangman had located himself, every one being more or less anxious to obtain a sight of the man who was to be Palmer's executioner.

In the more immediate vicinity of the gaol raised platforms were erected on every available spot from which a sight of the gallows could be obtained. Twenty-three of these erections crowded the gaol and county-roads, the former of which runs parallel with the gaol; and the charge for admission to some of the front seats was as high as a guinea for each person; half a guinea was the ordinary rate, but back standing places were attainable for less money. In the county road the roof of one house was covered with boards, to afford a standing place from which the execution could be witnessed. In other instances the luxurious produce of well-kept gardens was bartered away and trodden under foot, for the purpose of gratifying the morbid curiosity of the people. As early as ten o'clock on Friday night, scores of persons had taken up their positions on some of these erections, expressing a determination to remain there until the drop fell; but the drenching rain soon compelled them to forego their determination, and seek shelter in some adjoining hostelry. During the night, the streets were tolerably free from pedestrians, excepting those who arrived by the midnight mail trains, north and south; but as soon as the grey dawn dispersed the shadows of night, the whole town appeared to burst into renewed life and activity; the public-houses were gradually emptied of their occupants, and continuous stream of vehicles, from the four-in-hand to the overlaiden pony-cart, poured into the town; these were also augmented by droves of pedestrians; and long before five o'clock



every avenue leading to the gaol was choked up. The arrivals, however, did not cease until eight o'clock, when it was estimated that upwards of 20,000 strangers had assembled in the town. The colliers from the neighbouring pits formed conspicuous objects in the midst of the crowd, where they were banded together in groups, and seemed determined to force their way near to the scaffold. The great preparations made by the magistrates and the police, to preserve order and prevent accident from pressure, were fully needed. As not one half of the congregated thousands could get a view of the scaffold, those who had not a sight of it struggled with all their might to improve their positions. The erection of the scaffold, hung with black cloth, was taken as a proof that the execution was not to be deferred; and this certainty gave increased eagerness to get near the spot, and, if possible, to hear the dying speech which it was supposed Palmer would deliver.

As the hour of eight drew near, the excitement of the mob increased, but still there was no disturbance, and the police were not called upon to interfere. Long before that time all persons who intended to see the execution had assembled, and those of the crowd, who were in the most distant places, had made up their minds that it was impossible to better themselves, and were contented to know what was going on by the shouts of those in more favourable positions.

Amongst this immense crowd about 80,000 tracts, suitable to the occasion, and a number of bibles, were distributed by Mr. Radcliffe, a gentleman from Liverpool, and others; and in several of the dissenting places of worship continuous services were held during the night, on behalf of the unhappy culprit; whilst numberless preachers exercised their calling amongst the crowd during the early part of the morning.

The general impression amongst the authorities was, that Palmer was advised not to confess, in order that his memory might have the benefit of the doubt, for the sake of his son.

The scaffold was a huge affair, somewhat resembling an agricultural machine, and hung with black cloth. Contrary to the usual custom in small country towns, it was not built upon the top of the prison, but was brought out in front, so as to encroach upon the road, and thus circumscribe the points occupied by the spectators. It was brought out from the jail about four o'clock in the morning.

#### PALMER'S EXECUTIONER.

Smith, the man who was selected to execute the sentence of the law upon Palmer, is by trade a nailer; he is a great, coarse, brutal fellow, standing about five feet ten inches; he has left his original trade since he became hangman. He executed Moore for the murder of the Ash Flats, four years ago, and now pursues the precarious trade of a higgler.

The earliest thing that is known of him, is, that he ran a race against time almost naked in a market town, and was taken up immediately on accomplishing the disgusting feat, and sent to jail.

He has been the Staffordshire hangman for sixteen years.

The rope with which Palmer was hung was made by a ropemaker of the name of Coates, who is also a porter at the Stafford station. All the men employed at the station had a hand in making it; and Coates, having an eye to the main chance, made thirty yards, cut the surplus length up into small pieces of about two or three inches, and hawked them about Stafford. In one instance, half-a-crown was obtained for about two inches.

#### A PROPHECY FULFILLED.

Mr. Maxwell, a big, loud-speaking man, a commercial traveller for J. and F. Pawson's, Saint



Paul's-Churchyard, was in the habit of calling at Lloyd's Grand Junction Hotel, Stafford, and consequently knew Palmer, whom, however, he had no great respect for.

One night, in the autumn of 1854, Palmer and a friend drop into the "Junction," and Palmer sees a letter in the card-rack by the side of the looking-glass, addressed to Maxwell. He takes a pencil, and writes under it, "Hung at Stafford Jail." Presently Palmer and his friend go out to call upon Mr. Painter at the other side of the railway bridge; and, while they are gone, in comes Maxwell.

"Any letters?"

"Yes, sir; one in the commercial room." In goes Maxwell, takes the letter, discovers the insult, and swears and blusters like a trooper.

"Why, Mr. Maxwell," says the landlord, "what on earth is the matter with you?"

"Matter enough," replies Maxwell, still in a great rage; "I'll never come into this house again. Who wrote that on my letter?" And he threw it on the table. Just then, back came Palmer and his friend.

"Well, its only a joke, you know," said Palmer's friend. "To tell the truth, Palmer did it."

"Ah!" said Maxwell, with a sneer; "I thought so. Hung at Stafford Jail. Why, he knows I have told him that would be *his* fate, many a time."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

PALMER'S CHARACTER AND PECULIARITIES—PERSONAL APPEARANCE—RESEMBLANCE TO MANNING—THE POISONER'S HAND—EXTREME NEATNESS—HOSPITALITY AND GENEROSITY—GENERAL CHARACTER—FEAR OF SLEEPING ALONE.



HE appearance Palmer presented during his trial at the Central Criminal Court, was that of a middle-aged country gentleman. He appeared to be of the middle height, and though not very stout, looked puffy. His neck was rather thick, but his appearance on the whole was pleasant, and his expression rather good-natured than blood-thirsty. He seemed to be partly bald, and had flaxen hair, through which the fair skin showed. He had smallish sandy whiskers, fat cheeks, and his countenance was entirely devoid of that forbidding expression which we are taught to look for in murderers.

### RESEMBLANCE TO MANNING.

Inspector Field thought Palmer by no means unlike Manning. His fair hair was rather more inclined to redness, and his chin was longer.

### THE POISONER'S HAND.

People in the neighbourhood of Rugeley talk a good deal of Palmer's hand. In the room of the Talbot Arms we heard three commercial gentlemen chatting together about this terrible hand, that was so white and soft. Palmer, it seems, used to hold the wrist of the patient, and feel the pulse in such a manner that his delicate hand might be seen to the best advantage.



There is something extremely horrible in the idea, that the hand which drops the poison into the cup, and then tenders it to the victim, should be round, white, and dimpled—such an one as you could not suspect of doing any injury.

Palmer, according to an intimate friend, had very “pretty” hands, and he was very fond of, and careful, of them. He would rub them to keep them white, and, when talking, would sit still picking or trimming his nails, and looking at his fingers. The hand was small, and almost womanly. It was round, plump, and dimpled, and he had a great objection to touching anything which could in any way soil or stain them. He did not wear rings, or show much of his shirt-cuff; but he was constantly washing his hands, and whenever he did, occupied much time in thoroughly drying them.

#### EXTREME NEATNESS.

Palmer’s love of order was something unusual—he was extremely neat in his dress—he had a great horror of anything approaching untidiness or slovenliness. “He was the cleanest man about a house I ever knew,” remarked one of his friends.

#### HOSPITALITY AND GENEROSITY.

Palmer was a hospitable man. He would give very good dinners, with champagne, and the best in the house. He only had three or four companions; but he was thought to be a humane man. The clergyman never called to see him upon a case of charity, but he’d give him a guinea.

“There was a man named William Hawton,” observed an old sawyer at Rugeley, “who was clerk to Joseph Palmer, when he carried on the father’s business. Hawton was taken very ill, and couldn’t come to the yard for a long time.”

“Well, sir, William Palmer was the man who sent him joints of meat, and things that he might want, lots of them, and money.

“Why, sir, Hawton told me himself, that Palmer had lent him, or rather given him, now and again, a matter of more than ten pounds. He called it lending; but, bless you, it was only his kind way of doing it.”

Another acquaintance gives him this sort of character:—

“Palmer was a very generous man; it is a mistake to say that he was at all abstemious—he was not; he would drink his share, but he never showed it in any way. If he was not a drunkard, he was the cause of drunkenness in others; I have seen the betting-men come reeling out of his house one after the other; he was very fond of company.

#### GENERAL CHARACTER.

The following particulars respecting Palmer’s general character, were furnished to us by a gentleman in Rugeley, evidently a person of more than ordinary observation:—

“I don’t think Palmer was the clever man the world takes him to be. He was rather a cunning and cold man. He was a man that never drank, but I don’t think he was what I call a deep man. He could sit still and bite his nails, and listen to the conversation of others, and surmise plans of his own, but they were not of that deep character which you could suppose of a man in his position. Palmer was never drunk in his life. He was a perfectly sober man, kind and generous to all around; and his kindness disarmed his most near and dear friends as to suspicion. He was affectionate to his family, to his mother in particular; and a very many poor men (labourers) will long have reason to regret the present circumstances.

The landlord of the “Junction” at Stafford, says of Palmer:—

“I always took him for a very different sort of person to what he has turned out. He was most pleasant and affable. I never knew him to lose his temper. I never heard an oath or a bad word leave his lips.



"He never drank much. He used to dress very quietly; not at all like a sporting man. He always appeared very cool and collected, even during the race-time, whether he came home a loser or a winner. He was a man who appeared very quiet and thinking.

A betting man, of some standing, residing in the neighbourhood, told us that Palmer was a good-principled man as far as he knew him: "Of course, sir, he couldn't pay when he hadn't got the money; but he was a devil to speculate; and, bless you, knew as much about making a book as you yourself, sir. They talk about his being very clever; I don't believe he was clever. Why, I've heard people say that they wondered how he ever managed to win at all."

The "boots" at the "Junction," the man who fancied he had been poisoned by Palmer, says of him:—

"I've known Palmer ever since I remember. I come from about three miles off him. I'm from Colwich, and he Rugeley. I always took him for a very decent sort of fellow.

"Yes, there's no mistake about him. The least thing in the world as I ever did for him he's tip me a shilling. He never give less. If I was to just go, for instance, only as far as the station, he never gives less. Suppose he was to say, 'Here, Tom, order me a car, whilst I walk on to the house,' why, there was a shilling for only doing that.

"He didn't often stop long at our house when he came. Perhaps he'd come here of a night and take a car to go home to Rugeley in, and then he'd say to the postboy, 'Here, go and get a glass of gin,' or whatever it was.

"Sometimes he was merry, and sometimes he wasn't, just as he was took. Perhaps he'd come in and ask for a glass of liquor, whatever it might be. But I never see him a joking the maids, or anything of that sort."

The Rugeley sexton said:—

"I'm sure he is the last person in the town, as I should have suspected of such a thing as this. He was a religious man, and many's the time when I've had a sup of ale too much, he's chastised me for it. He'd say, "Do keep yourself respectable, and don't go to them public-houses. If you wants a drink of ale come here."

Palmer appears to have credit universally given him for his agreeable manners. He was always popular with the poor, and was liked by the public generally. Since he became a betting man he was never secretive of sporting news of value, and he seemed always glad to put money in the way of poor men eager for the excitement, *sans* the risk, of betting. These qualities obtained for him considerable influence in his own town, and in the sporting circles of the midland and northern counties. He was, moreover, what has been called a liberal man. Ask the servants at the various hotels he frequented within thirty miles of his native town, and they will invariably speak of him as "a nice pleasant sort of gentleman." But he was never respected. Latterly, his companions were of rather a low class, and he only differed from them in his temperate habits and equable tact of manner.

If Palmer wanted a certificate from a surgeon, when in search of one of his many insurances, he would always go himself to get it; he would never sit down while it was being drawn out, but would stand over the surgeon and suggest minute alterations that individually were of no importance, but which at last materially altered the sense of the whole.

#### FEAR AT SLEEPING ALONE.

Palmer never could, or would, sleep by himself alone after his wife's death. Whenever he went to the races he used to get Jerry Smith, or somebody, to go along with him. At winter and summer he usually went to bed at eight o'clock; he used to make them go up with him to the bed-room, and allow them to have champagne, or anything they liked to drink, if they only stopped in the room with him.



WILLIAM PALMER'S

PRIVATE DIARY

FOR THE YEAR

1855;

PRINTED FROM AN OFFICIAL COPY MADE FOR THE PURPOSES OF  
THE CROWN.

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NOTE.—The expression the “Yard” is used to denote Mrs. Palmer’s, sen., place of residence.

“JERE” is an abbreviation for Jeremiah Smith.

“BEN” refers to Mr. Thirlby.

“ELIZA” is Eliza Tharm, Palmer’s maid-servant.

“WILLIE” is Palmer’s little boy.

The word “NERI,” and the crosses prefixed to certain entries are private marks of Palmer’s, no explanation of which has yet been suggested.



## JANUARY, 1855.

1. MONDAY :—			
Went to Hednesford, with Jere and Tom Earwaker. Mother, Sal. Walter, Jere, and Tom Earwaker dined.	£	s.	d.
+ Paid Crabb on account .....	5	0	0
Cook and Brown, and Wm. Saunders called.			
+ Paid Hyatt and Dalton.....	100	0	0
2. TUESDAY :—			
Smith and Tom Earwaker dined. Ann Heywood came.			
+ Sent Josh. Saxon .....	32	0	0
+ Sent Mr. James Perkin.....	12	10	0
George, Ben, Walter, Jere, and Tom Earwaker to oysters. Will at Ben's, dinner and tea. Eliza and Jane went to a dance at the Talbot.			
3. WEDNESDAY :—			
NERI Received a cheque from J. Weatherby for "Goldfinder," paid it into bank .....	300	0	0
NERI Paid Weatherly "Escape's" and "Morning Star's" entrances in the Liverpool Chase .....	10	0	0
Tom Earwaker, Willie, Annie Heywood, and I dined at the timber yard.			
Eliza in bed.			
4. THURSDAY :—			
Wm. Saunders, James Eaton, Jere, and Tom Earwaker, here to dinner, and three bottles of wine.			
Eliza in bed.			
5. FRIDAY :—			
+ Paid Timmis balance of oats .....	5	0	0
Tom and I at yard to tea.			
6. SATURDAY :—			
Tom, Jere, and I went to Hednesford's to see some jumping.			
Dined at the Keys.			
Herbert Wright here.			
++ Paid Walter for Mother (being all due up to day) .....	5	0	0
Paid Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	2	6
7. SUNDAY :—			
At home—sore throat. Tom and I at tea at the yard.			
8. MONDAY :—			
Tom Earwaker left here for London by the 8 o'clock train.			
+ Paid Greensmith's bill .....	4	6	0
Sanders, Jere, and Charles Heywood here to dinner .....			
++ Paid William Saunders for training .....	50	0	0
+ Paid Kaybe for tray and cord .....	0	17	0
9. TUESDAY :—			
+ Paid Lord Lichfield's rent, he allowing £3 8s. 9d. for Income tax, and Hall's Acct.....	22	10	0
+ Paid Hall's Acct. ....	1	11	0
+ Paid Markham's bill.....	1	14	0
+ Paid Mellard's bill .....	3	16	7
Eliza in bed yesterday and to-day—Exchanged dressing gown with Potts.			
10. WEDNESDAY :—			
+ Paid gas bill .....	0	14	2
Paid for coals .....	0	10	10
Eliza down stairs.			
W. Ward called, gave him .....	1	0	0
Wm. Saunders and Charles Marlow called for two hours.			
11. THURSDAY :—			
+ Paid T. Southern's bill.....	2	19	0
+ Paid poor's rate .....	1	1	9½
Ann Heywood gone to George's for a few days.			
+ Paid Fortescue for turnips .....	1	3	4
++ Paid Fortescue for Saunders .....	3	10	0
Saunders and Jere Smith here to dinner—one bottle of wine.			
+ Paid Jones for envelopes .....	0	6	6
12. FRIDAY :—			
+ Paid Bennett's bill (after allowing 12s. for the Engine House) .....	4	4	0
+ Paid Simpson for Income Tax.....	2	18	4
13. SATURDAY :—			
Saunders here to dinner.			
Paid Henry.....	0	14	0



	£	s.	d.
Paid Michael .....	0	10	0
— Charles .....	0	3	0
Walter here in bed ill. 14th, signed a bill for £400 for Saunders, entirely as a matter of accommodation.			
14. SUNDAY :— At home with Walter. Willie at Yard to dinner and tea.			
15. MONDAY. Went to London with Walter and Jere Smith by the 8 o'clock train. Expenses, &c. Slept at 7, Beaufort Buildings. Paid Pratt for Three bills .....	350	0	0
Went to the Lyceum.			
16. TUESDAY :— Went with Walter to see Dr. Hastings. Returned home with Walter and Jerry Smith at half-past seven.			
17. WEDNESDAY :— Went to see Tom at the yard. Sent him some medicine. Jere and Walter here to dinner. Saunders here in the afternoon. + Paid Tunncliffe's bill .....	0	8	10
+ Settled with Mrs. Robinson in full, and received a balance of 12s. 10d. from her through Jere.			
18. THURSDAY :— + Paid Mr. Brown for hay .....	5	7	6
At home. Walter went to Stafford, and stayed all day, till half-past four. Brother ill.			
19. FRIDAY :— + Paid Whitworth for pork, steaks, and bran .....	0	10	9
+ Paid Hattersley for two gallons of gin .....	1	2	0
+ Received from Glover by Henry .....	15	0	0
Mother ill at home.			
20. SATURDAY :— Mother ill. + Paid Hatfield's bill .....	5	18	0
+ Paid Cox's bill .....	0	2	6
Paid Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
Slept at the yard.			
21. SUNDAY :— At home—slept at yard.			
22. MONDAY :— Mother ill in bed. Ben dined here. Willie all day at Eliza's.			
23. TUESDAY :— Went to Stafford with Jere, and returned at 12 before 5. + Paid Ashmall's bill .....	6	13	0
Willie all day at Ben's.			
+ Paid J. Welis's bill .....	10	18	0
+ Myatt delivered gig harness—paid for 21st Feb. Walter gone to Stoke to buy dinner-service, &c., &c. Expenses .....	0	15	0
24. WEDNESDAY :— Went to Hednesford with Jere, and returned home for dinner. Jere and Walter dined. Mother still in bed.			
NERI. Mr. Milcrest died.			
25. THURSDAY :— Mother down stairs. Saunders, Smith, and Walter dined.			
26. FRIDAY :— Fetched coals .....	0	9	9
+ Paid tithe .....	0	11	9
Walter and Smith dined. Mother down stairs.			
+ Paid Slater's bill .....	0	3	6
27. SATURDAY :— Walter gone with T. Walkenden to Stafford. + Paid Walter .....	1	0	0
Willie at Ben's to dinner. Paid Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	2	0
Mother down stairs.			



	£	s.	d.
28. SUNDAY :—			
At church (sacrament).			
Willie poorly.			
29. MONDAY :—			
At home.			
Lent Jere mare and gig to go to Hednesford.			
+ Paid C. F. Wylde for Will's pinafore's and coat .....	0	8	0
30. TUESDAY :—			
+++ Took Willie to Mrs. Salt's school.			
+ Paid Walter.....	1	0	0
Dined at Ben's—he and Jere came and had 2 bott. after dinner.			
31. WEDNESDAY :—			
Very poorly in the house with cold.			
+ Paid Crabb.....	5	0	0
Saunders, Jere, and Ben here to dinner and 4 bottles of wine.			
Saunders got hurt going home.			

## FEBRUARY.

1. THURSDAY :—			
In the house with a cold.			
+++ Charles Markham called.			
Sam Cope called.			
+ Paid Woolcott to Feb. 1.....	4	3	7
+ Paid Mrs. Barrett for Cope .....	1	0	0
+++ Received from Ben .....	30	0	0
+ Paid Mrs. Cook for making Will's shirts and material.....	0	10	8½
2. FRIDAY :—			
In the house with a cold.			
Charles Markham called.			
+++ Paid Tom Palmer.....	10	0	0
Eliza returned home, having gone home the day before.			
Jere slept with me last night and to-night.			
3. SATURDAY :—			
Sent Henry to Stafford to see Willie.			
Mr. Pratt came from London here to get receipts endorsed on Sun and Norwich Insurances.			
+ Walter here by 5 train and returned at half-past 7. Paid him .....	1	1	0
Sarah up twice about mother's illness.			
Paid Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
4. SUNDAY :—			
At home with a bad cold.			
5. MONDAY :—			
+++ Wm. Saunders sent Geo. Calloway's colt home.			
At home with a cold.			
Jere here to dinner.			
8th + Paid Crabb by Jere .....	5	0	0
Sarah called twice about her mother's medicine.			
6. TUESDAY :—			
In the house with a cold.			
+ Fetched coals .....	0	10	3½
Jere and Ben gone to Hednesford to shoot for the gun.			
15 dozn. wine come in from Pratt.			
7. WEDNESDAY :—			
+ Paid Wallbank for hams, &c. ....	3	13	5½
In the house with a cold.			
Jere and Ben packed the wine, gave them a bott. sherry for trouble.			
8. THURSDAY :—			
In the house with a cold.			
Jere Smith here to dinner.			
+ Sent Fordham a cheque for.....	27	0	0
For riding Larley at Shrewsbury, and Whampton, and expenses .....	19	18	6
My own, the remainder Saunders.			
+++ Paid Fordham for Saunders.....	7	11	6
9. FRIDAY :—			
In the house with a cold.			
+ Paid S. Timmis for wool .....	0	12	6
Jere, Walter, and Tom Walkeden here for dinner.			
+ Paid Walter Palmer .....	1	0	0
+ Paid Jere for work done (all being due) .....	5	0	0



	£	s.	d.
10. SATURDAY :— In the house with a cold.			
++ Lent Wm. Saunders .....	50	0	0
Advised Buxton's bill for .....	250	0	0
Received as balance of mother's 350 <sup>l</sup> . bill .....	100	0	0
+ Paid Miss Manners for Willie's schooling .....	2	9	0
— Emery .....	0	10	0
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
11. SUNDAY :— In the house with a cold. Jere here to dinner.			
12. MONDAY :— Out of doors again.			
+ Paid Whitworth for cheese .....	6	10	0
George Bate and Jere Smith here to dinner off wild ducks. Jere left at $\frac{1}{4}$ b. 6 p.m.			
13. TUESDAY :—			
+ Paid Salisbury for straw .....	17	14	0
+ Paid Wright's bill for shoeing .....	9	14	2
+ Paid Woodhouse for a pair of boots for myself and Jere Smith .....	1	12	0
Tom Palmer over. Called at the timber-yard for the first time after being ill.			
++ Sal gone visiting to Whampton.			
++ Paid Walter (by Jere) .....	4	0	0
Gave Mr. Atkinson for alterations at school .....	2	0	0
15. THURSDAY :—			
+ Paid Saml. Cope for oats .....	12	0	0
+ Paid George Palmer half a year's interest .....	15	0	0
++ Lord Inges—he married to-day. Jere Smith and Saml. Cope here to dinner.			
16. FRIDAY :—			
+ Paid Jno. Allen's bill .....	1	15	0
+ Fetched coals .....	0	7	7
Dined with Jere Smith at the Yard.			
17. SATURDAY :— Went to Stafford with Jere to see Willie—dined with Walter.			
++ Paid Mrs. Tunnicliffe on acc. for interest due April, 1855 .....	10	0	0
Paid Emery .....	0	10	0
+ Paid Jno. Wright's bill .....	13	0	0
Paid Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Chadbourne on acct. ....	1	0	0
18. SUNDAY :— At church—Mr. Atkinson preached. Dined at the Yard with Jere.			
19. MONDAY :—			
++ Paid Walter for mother .....	1	0	0
Lent Walter the mare to go to Armitage. Walter and Jere Smith here to dinner.			
+ Sent Dyke a bill at 2 months for .....	70	0	0
20. TUESDAY :— Mr. Painter, Geo. Bate, and Jere Smith dined here; had 4 bottles of wine.			
+ Paid Mr. Hullersley for wine bottles to bottle gin and brandy .....	1	8	0
Mrs. Bradshaw called, gave her .....	0	2	6
Jane called, and had tea and supper.			
21. WEDNESDAY :—			
++ Settled Myatt's accounts; paid him the balance .....	15	0	0
22. THURSDAY :— Walter called, and had some soup. Michael took 2 hams to his own house to cure for me.			
23. FRIDAY :— Mother not well; called 3 times.			
++ Settled with Strawbridge; paid him .....	14	13	0
24. SATURDAY :— Sent Henry to Stafford for Willie.			
++ Walter here; paid him .....	3	0	0
Sal returned home from W <sup>h</sup> ampton. Paid Emery.			
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Chadbourne .....	0	15	0
Commenced thawing.			



25th. SUNDAY :—		£	s.	d.
At home with Willie.				
26. MONDAY :—				
Sent Henry with Doubt to Rugby by the 8 o'clock train.				
Expenses .....	1	0	0	
Sent J. Warrington a bill at 2 Months for .....	210	0	0	
Willie and I dined at the Yard. Took Willie to School by the 3 o'clock train.				
++ Paid Thomas Palmer .....	20	0	0	
27. TUESDAY :—				
++ Paid Walter Palmer .....	2	0	0	
+ Paid Whitworth for Hams, &c. ....	2	6	0	
Jere Smith here to dinner. Hung the hams up.				
28. WEDNESDAY :—				
Sent Charles to Brereton with some potatoes for Jane. Dined alone.				
+ Paid Jere for M'Intosh.				

## MARCH.

1. THURSDAY :—				
Lent Henry the mare and cart to fetch coals.				
+ Paid Charles for hay .....	9	5	6	
+ Paid Sam Cope for Beans .....	2	6	0	
2. FRIDAY :—				
Went with Ben to Hednesford, and returned at 5 o'clock.				
Emperor of Russia died.				
H. Wright here to swear me to an affidavit before Mr. Atkinson.				
Planted my first peas.				
3. SATURDAY :—				
Paid Carter for Insurance Ticket .....	1	0	0	
Went to Rugby to meet Pratt. Returned to Stafford to see Mr. Meeson and Walter.				
++ Paid Walter (by Glover) .....	4	0	0	
Josh. Haywood retd. to Hayweed from Buxton.				
Paid Emery balance of account .....	0	18	0	
— Chadbourne .....	2	0	0	
— Henry .....	0	14	0	
— Michael .....	0	12	0	
— Charles .....	0	3	0	
4. SUNDAY :—				
At church—Mr. Atkinson preached.				
Dined at yard.				
5. MONDAY :—				
3d. Henry fetched home "The Nuggett."				
4th. Jane called and had supper.				
Cook dined here.				
Drove to Colwich to meet the 13m. p. 2 train for Liverpool.				
Slept at the Stork.				
5th. Called to see Joseph at Liverpool.				
Dined at Joseph's.				
Slept at the Stork.				
7. WEDNESDAY :—				
++ Paid Escape's Stake in the Liverpool chase for Saunders .....	20	12	6	
++ Saunders lost on Escape .....	10	0	0	
++ Saunders lost on Keepsake .....	2	0	0	
Returned home with Ben by excursion train from Liverpool to Stafford, and then on by mare and gig at $\frac{1}{4}$ b. 1.				
8. THURSDAY :—				
+ Paid Walbank for hams, beef, &c. ....	1	15	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Cook and Saunders here to breakfast; lent them the mare and gig to go to Hednesford.				
Jane called and had luncheon.				
9. FRIDAY :—				
8th. Sent Mr. Edwards .....	100	0	0	
Had breakfast at the yard.				
Sent Henry to Rugby to see "Doubt."				
Lent Sandon a desk .....	1	0	0	
10. SATURDAY :—				
++ Paid Walter Palmer (by Glover) .....	7	0	0	
++ Paid Chadbourne .....	2	0	0	
— Thomas Lyttler .....	1	10	0	
— Henry .....	0	14	0	
— Michael .....	0	12	0	



£ s. d.

11. SUNDAY :—  
At home.
12. MONDAY :—  
Dined at the yard. Saunders slept here, being on his way for Doncaster.
13. TUESDAY :—  
Went to Lichfield station for Doncaster, and back to Rugby at night, and slept there.
- |   |    |    |   |
|---|----|----|---|
| +++ Paid Escape's Stake .....                             | 15 | 10 | 0 |
| +++ Saunder's lost on Escape, forfeits at Doncaster ..... | 5  | 0  | 0 |
| +++ Paid Morning Star's and Lusley's .....                | 8  | 10 | 0 |
14. WEDNESDAY :—  
Returned home by 10 train.  
Went to Hednesford with Saunders and stayed all day. Walter called, but I did not see him.
15. THURSDAY :—  
Saunders called. Went to Colwich for Stafford and back at 5 o'clock to see Walter.  
Eliza cured two hams.
16. FRIDAY :—  
Mr. Halford came here at ten, and slept here.
- |                                   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| +++ Paid Walter (by Glover) ..... | 5 | 0 | 0 |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
17. SATURDAY :—  
Went with Mr. Halford to Hednesford to try Smithmon.
- |                       |   |    |   |
|-----------------------|---|----|---|
| Paid Chadbourne ..... | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| — T. Lyttler .....    | 1 | 0  | 0 |
| — Henry .....         | 0 | 14 | 0 |
| — Michael .....       | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| — Charles .....       | 0 | 4  | 0 |
18. SUNDAY :—  
At home.  
Dined at the yard.
19. MONDAY :—  
Went to Hednesford to go with Saunders to Brown Hills, for Warwick.  
Returned to Birmingham in the evening, and on to York by mail train.
20. TUESDAY :—  
Went on to Bedals and Richmond, to Mr. Gill's to see "The Chicken." Returned to Derby by the mail train.
21. WEDNESDAY :—  
Returned home by 20m. to 10 train to Lichfield, then on here with Marlow's trap.  
Saunders and Marlow dined here.  
Fast day.
22. THURSDAY :—  
Went to Stafford by  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 11 train, and dined with Mr Painter.  
Wm. Saunders slept here on his way to Warwick.
23. FRIDAY :—  
Dined at the Yard.
- |                                  |   |    |   |
|----------------------------------|---|----|---|
| 24th. Paid Brown for hay .....   | 6 | 19 | 0 |
| 24th. Paid Masters for hay ..... | 3 | 7  | 6 |
24. SATURDAY :—  
Due to day to Tom Palmer .....
 20 | 0 | 0 |

+++ Paid Walter Palmer .....	5	0	0
Paid Chadbourne .....	1	10	0
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	8	0

25. SUNDAY :—  
At home with a cold.  
Eliza gone home to tea.

26. MONDAY :—  
Left for London by the 8 train to see Pratt, and returned to Northampton at  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 6.  
Slept at the Angel.

27. TUESDAY :—  
At Northampton.—Returned home by the  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7 train.

28. WEDNESDAY :—  
At home.  
Walked to Brereton with George Bate.

29. THURSDAY :—  
Paid Walter Palmer .....
 1 | 0 | 0 |

Walter, Geo. Bate, and Jere dined here.

+++ Paid school land rent .....	6	0	0
---------------------------------	---	---	---

+++ The Alderman called to see the colts.  
Went to Colwich for Stafford, to see Mr. Painter.



	£	s.	d.
30. FRIDAY :—			
NERI. Fetched coals .....	0	10	2½
Went with Saunders to Lichfield ; dined at the George hotel.			
31. SATURDAY :—			
Went with Saunders to Stoke, then to Stafford.			
+ Paid Lloyd's bill.....	1	13	2
— Chadbourne .....	2	6	0
— T. Lyttler .....	1	0	0
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	3	0
Settled with Gardner up to this day.			

## APRIL.

1. SUNDAY :—			
At church—son preached. Dined at the yard.			
2. MONDAY :—			
Went to Stafford to see Walter.			
Paid Walter Palmer .....	5	0	0
— J. Perkin .....	12	10	0
— Keyte, for writing-desk .....	7	0	0
Saunders dined here.			
Paid J. Cooper .....	37	13	4
+++ Sold Saunders a book-chest, or writing-desk .....	10	0	0
Paid Mrs. Welkden for washing .....	0	18	0
3. TUESDAY :—			
Went to Hednesford to give C. Marlow the orders for Chicken and Nettle.			
Jere dined here.			
Sent H. Padwick .....	100	0	0
Paid Shakeshaft for hay .....	9	9	6
4. WEDNESDAY :—			
Went to Hednesford.			
Paid Wm. Saunders (vide April 2nd 10l.) .....	50	0	0
5. THURSDAY :—			
Willie came home.			
Walter, Jere, and Saunders dined.			
Willie at Geo's to tea.			
Paid Walter Palmer .....	3	0	0
Went with Saunders to Lichfield to meet Nettle and the Chicken.			
6. GOOD FRIDAY :—			
At church with Willie.			
Willie at Geo's to tea.			
2nd sent brown colt and ch. filly from Mr. Painter's to Wm. Saunders to be trained.			
7. SATURDAY :—			
Went to Stafford to see Walter. Painter and Wright, of B'ham.			
++ Paid Landor and Gardner.....	50	0	0
++ Deposit on Inge's Land.....	5	5	0
Paid wages for the field.....	0	14	0
— Henry .....	0	10	0
— Michael .....			
8. EASTER SUNDAY :—			
At church.			
9. MONDAY :—			
Went with Jere to Hednesford, to see Nettle and Chicken ; stayed all day.			
Paid Walter Palmer .....	20	0	0
10. TUESDAY :—			
Went by 8 train to Woodford.			
11. WEDNESDAY :—			
Returned from Woodford by Stafford at 6.10 ; then by fly.			
Expenses with boys, &c. ....	10	0	0
12. THURSDAY :—			
Walter dined here.			
Paid Walter Palmer .....	2	0	0
Paid Fire Insurance .....	3	9	0
13. FRIDAY :—			
Went with Saunders to Lichfield, to settle his account to April 1st, 1855, and find a balance due to me of .....	156	12	10



	£	s.	d.
14. SATURDAY :—			
Went to Birmingham by 8 train and back at 6.			
Paid Field wages .....	4	4	0
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	6	0
15 SUNDAY :—			
At Church—Mr. A's son preached.			
16 MONDAY :—			
15th Paid Saunders .....	60	0	0
Went with Saunders to Litchfield for York.			
Slept at the White Swan.			
Paid Walter Palmer (by Jere.) .....	20	0	0
17 TUESDAY :—			
At York.			
Slept at the White Swan.			
8 WEDNESDAY :—			
Returned home at half-past 5.			
Paid Walter Palmer .....	1	1	6
19 THURSDAY :—			
Went to Stafford to see Day about Walter.			
Wm. Saunders here after dinner.			
19th bill, 3 months.			
20 FRIDAY :—			
Went to London with Jere, and returned home at half-past 9.			
Paid for mother's bonnets, shawl's, and parasol.			
21 SATURDAY :—			
Paid Dyke's bill (falls due) .....	70	0	0
Went to Birmingham and back at half-past 5.			
Paid wages at Field .....	3	15	4
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	8	0
— Walter Palmer .....	5	0	0
23. MONDAY :—			
Paid Wm. Saunders .....	100	0	0
Went to Hednesford with Jere.			
Sent Henry with Goldfinder down to Teddington.			
24. TUESDAY :—			
Went to Stafford with Keyte to order some things for Walter's house.			
Paid Walter Palmer .....	5	0	0
Wm. Saunders and Ben here.			
Mr. Salt called to examine Jere for the Albion office.			
25. WEDNESDAY :—			
Paid Whitworth for hams and bacon .....	2	6	0
— a County Court summons for Walter Palmer amounting to .....	3	11	9
Jere Smith dined here.			
26. THURSDAY :—			
Paid Sam Cope for oats .....	5	0	0
Henry fetched the Duchess of Kent and foal from Mr. Painter's.			
Wm. Saunders, Ben, Jere, and Cook here to 3 bott. wine.			
Advised J. Warrington's bill for .....	210	0	0
Went with Jere Smith to Hednesford.			
Paid Tom Palmer to March 25, 1855 .....	20	0	0
Sent Myatt .....	25	0	0
Sold Mr. Saunders grey horse for .....	20	0	0
28. SATURDAY :—			
Paid J. Warrington's bill due.			
— Walter Palmer .....	5	0	0
Went to Stafford.			
+ Paid Mr. Saunders .....	10	0	0
Sold Mr. Saunders bag of potatoes.			
Paid Field wages .....	1	12	0
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	6	0
29. SUNDAY :—			
Took H. Wright and Jere to Hednesford.			
30. MONDAY :—			
Henry took the gig to Welhden's of Lichfield.			
Paid Wm. Saunders (by Jere) .....	5	0	0
Started with Saunders and Cook by the $\frac{1}{2}$ p. 11 train to Chester			
Slept at the White Lion.			



## MAY.

	£	s.	d.
1. TUESDAY :— At Chester.			
Wm. Saunders lost at Chester .....	9	0	0
2. WEDNESDAY :— At Chester.			
3. THURSDAY :— At Chester.			
4. FRIDAY :— Returned home with Wm. Saunders at 9 o'clock, by fly from Stafford. Eliza here for the night.			
5. SATURDAY :— Went to B'ham to see Wright. Went to Stafford to pay Mr. Painter for mare and foal .....	400	0	0
++ Paid Walter Palmer .....	5	0	0
— Field wages.			
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	6	0
6. SUNDAY :— At church—Mr. Atkinson preached—Dined at the yard.			
7. MONDAY :— Went to Hednesford with Jere—dined at the yard.			
8. TUESDAY :— Met Mr. Painter at the 8 train, and drove him to Hednesford—dined there. Goldfinder's dam foaled.			
9. WEDNESDAY :— Went to Shrewsbury with Wm. Saunders by the $\frac{1}{2}$ p. 11 train. Slept at the Raven.			
10. THURSDAY :— Wm. Saunders lost at Shrewsbury, Lurley cup .....	15	0	0
Slept at the Raven.			
11. FRIDAY :— Returned home by 7 train to Stafford, then on by mare and carriage. 12th Paid Walter .....	5	18	6
12. SATURDAY :— Paid Saml. Palmer's bill due. Went to Stafford with Wm. Saunders, and dined at Mr. Painter's. Went to Hednesford. Paid Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	5	0
Bought Staffordshire Nan and her sister from Meesom, and to give Wm. S. £25, £400 in all .....	375	0	0
13. SUNDAY :— At home.—Eliza here.			
14. MONDAY :— Went to Hednesford with Jere. Dined at the Yard. Paid Wm. Saunders .....	90	0	0
— Potts for Jere's clothes .....	2	12	6
Henry fetched Meeson's yearling from Stafford. Paid Wm. Salt's deposit on land .....	160	0	0
Eliza returned home.			
15. TUESDAY :— Paid Hitchenson the balance of his account for painting .....	30	0	0
— Pott's for a pair of trousers, and Henry's clothes .....	3	12	0
— carriage of whiskey .....	0	6	6
Dined at the yard.			
16. WEDNESDAY :— Paid Wm. Turner for hay for Wm. Saunders.....	11	0	0
Dined at Hednesford.			
17. THURSDAY :— Mr. Painter, Wm. Bate, Wm. Saunders, and Jere, dined here. Sent Dorling a cheque for Chicken's stake at Epsom.....	5	0	0
18. FRIDAY :— Went with Jere Smith to Hednesford Henry took the Duchess to Stafford. Sent Weatherby a cheque for Nettle's stake for the Oaks.....	50	12	6
Dined at the yard. Paid Brassington for 6 buckets .....	1	4	0



	£	s.	d.
19. SATURDAY :—			
NERI. Paid Walter Palmer .....	5	0	0
Went to Hednesford with Markham's gig—Saw Tom Walthew and Meeson.			
Paid Henry.....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	6	0
Eliza came.			
20. SUNDAY :—			
At home. Eliza here.			
NERI. Paid Wm. Saunders.....	60	0	0
Started by 8 o'clock train for Epsom.			
Paid Crabbe the balance of Pickard's $\frac{1}{2}$ year's interest, due this month.....	4	8	9
22. TUESDAY :—			
At Epsom.			
23. WEDNESDAY :—			
Wm. Saunders received from Dorling .....	15	0	0
And lost on Dirk Haterick .....	10	0	0
„ „ St. Hubert.....	5	0	0
„ „ Nettle .....			
24. THURSDAY :—			
At Epsom.			
25. FRIDAY :—			
At Epsom.			
Returned to London at 8 o'clock—Slept at Beaufort-buildings.			
26. SATURDAY :—			
Returned home by the $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 train.			
Paid Chadbourne .....	0	19	0
„ Henry.....	0	14	0
„ Michael .....	0	12	0
„ Charles .....	0	7	0
27. WHIT-SUNDAY :—			
At home.			
28. MONDAY :—			
At home.			
Paid Walter Palmer .....	0	10	0
Sold W. P. the carriage for.....	10	0	0
Walter here to dinner.			
Sent Henry to Stafford to see dear Willie.			
29. TUESDAY :—			
Went to Hednesford and back per $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 train for Manchester, with Sarah and Saunders.			
Slept at the Star.			
30. WEDNESDAY :—			
At Manchester.			
Paid for Saunders at Manchester—St. Dunstan .....	3	0	0
„ „ „ Sargent .....	2	0	0
Bonnet.....	1	9	0
31. THURSDAY :—			
Returned home by the Express to Stafford, then on by gig with Saunders.			
++ Paid Walter Palmer .....	2	0	0

## JUNE.

1. FRIDAY :—			
Dined at the Yard.			
S. P.'s bill given.			
2. SATURDAY :—			
Went to Stafford to see Buxton.			
Paid W. P. ....	1	0	0
Paid Harland and Wogan's fees .....	2	2	0
Dined at the Yard.			
Paid Henry.....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	5	0
3. SUNDAY :—			
At home. Eliza came.			
4. MONDAY :—			
Went by the 8 train to London with Saunders and George Whitehouse—then on to Ascot in the evening—slept at Mrs. Cook's.			
5. TUESDAY :—			
At Ascot. Wm. Saunders lost on the Chicken .....	100	0	0



£ s. d.

6. WEDNESDAY :—	
At Ascot.	
7. THURSDAY :	
At Ascot.	
9th Paid Walter at Ascot and London .....	7 0 0
8. FRIDAY :—	
At Ascot.	
Returned to London at 7 o'clock—slept at Beaufort-buildings.	
9. SATURDAY :—	
Paid Buchanan's whiskey, to be advised to-day .....	29 10 1
Returned home by the Express train to Stafford, then on by fly	
Paid Henry.....	0 14 0
— Michael .....	0 12 0
10. SUNDAY :—	
At home.	
Dined at the yard.	
Went to Wednesford with Jere.	
11. MONDAY :—	
At home with a bad head ache.	
Dined at the yard.	
Paid Phillips' ac. ....	5 10 0
Paid Vernon for corks.....	0 8 6
12. TUESDAY :—	
Went to Birmingham by the 8 o'clock train, then on to Newton.	
Slept at the Leigh Arms.	
13. WEDNESDAY :—	
At Newton.	
Won the gold cup with "Zarley."	
14. THURSDAY :—	
At Newton.	
Won the Newton Cup with Zarley, and returned home by $\frac{1}{2}$ p. 8 train to Stafford,	
then on by gig with Saunders.	
Willie ret'd. home from school.	
15. FRIDAY :—	
Dined at the yard.	
Settled Hayward's Bond in full, by giving a cheque for the balance due, viz. ....	22 17 0
16. SATURDAY :—	
Dined at the yard.	
Paid Henry.....	0 14 0
— Chadbourne .....	0 10 0
— Michael .....	0 12 0
— Charles	
Eliza came to see Willie.	
17. SUNDAY :—	
At home.	
18. MONDAY :—	
Received Edwards' rent to March, 1855.....	8 10 0
Received from Glover .....	5 0 0
Paid tithe .....	6 4 10
Barbara called and stayed all night.	
19. TUESDAY :—	
Paid Walter Palmer .....	2 0 0
Eliza and Barbara went home in the carriage.	
Dined at the yard.	
Willie at Ben's all day.	
Sent Spittle a bill.	
20. WEDNESDAY :—	
NERI.	
Sent Henry for Trickstress and foal, paid .....	31 10 6
Went to Hednesford to breakfast.	
Paid Lord Lichfield's rent .....	22 10 0
Wm. Saunders, Ben, and Jere dined.	
Wm. Saunders lost at Whist .....	1 8 0
††††† Lent B. Thirlby .....	35 0 0
21. THURSDAY :—	
Dined at yard.	
Paid Crabbe .....	5 0 0
22. FRIDAY :—	
Went to London by the 8 o'clock train.	
Slept at Beaufort buildings.	
Henry returned home with Trickstress and foal—expenses .....	1 12 6



£ s. d.

23. SATURDAY :—  
Returned from London by the 3 o'clock train.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles ..... 0 8 0
24. SUNDAY :—  
At Church—Mr. Atkinson. Eliza came after dinner.
25. MONDAY :—  
Wm. Saunders and Jere dined here, off goose.  
Paid Walter Palmer ..... 3 0 0
26. TUESDAY :—  
Went by the 11 train from Lichfield for Newcastle. Slept at the Neville Hotel.  
+ + + Eliza confined of a little boy  
+ + + at 9 o'clock at night.
27. WEDNESDAY :—  
At Newcastle.  
Left Newcastle at 8 p. 7 and arrived at Derby at  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 12. Slept at the Midland Hotel.
28. THURSDAY :—  
Returned home from Derby by the 10 o'clock train.  
Dined at the yard.
29. FRIDAY :—  
Went to Hednesford with Willie and Ben; stayed dinner, and went round by Chorley.
30. SATURDAY :—  
Willie and I dined at Jere's with Wm. Saunders.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles ..... 0 8 0

## JULY.

1. SUNDAY :—  
At Church; sacrament.  
Dined at the yard.
2. MONDAY :—  
Paid Wm. Fortescue for cow, hay, straw, porter, and ale ..... 26 7 0  
— T. Southern ..... 1 15 0  
Sent the 2 yearlings to Hednesford, by Henry and James Knott.  
Dined at the yard.
3. TUESDAY :—  
Paid Potts in full ..... 4 6 6  
— Dewey for a bag of barley ..... 1 0 0  
Brewed 4 bushels of malt.  
Paid Crabbe ..... 5 0 0  
Eliza came down stairs.
4. WEDNESDAY :—  
2nd Mr. Atkinson left home for his holiday.  
Dined at the yard.  
Tom was there.  
Paid Whateley's fee for Wm. Saunders ..... 1 3 9
5. THURSDAY :—  
Went with Jere to Worcester, and returned home at night by Stafford, then on by fly.
6. FRIDAY :—  
Drove Jere and Willie to Lichfield.  
The 7th. Paid Walter and Wright for Walter Palmer.
7. SATURDAY :—  
Went to Birmingham with Jere—came back by Stafford—received Wright's rent (balanced after deducting Walter's account.)  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles ..... 0 6 6  
Had supper with Cook, and Saunders, and Ben at Jere's.
8. SUNDAY :—  
At Church—Mr. Atkinson, jun. did all.
9. MONDAY :—  
Went to London and back the same day.
10. TUESDAY :—  
Wm. Saunders dined here. Rode with Wm. Saunders to Lichfield to see Morning Star off for Mansfield.  
Paid W. S. to pay "The Star's" expenses ..... 10 0 0



11. WEDNESDAY :—			
Drove to Stafford for the 10 train for Liverpool.			£ s. d.
Slept at the Stork.			
Henry fetched "Nettle."			
Home from Wm. Saunders'.			
12. THURSDAY :—			
At Liverpool.			
Wm. Saunders received Morning's stake at Mansfield, amounting to .....	40	0	0
13. FRIDAY :—			
Returned home by the 5 express from Liverpool, then on by gig home with G. to Whitehouse.			
14. SATURDAY :—			
Sent J. Edwards a cheque for 50l.—for interest .....	50	0	0
Paid Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
15. SUNDAY :—			
At Church—Pittman read the prayers—Atkinson, jun., preached.			
16. MONDAY :—			
Went to Birmingham to see Wright, and returned back by Colwich at 3 o'clock.			
Henry fetched home Doubt and her foal, expenses, &c., &c., &c. ....	74	0	0
17. TUESDAY :—			
Dined at home.			
Geo. Bate dined.			
Eliza went to Stafford.			
18. WEDNESDAY :—			
Jere dined here—then went to Hednesford.			
Paid Lander and Gardner—			
For Mr. Inge's land .....	450	0	0
— Possession .....	3	0	0
— Interest .....	1	8	0
19. THURSDAY :—			
Saunders and Jere here to breakfast—then I went on with Saunders to Lichfield for Nottingham, but only got to Derby and back at night.			
20. FRIDAY :—			
Went to Shrewsbury to see Mr. Edwards; returned home at 8 o'clock.			
Paid Jere Smith on account of Vetches .....	6	0	0
21. SATURDAY :—			
Went to Birmingham to see Mr. Wright.			
Paid for Mowing—Hay-making.			
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	3	0
22. SUNDAY :—			
Willie went to Tom's at Coton with his Grandmama.			
At home.			
23. MONDAY :—			
Went to London to see Pratt, and returned home with Jere by the 5 express.			
24. TUESDAY :—			
Went to Hednesford with Jere.			
Went to Stafford, to see Dr. Harland, with Walter.			
Paid Walter Palmer .....	17	0	0
25. WEDNESDAY :—			
At home.			
Sent Jere to Colwich station.			
26. THURSDAY :—			
Henry fetched Willie home.			
George Whitehouse dined here.			
27. FRIDAY :—			
At home.			
28. SATURDAY :—			
Went to Stafford to see Walter.			
Paid Walter Palmer .....	3	2	0
— Haymakers .....	1	3	9
— Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Potts for Elis's clothes .....	3	3	6
29. SUNDAY :—			
— At home—Willie went to church, and to George's to tea.			
30. MONDAY :—			
Paid Weatherby, for Wm. Saunders, for half Myrtle's stake in the Oaks, and at Liverpool .....	17	14	7½
Wm. Saunders lost at Goodwood.			
Went to London by 7 train from Lichfield for Goodwood.			



£ s. d.

31. TUESDAY :—  
At Goodwood.

## AUGUST.

1. WEDNESDAY :—  
At Goodwood.
2. THURSDAY :—  
At Goodwood.  
Wm. Saunders lost at Goodwood ..... 16 10 0
3. FRIDAY :—  
At Goodwood.  
Returned to Beaufort-buildings at  $\frac{1}{4}$  b. 9.
4. SATURDAY :—  
Returned home at 10.  
Paid Southwell for venison ..... 4 4 0  
— Haymakers ..... 2 0 0  
— Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0
5. SUNDAY :—  
At Church—Mr. Freen read prayers—Sacrament.
6. MONDAY :—  
Went to Stafford to pay Willie's schooling ..... 12 18 0  
Paid Walter Palmer (Glover) ..... 2 0 0  
+++ Weaned the Duchess of Kent's foal.
7. TUESDAY :—  
Went to London by 5 o'clock train.
8. WEDNESDAY :—  
Went to Brighton races and returned to London in the evening.  
Returned to Stafford by the mail train. Slept at the junction.
9. THURSDAY :—  
Returned home by the 8 o'clock train.
10. FRIDAY :—  
Went to see Walter who was taken ill.  
Paid Walter Palmer ..... 7 0 0
11. SATURDAY :—  
Went to see Walter twice, and returned home at night by fly.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
+++ I went to see Walter, and returned home by fly.
12. SUNDAY :—  
Mr. Dyke came.  
Jere dined. Mr. Dyke and I went to Wolverhampton with Southern's fly.
13. MONDAY :—  
Saunders lost on Lurley. .... 20 0 0
14. TUESDAY :—  
Went by Stafford to see Walter. Came home by gig from Wolverhampton.
15. WEDNESDAY :—  
Went by Stafford to Wolverhampton, and returned by Stafford to see Walter,  
who was very ill.
16. THURSDAY :—  
Paid Fortescue for a barrel of beer ..... 0 12 0  
Went to see Walter, who was very ill.  
Walter Palmer died at half-past two, p.m.
17. FRIDAY :—  
Went to Liverpool to tell Agnes, Eliza, and Joseph of Walter's death.  
Paid Meeson (in the train going to Liverpool) for oats ..... 18 0 0
18. SATURDAY :—  
At home.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Chadbourne for thatching ..... 0 8 6  
— Charles ..... 0 12 0
20. MONDAY :—  
Went to Stafford to get Walter's certificate from Mr. Day.  
Jere dined.  
Settled with Glover, and received the balance ..... 4 14 6
21. TUESDAY :—  
Drove to Lichfield with Ben for Warwick. Slept at the Woolpack.
22. WEDNESDAY :—  
At Warwick.  
Returned home by luggage train at 20 p. 10.



23. THURSDAY :—  
At home. £ s. d.  
Jere dined here off pheasant.  
Michael fetched coals from Brown Hills.
24. FRIDAY :—  
Went to Hednesford with Cook and Jere.  
7th. Paid Wm. Saunders..... 100 0 0
25. SATURDAY :—  
Saunders, Cook, Ben, Jere, and Geo. Bate here to dinner.  
Paid Henry..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles.
26. SUNDAY :  
At home.  
Jere dined.
27. MONDAY :—  
Went to Stafford with  
George and Tom, to  
follow Walter to  
his grave at Rugeley.  
Dined at the yard.
28. TUESDAY :—  
Went to Lichfield for York—stayed at the White Swan.
29. WEDNESDAY :—  
At York.
30. THURSDAY :—  
At York.
31. FRIDAY :—  
At York.  
Returned to Derby, and slept at the Midland.

## SEPTEMBER.

1. SATURDAY :—  
Sold the 2 yrs. old br. c. to Mr. Robinson, and delivered him to Armstrong, his  
trainer, this day.  
Paid Henry..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 8 0
2. SUNDAY :—  
At church—Mr. Coaney preached.
3. MONDAY :—  
Mother, Sarah, George and Eliza started for Buxton at 7; lent them the mare  
and carriage.  
Went to Hednesford with Jere.  
Jere dined here.
4. TUESDAY :—  
Went to Lichfield with Saunders for Derby; returned home in the evening.  
Sold Wm. Saunders my half of Careless for..... 30 0 0  
Paid Lurley's Stake ..... 15 0 0
5. WEDNESDAY :—  
At home.  
Jere dined.  
NERI. Paid for Jere for Crosbie's returned bill ..... 12 0 0  
27. Paid Southwell for Buck ..... 4 0 0  
Paid Jere Smith on Acc. of his law costs in Denman v. Saunders, for Saunders .. 20 0 0  
W. Bate, Geo. Bate, and Jere here to dinner.
7. FRIDAY :—  
Went to Hednesford with Jere.  
Paid Wm. Saunders ..... 25 0 0  
4th—Wm. Saunders lost on Little Nell, at Derby ..... 5 0 0
8. SATURDAY :—  
Went to London and back.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles ..... 0 5 0
9. SUNDAY :—  
At home.  
Jere and T. Welkeden dined.
10. MONDAY :—  
Went to Lichfield with Wm. Saunders, for Doncaster.  
Mother returned home from D. and Buxton.



	£	s.	d.
11. TUESDAY :— At Doncaster. Wm. Saunders lost on Veteran and Midsummer .....			
	4	0	0
12 WEDNESDAY :— At Doncaster. William Saunders lost on the Chicken for Portland Plate .....	10	0	0
13. THURSDAY :— At Doncaster.			
14. FRIDAY :— At Doncaster. Wm. Saunders lost on the Chicken for Don Stakes .....	10	0	0
Returned home by way of Lichfield at 20 b. 11.			
15. SATURDAY :— Went to Stafford. Dined with my Willie and Geo. Bate at Castle Terrace. Paid Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	8	0
Eliza went home 16th to wake. Went to Hednesford—Mr. Cook dined.			
17. MONDAY :— Drove Mr. Cook and Cheshire to Lichfield races—returned home at $\frac{1}{2}$ p. 7, and supped with Jere. Eliza went with Barbara to the wake, and stayed all night.			
18. TUESDAY :— Drove Mr. Cook to Hednesford, then on to Lichfield, and home in the evening. Eliza went to the races with Barbara.			
19. WEDNESDAY :— Paid Crabb Mrs. Turncliffe's interest, due in October next.....	14	8	9
Paid Jno. Wright's bill.....	12	0	0
Lent Jno. Wright on acc. of bill to Sep. 29.....	5	0	0
Paid Perkins' interest, after deducting £2 18s. for income tax .....	9	12	0
20. THURSDAY :— Went to Stafford with Wm. Saunders, and returned home at 5 m. p. 8, P.M. Trickstress' foal died.			
21. FRIDAY :— Geo. Bate and Jere Smith dined. NERI. Paid Wm. Saunders, for Nan's Stake, and expenses .....	10	0	0
22. SATURDAY :— Dined at the yard. Paid Henry.....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	8	0
23. SUNDAY :— Went to church with Cook—Mr. Atkinson.			
24. MONDAY :— Went to London to see Pratt. Slept at Beaufort-buildings. Saunders sent the bay mare.			
25. TUESDAY :— Returned home by the 10 train.			
26. WEDNESDAY :— At home. 27. Lent Myatt to go to London.....	15	0	0
Paid Crabb .....	5	0	0
27. THURSDAY :— Paid Jno. Timmiss for oats .....	10	18	0
— Wenlock for straw .....	5	18	0
Sam Cope dined.			
28. FRIDAY :— Jere dined. Paid Bull for Paving.....	1	4	6
29. SATURDAY :— Received from James Webb for two years' rent, deducting 7l. 0s. 4d. for Property and Land-Tax.....	38	0	0
Paid Henry .....	0	14	0
— Michael .....	0	12	0
— Charles .....	0	3	0
30. SUNDAY :— Went to Hednesford.			



## OCTOBER.

£ s. d.

1. MONDAY :—  
Went to London, and from there to Chester.  
Slept at the White Lion.
2. TUESDAY :—  
At Chester.  
Wm. Saunders lost on Little Nell ..... 5 0 0  
Beregina and Merrywing ..... 7 0 0
3. WEDNESDAY :—  
At Chester.  
Wm. Saunders lost on Chicken and Crabstick ..... 15 0 0  
And received from Topham for Chicken's stake .....  
Returned to Stafford, then on by fly with Cook.
4. THURSDAY :—  
At home.
5. FRIDAY :—  
At home.
6. SATURDAY :—  
Went to Lichfield for London with Mr. Cook.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Nailor ..... 0 4 0
7. SUNDAY :—  
Went to Stafford.
8. MONDAY :—  
Went to Stafford to see Buxton and Day—Dined at the junction.
9. TUESDAY :—  
At home.  
Paid Robert Bentley ..... 2 7 6
10. WEDNESDAY :—  
Went with Jere to Hednesford.
11. THURSDAY :—  
Willie's birth-day.  
Jere and George Bates here to dinner.  
Paid Pearson for oats ..... 28 12 0  
— Wm. for cheese ..... 0 13 0  
— for Nutt.
12. FRIDAY :—  
Went with Jere to Hednesford, then on with Wm. Saunders to Lichfield.
13. SATURDAY :—  
Went with Cook to Hednesford to try Polestar.  
Paid for getting up potatoes ..... 0 15 9  
— Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles ..... 0 3 0
14. SUNDAY :—  
Went with Willie to church—Sacrament.
15. MONDAY :—  
Sent Willie to school with T. Walkeden.  
Subpœned into County court.
16. TUESDAY :—  
Went by 8 train for Warwick.  
Slept at Woolpack.
17. WEDNESDAY :—  
At Warwick.  
Returned home by gig from Lichfield at  $\frac{1}{4}$  p. 9.
18. THURSDAY :—  
Paid Hopley for bricks ..... 0 16 10  
Mr. Clarke and Mason called to see the foals.
19. FRIDAY :—  
Went with Mr. Cook to Hednesford to try "Nan," and in coming home the horse tumbled down—Eliza went to Stone.
20. SATURDAY :—  
Mr. Cook, Mr. and Mrs. Walkeden breakfasted here.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Tom Palmer ..... 5 0 0
21. SUNDAY :—  
Left for London by 30 p. 12 train.



£ s. d.

22. MONDAY :—  
Left Eastern Counties Station for Newmarket at 8 o'clock.  
Slept at Pettit's.
23. TUESDAY :—  
At Newmarket.
24. WEDNESDAY :—  
At Newmarket.  
Chicken won, beating Ld. Alfred and 15 others.
25. THURSDAY :—  
At Newmarket.
26. FRIDAY :—  
At Newmarket.  
Returned to London with Geo. Whitehouse, to B. Buildings at  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 10.
27. SATURDAY :—  
Went to see Pratt, and paid him £250 on acc. of £2,000 bill.  
Returned home at  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 7.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles ..... 0 4 0
28. SUNDAY :—  
At home.
29. MONDAY :—  
Jere dined, then rode with me to Lichfield for Worcester.  
Slept at the Bell Inn.
30. TUESDAY :—  
At Worcester.  
Returned home by fly from Lichfield at  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 9.
31. WEDNESDAY :—  
At home with a bad cold.  
Jere dined.  
Charles and Henry brewed 14 bushels of malt.

## NOVEMBER.

1. THURSDAY :—  
At home with a bad cold.
2. FRIDAY :—  
At home with a bad cold.  
Charles and Henry brewed.  
Eliza and Barbara went to see the horsemanship, &c.
3. SATURDAY :  
Went with Ben to Hednesford to see Chas. Marlow.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles ..... 0 3 6
4. SUNDAY :—  
At home.
5. MONDAY :—  
At home.
6. TUESDAY :—  
Went to Liverpool with Cook, Jere, and Saunders.  
Paid Saunders ..... 10 0 0  
Slept at the Stork.
7. WEDNESDAY :—  
At Liverpool.  
Saunders lost on Chicken ..... 50 0 0  
Saunders lost on Staffordshire Nan ..... 50 0 0
8. THURSDAY :—  
At Liverpool.  
Paid Wm. Saunders ..... 20 0 0  
Returned home by fly from Stafford.
9. FRIDAY :—  
Went to London by 12 m. b. 5 train.  
Slept at B. Buildings.
10. SATURDAY :—  
Returned home by B'ham.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles ..... 0 4 0
11. SUNDAY :—  
At home.  
Mr. H— A. preached farewell.



12. MONDAY :—  
At home.  
Jere dined.
13. TUESDAY :—  
Drove with Cheshire to Stafford, with George's poney for Shrewsbury.  
Returned home at night with Wm. Saunders.
14. WEDNESDAY :—  
Went to Colwich with George's poney for Shrewsbury.  
Slept at the Raven.
15. THURSDAY :—  
Retd. home with Cook and Myatt, by fly from Stafford.
16. FRIDAY :—  
Cook and Jere dined here.
17. SATURDAY :—  
Cook ill in bed.  
Dined with Jere.  
Paid Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Harriman ..... 0 18 0
18. SUNDAY :—  
At home.  
Cook ill in bed.
19. MONDAY :—  
Went to London to pay Pratt ..... 700 0 0  
Returned home by fly from Stafford.  
Sat up with Cook all night.
20. TUESDAY :—  
Attending on Cook all day.  
Dined at the yard.  
Up with Cook all night.
21. WEDNESDAY :—  
++++ Cook died at 1 o'clock this morning.  
Jere and Wm. Saunders dined.  
Sent Bright a 3 months' bill.
22. THURSDAY :—  
Paid Spilsbury for hay for Wm. Saunders ..... 32 19 9  
— Spilsbury for my hay ..... 13 2 6  
— Burnett for Spirits ..... 13 13 0
23. FRIDAY :—  
Cook's friends and Jones came, and I dined with them at Masters'.
24. SATURDAY :—  
Went to Lichfield for London, and returned home at  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 7.  
Mr. Stevens came at  $\frac{1}{2}$  p. 7.  
Paid Harriman ..... 0 18 0  
— Henry ..... 0 14 0  
— Michael ..... 0 12 0  
— Charles ..... 0 8 0
25. SUNDAY :—  
At church—Hamilton preached.  
Dined, yard.
26. MONDAY :—  
Attended a P. M. examination on poor Cook, with Drs. Harland, Mr. Bamford, Newton, and a Mr. Devonshire.









