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1 "A Windy Day": a scene outside the shop of Bowles, the famous printseller, in St. Paul's Churchyard

From a water colour by Robert Dighton, ca. 1790

THE STREETS OF LONDON

THROUGH THE CENTURIES

By

THOMAS BURKE

Illustrated from
Prints, Paintings, Drawings and Photographs

B. T. BATSFORD LTD
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LIVING IN BLOOMSBURY
NIGHTS IN TOWN
THE OUTER CIRCLE
THE LONDON SPY
CITY OF ENCOUNTERS
LONDON IN MY TIME
ENGLISH NIGHT-LIFE
TRAVEL IN ENGLAND
Etc.

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Preface

IN THIS book I have tried to show something of the London that was, through the medium of the life of its streets. This has always been a favourite subject of our writers and our artists, and the literature of this aspect of London alone makes a small library. I mean such works as Dekker's *Bell-man of London* and *Gull's Horn-book*; the pamphlets of John Taylor, Tom Brown, and Ned Ward; Gay's *Trivia*; Malcolm's *Anecdotes*; and the works of that host of nineteenth-century writers on our street-life—Pierce Egan, James Grant, Albert Smith. J. T. Smith, Mark Lemon, the Mayhews, G. A. Sala, Ewing Ritchie, James Greenwood, G. R. Sims, among a hundred more whose names are less familiar.

These men did nothing profound, and in the literary sense their writings were minor journalism. But they did useful work. The tone and manners of a nation's life are shown more sharply in the street than in the *salon* or the front parlour; and from their books, and the confirmation given to them by contemporary artists, we can see and hear the London life of thirty decades. We can see where we have improved, and where we have fallen back. We can see how different we are from the people who walked the streets that we walk to-day, and how much we are just like them. And in this present year we can remember that our London ancestors had often to face, though in a different form, as much disturbance and sudden death as waits for us to-day.

Londoners have never been quite so boastful of their city as the sons of some towns of the North. It wasn't a Londoner who made that grand outburst on Cheapside—"that mighty thoroughfare—thou pride of London's east—mighty mart of old renown—a place of gold and silver, perfumes and fine linen." That was the East Anglian, George Borrow. It wasn't a Londoner who cried: "London, thou art of townes *A per se*; Sovereign of cities, seemliest in sight." That was the Scot, William Dunbar. Most of the London writers just mentioned were indeed highly critical; even in their moments of appreciation, they went little farther than an approving nod. But in their devotion to London, they were all faithful.

T. B.

September 1940

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Acknowledgment

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2 Coronation Lights: Waterloo Place and Lower Regent Street, 1937

3 Cheapside in the Reign of Henry VIII

A reconstruction by H. W. Brewer

PART ONE

Before 1600

CHEAPSIDE to-day. . . . A long gorge through a cliff of buildings, broken at its middle by that church whose steeple holds the bells that symbolise the voice of all London. At the eastern end are the temples of England's commerce and finance, and at the western end the temple of what worldly men understand by the term Religion. The sky is webbed with wire, and the gorge is choked with traffic—motor-buses, taxis, private cars, lorries, horse-vans, tricycles. The pavements stream and bubble with people. The ear receives an artillery of brakes and gears; horns, hoofs, wheels, and voices. The shop of a wireless-dealer gushes music that is being played two hundred miles away. Vans loading and unloading constantly bring the traffic to a stop. At either end are tube-stations and subways, and at intervals are traffic-lights, yellow crossing-beacons, and bus-stops. Banks, restaurants, tea-rooms, pubs, lunch-counters, neon signs, and shops for almost all your needs. Tickets For All Theatres . . . Lunch Edition . . . *Draper's Record* . . . *Investor's Chronicle* . . . One-Way Street . . . Look Left. . . .

Six hundred years back. . . . A broad street of wooden houses, mostly one storey high, without chimneys. Pent-house shops and lines of stalls. The houses were brightly painted. Most of them displayed a gilded pendant sign. At one end was the Standard; in the middle, the Conduit; and at the other end, the Cross, gilded. The whole breadth was roughly laid with stones, with no division marking the footpath from the roadway. In some features it was much as it is to-day; in others almost miraculously different. Then, as now, it was a market, West Chepe, a street of shops stocked with the merchandise of this and other countries. Then, as now, it had taverns and eating-houses and swinging signs. Then, as now, it had a church dedicated to St. Mary-le-Bow, whose bells were the bells of London. Then, as now, it had at one end a temple to St. Paul, and at the other a rendezvous for merchants. It was even lighted, on joyful occasions, in the manner of to-day. Where it now has arc-lights suspended over the road by cables, it then had lanterns slung across on ropes of straw.

In another feature, it is, at the time of writing, as it was in those days. It was then a street of black nights, black casements and doorways. After sunset, shops were closed, and household lights were dimmed. But as the centuries passed, and lighting became essential to

public order, and new means of lighting were discovered, the London nights became brighter and brighter until, in the nineteen-thirties, they glittered and glowed to the sky as though the city were afire. Then, in September 1939 we went back in a few hours to the London of the first Normans, to the eleventh century, and our nights became darker even than the London nights in which Chaucer walked in the fourteenth century.

Cheapside, in London's early days, was its most important street. It was a centre that drew to itself something from each limb and nerve of the rest of London, and gave it back in amplified form, so that the life of Cheapside, and all the changes in that life, were for some centuries reflected in every minor street and in the daily life of every citizen.

It was a boisterous life: rich and fruity. That particular small sector of the London soil, whose present length is what it was when it began (though to-day it is narrower) was for so long the setting for so many London doings, and such variety of London life, generation after generation; so many London and country feet have trodden it, so many songs been sung in it, so many tales told in its taverns—notably the Mermaid and the Mitre—so many quarrels and fights and executions has it seen, that if we could pick from the air the vibrations of the speech and clamour of its past, our ears would be blasted by a crash of talk and song and cry, of jest and oath and bawdry, that would carry the burden of London life, Saxon and Norman, Plantagenet, Tudor, and Stuart.

Cheapside held, as I say, the essence of the London of most of those periods, and up to the eighteenth century its daily scene was a pageant of contrasted characters who exhibited their contrast in their dress, deportment and speech. Each man announced his calling and his place in life by externals. The Cheapside crowd of every day was something that we now see only at fancy-dress balls. Merchant, knight, courtier, prior, monk, pedlar, apothecary, scrivener, gallant, soldier, ballad-singer, beggar, cut-purse, cripple, water-carrier, milkmaid, money-changer—all were there, and each had his own manner and his own drab or gaudy apparel.

Londoners of the past were more Latin in their ways than those of later ages; they lived much more in the street. They transacted much of their business in the street. They made communal feast and carnival in the street. Kings held occasional court in the street, and princes caroused and raised hell's delight in the street. Grown men as well as children played games in the street, and exercised at sports. In the street men aired their grievances—as they do to-day in Hyde Park—and in the street, at the cart's tail, in the pillory, or on the gallows, they paid the penalty of their daring. In celebration of victories, oxen were roasted in the street, bonfires lit, and barrels of wine emptied into the conduits, free to all. The noble as well as the plebeian fought out their

quarrels in the street. In the days before newspapers, news of invasion or battle, of rebellion and treason, was cried in the street by messengers on steaming horses. Those with no lodging slept in the street, and in the last extremity they were allowed to die in the street. For all except these last, the street was another home from home, with, despite the Watch and the constables, fewer restrictions than the home.

The general condition of the streets was chaos and dirt. There was no flat paving, and for rain and refuse there was only a kennel in the middle of the road. There was not only, in wet weather, a depth of mud, but all sorts of household refuse, even the most intimate, was flung into the roadway and churned up by hoofs and wheels, or left to rot under cover of other refuse from the stalls or under the welter from the Newgate Street slaughter-houses. Often it was flung from upper windows, damaging some gallant's costume, and leading to high words which were indeed high. Much of it was carried away by the long sleeves of the men, which at one time reached to the ground, and the trailing skirts of the women. A ballad of the time makes a point of this:

> Now hath this land little need of brooms
> To sweep away the filth out of the street,
> Since the side-sleeves of penniless grooms
> Will lick it up, be it dry or wete. . .

The streets held far more noise than this generation has known. Craftsmen worked in open shops or sheds. There was hammering and planing, sawing and grinding. Women did their needlework at the door, and cried gossip across the street. Prentices bawled "What d'ye lack?" and cried their particular goods. Trumpets blared, and musicians played against each other. There was the thunder of iron wheels on stone, the clatter of horses, the crying of the ballad-singer and the hawker, the wailing of the beggar, the back-chat of the quarrelsome, the turmoil made by drovers with their flocks and herds, the insults of carters, the lashing of whips, and, on a dozen occasions of the day, the ringing of bells.

In those days almost the whole of London was comprised in that section which to-day we call the City; the section enclosed by the Wall, with gates at the Tower, Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Cripplegate, Aldersgate, Newgate, and Ludgate, and with outlets to the river by the water-gates and stairs. London Bridge (the only bridge to the river until 1740) was also gated. All these were barred and bolted at sunset, so that travellers arriving after that hour had to use the inns outside the gates. Just as each calling had its costume, so each craft or trade of this enclosed city was lodged in its respective street. Mercers, haberdashers, saddlers, and goldsmiths were in Cheapside; grocers in Soper Lane; drapers and second-hand clothiers in Lombard Street and Cornhill; ironmongers in

Old Jewry; butchers and cooks in Thames Street and Eastcheap; poulterers in The Poultry; horse-coursers and dealers in sheep and oxen at Smithfield; wine-merchants in The Vintry by the river. The cook-shops of Thames Street and Eastcheap were a prominent feature of that London. Just as people of to-day, living in flatlets, send out to the delicatessen store for a supper for unexpected visitors, so the people of the twelfth century, when the preparation of food meant much more trouble, would send out to the public cooks for a ready-cooked meal delivered hot.

The shops of the principal streets, in appearance like the coffee-stall of to-day, only larger and, of course, stationary, offered not only English goods but the produce brought from abroad by foreign merchants. There was gold from Araby, spices from Italy, armour from Scythia, gems from Egypt, furs from Norway and Russia, oil from Baghdad, and wine from France. Along the river these foreign merchants had their warehouses, and the street scene was as cosmopolitan then as it is to-day. Franks, Flemings, Genoese, Lombards, Venetians and Germans of the Hanse towns were as much a part of London life as the Cockneys themselves.

John Lydgate, in his *London Likpenny*, gives a vivid picture of streets and trades in the middle of the fifteenth century, and makes a complaint that has been echoed many times since of London's chill reception of those without money:

Then unto London I did me hye,
Of all the land it beareth the pryse;
Hot peascods one began to crye,
Strawberry rype and *cherries in the ryse*:
One bade me come nere, and by some spyce,
Peper and sayforne, they gan me bede:
But for lacke of mony I myght not spede.

Then to the Chepe I began me drawne,
Where mutch people I saw for to stande;
One offered me velvet, sylke, and lawne,
And other he taketh me by the hande,
Here is Parys thred, the fynest in the lande.
I never was used to such thyngs indede,
And wantyng mony I myght not spede.

Then went I forth by London stone,
Throughout all Canwyke streete;
Drapers mutch cloth me offered anone:
Then comes me one, cryde *Hot shepes feete*,
One cryde *Makerell*, *Rushes greene*, another gan greete,
One bade me by a hood to cover my head:
But for want of mony I myght not be sped.

Then I hyed me into Estcheape:
One cryes *Rybbs of befe*, and many a pye;
Pewter potts they clattered on a heape,
There was harpe, pype, and mynstrelsye:
Yea by cock! Nay by cock! some began crye,
Some songe of Jenken and Julyan for their mede;
But for lack of mony I myght not spede.

Then into Cornhill anon I rode,
Where was much stolen gere amonge;
I saw where honge myne owne hoode,
That I had lost amonge the thronge;
To by my own hood I thought it wronge,
I knew it well as I dyd my crede;
But for lack of mony I could not spede.

The Taverner took me by the sleeve;
"Sir," sayth he, "wyll you our wyne assay?"
I answered, that cannot mutch me greve,
A peny can do no more than it may;
I dranke a pynt, and for it dyd pay;
Yet sore a hungerd from thence I yede,
And wantyng my mony I could not spede. . . .

Wherever there were crafts and trades, there were apprentices, and wherever there were apprentices, there were high spirits and noise and ungainly pranks. At that time apprentices were granted a license of conduct granted to-day only to undergraduates. There *were*, no doubt, some industrious apprentices, but most contemporary sketches follow the figure drawn by Chaucer:

Gaillard he was, as goldfinch in the shawe,
Broun as a berie, a propre short felawe,
With lokkes blake, y-kempt ful fetisly.
Dauncen he could so wel and jolily,
That he was cleped Perkin Revelour. . . .
At every brydale would he singe and hoppe,
He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.
For when ther any ryding was in Chepe,
Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe,
Til that he hadde al the sighte y-seyn,
And daunced wel, he wolde not come ageyn;
And gadered him a meinee of his sort
To hoppe and singe, and maken swich disport.
And ther they setten steven for to mete
To pleyen at the dys in swich a strete.
For in the toune was ther no prentys
That fairer coude caste a paire of dys
Than Perkin coude, and there-to he was free
Of his dispense, in place of privatee.

London then, and earlier, was as much a city of sport as it is to-day, and for the apprentices there were all manner of field diversions, including horse-racing. Fitzstephen, writing in the twelfth century, gives a picture of the racing at Smithfield:

> There, every Friday, unless it be one of the more solemn festivals, is a noted show of well-bred horses exposed for sale. The earls, barons, and knights, who are at the time resident in the city, as well as most of the citizens, flock thither either to look on or buy. It is pleasant to see the nags, with their sleek and

Apprentices at Play

From a medieval illustration

> shining coats, smoothly ambling along. . . . When a race is to be run by such horses as these, and perhaps by others, which in like manner, according to their breed, are strong for carriage and vigorous for the course, the people raise a shout, and order the common horses to be withdrawn to another part of the field. The jockeys, who are boys expert in the management of horses, which they regulate by means of curb-bridles, sometimes by threes and sometimes by twos, according as the match is made, prepare themselves for the contest. Their chief aim is to prevent a competitor getting before them. The horses, too, after their manner, are eager for the race; their limbs tremble, and, impatient of delay, they cannot stand still; upon the signal being given they stretch out their limbs, hurry over the course, and are borne along with unremitting speed. The riders, inspired with the love of praise and the hope of victory, clap spurs to their flying horses, lashing them with their whips and inciting them by their shouts.

At Shrove-tide there were cock-fighting and football between men and boys. Every Sunday in Lent, the younger nobility and the citizens' sons went out to the fields, just north of Cheapside, and engaged in mock battles. In summer-time there were tennis, tilting at the quintain, contests in leaping, archery, wrestling, javelin-throwing and fighting with bucklers. For the girls there were dances of pagan origin set to the different festivals of the year—Easter, May Day, Whitsun, Midsummer

Eve, Harvest, and so on. In winter there were bull-baiting and bear-baiting, battles of boars against hogs, and the usual Christmas revels. On the frozen swamps of Moorfields the young men engaged in ice-sports and a crude form of skating: the skates were the shin-bones of animals fixed under the boot. One of their sports was to skate towards each other at high speed and, in passing, crack each other's skulls—or try to—with quarter-staffs. The well-to-do citizens shared with the courtiers the pastimes of hawking, hunting, and rabbit-coursing; and in place of the theatre, which came later, they could witness, in and about the churches, the miracle-plays and interludes. One of these, given at Smithfield, lasted eight days and presented the story of the Old and New Testaments from the Creation onwards. On summer evenings the sober citizens resorted to the cool and shady oases of the various fountains at Clerkenwell, Holywell, Skinner's Well, and Clement's Well. For the rest, there were always fairs, saints'-day pageants, pilgrimages to the shrines of saints, and royal processions. And for the idle there were bowling-alleys, fencing-schools, and dicing-houses.

The bull-baiting and bear-baiting, on Bankside and elsewhere, were amusements of a kind that lasted for many centuries—until, indeed, public taste, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, revolted. A description of one of these shows, as seen by a contemporary, may give modern stomachs a turn; but the people of Plantagenet London were heartier and lustier than ourselves—heartier in their loves, heartier in their hates, lustier in their labours and their sports, heartier in their domestic affections and lustier in their personal and their mass cruelty:

> They are fastened behind, and then worried by great English bull-dogs, but not without great risk to the dogs, from the horns of the one and the teeth of the other; and it sometimes happens that they are kilied upon the spot; fresh ones are immediately supplied in the places of those that are wounded or tired. To this entertainment there often follows that of whipping a blinded bear, which is performed by five or six men, standing circularly with whips, which they exercise upon him without any mercy, as he cannot escape from them because of his chain; he defends himself with all his force and skill, throwing down all who come within his reach and are not active enough to get out of it, and tearing the whips out of their hands and breaking them.

When there were no regular amusements to attend, the citizens and prentices could find something to do in witnessing the beheadings on Tower Hill or at the Cheapside Standard; the hangings at Tyburn or Wapping; or the burnings, and even boilings, at Smithfield. Murder by poison or attempted murder by that means, carried a special penalty of boiling to death; and Timbs quotes a few cases from the *Chronicles of the Grey Friars of London*:

> This yeere was a cooke boyld in a caldron in Smythfielde for he would a-poysond the Bishop of Rochester, with dyvers of his servants; and he was

lockd in a chain, and pulld up and down with a gibbet, at dyvers tymes, til he was dede.

The x day of March was a maid boyld in Smythfield for poysoning of dyvers persons.

Other spectacles were afforded by the hue-and-cry after thieves and murderers; the penances of culprits in public places; and the spontaneous rejoicings in honour of victories, accessions, or anything else.

Jousts and tournaments were held not only at Smithfield, but in the streets and on London Bridge. In 1331 a great tournament was held in Cheapside in the presence of Edward III, his Queen, the French ambassador, and the Mayor and sheriffs. On that occasion the scaffolding on which the ladies were standing collapsed, and flung them to the ground among the knights. It is an indication of the dyspeptic temper common to those times that the life of the carpenter who built the scaffold was in grave danger until the queen went on her knees to her lord and begged his clemency.

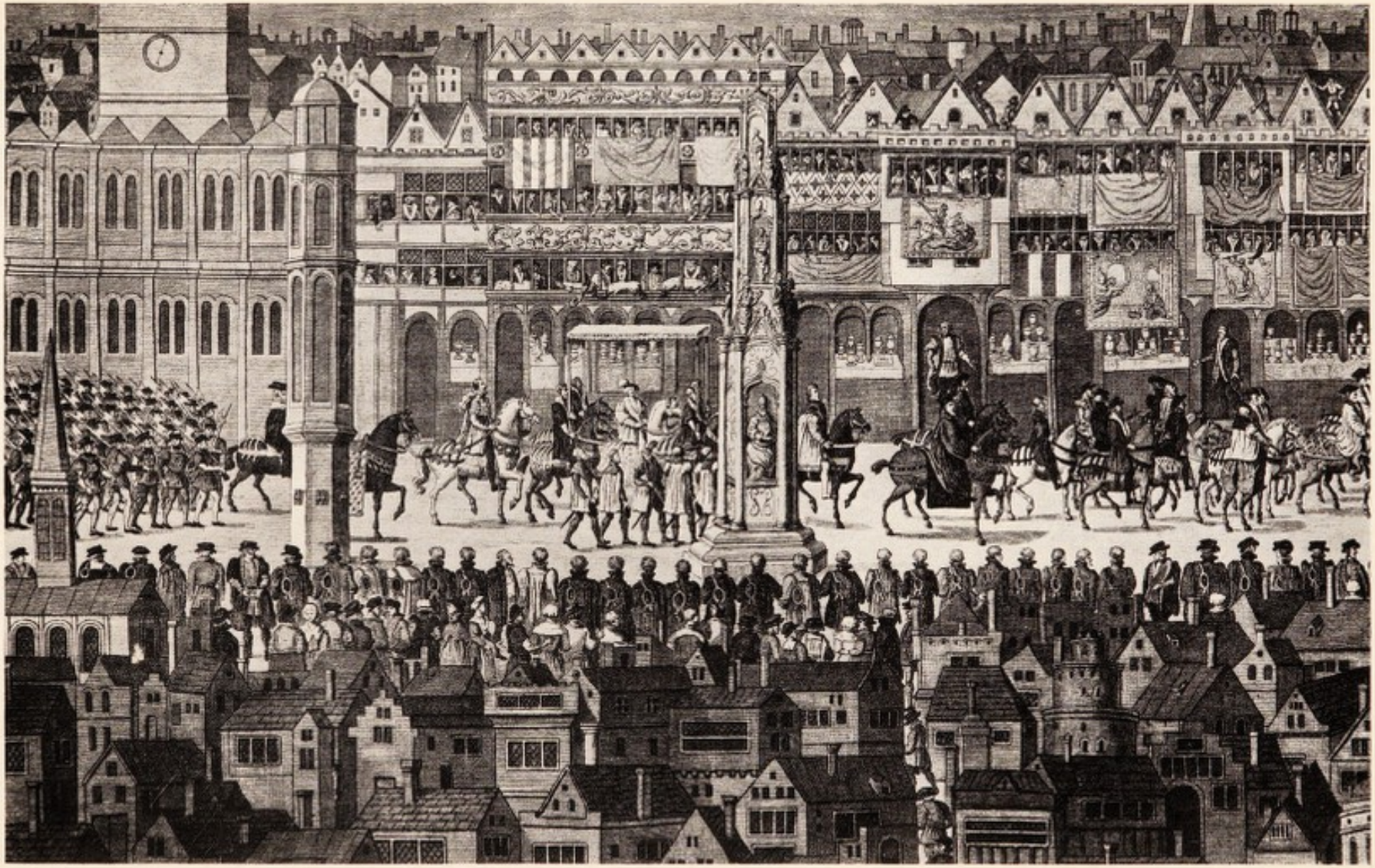
London Bridge saw many a tourney of single combat. One of these was between the Scotch Earl of Crawford, and Lord Wells, the English ambassador to Scotland, to settle the question whether the English or the Scotch were the more valiant. The two men were escorted to the bridge by their followers and on a flourish of trumpets they charged with square-ground spears. The framing and crossing of the later boxing-ring were apparently not unknown on the field of chivalry. The Scotch earl took so many blows from the Englishman on his helmet and visor, and broke so many of his lances, without being unseated, that the English supporters cried that he was fastened to his saddle. Whereupon he dismounted, and showed his saddle, and remounted, and charged the Lord Wells to such effect as to send him full length to the ground unconscious. Then, like a modern boxer, he ran to his defeated opponent, embraced him tenderly, and visited him every day until he was recovered from his injuries.

The tourneys held at Smithfield were affairs of more ceremony, and lasted many days, with much feasting. Froissart gives a picture of one of these which may be taken as typical:

> At the day appointed there issued forth of the Tower, about the third hour of the day, sixty coursers apparelled for the jousts, and upon every one a squire of honour, riding a soft pace; then came forth sixty ladies of honour, mounted upon palfreys, riding on the one side, richly apparelled, and every lady led a knight with a chain of gold; those knights being on the king's party had their harness and apparel garnished with white harts and crowns of gold about the harts' necks, and so they came riding through the streets of London to Smithfield, with a great number of trumpets and other instruments of music before them. The king and queen, who were lodged in the bishop's palace of London, were come from thence, with many great estates, and placed in chambers to see the jousts; the ladies that led the knights were taken down

4 A Market Street, Seventeenth Century

5 Stalls at a Holiday Assembly, Fifteenth Century



6 The Coronation Procession of Edward VI passing through Cheapside

From an old engraving

from their palfreys, and went up to chambers prepared for them. Then alighted the esquires of honour from their coursers, and the knights in good order mounted upon them; and after their helmets were set on their heads, and being ready in all points, proclamation made by the heralds, the jousts began, and many commendable courses were run.

The feasting seems to have been shared by the knights not only after the courses but before, sometimes with a tragic result. Stow cites a case in which a servant had laid a charge of treason against his master, when, according to custom, the king ordered them to settle the truth or falsity of the charge by combat at Smithfield. "A day being assigned them to fight in Smithfield, the master being well-beloved was so cherished by his friends, and plied with wine, that being therewith overcome was unluckily slain by his servant."

Processions of welcome or felicitation were always done on a scale of grandeur. The Mayor and sheriffs turned out in full regalia of furs and chains, the masters and prentices of the different trades and mysteries paraded in cloaks embroidered with gold, or their particular livery of silk or velvet; every house was adorned with silk banners, and at night lamps, cressets, and candles were lit by thousands. On the occasion of a victory each trade got up an impromptu procession. An account of one of these makes special mention of the fishmongers' march, when they carried four gilt sturgeons on four horses, four silver salmon on four horses, with a troop of mounted knights representing luces, or pike.

A procession made at Christmas time for the Black Prince's son began during the night. One hundred and thirty citizens rode in a comic mummery to the music of trumpets, sack-buts, cornets, and shawms, and to the light of a thousand torches. Forty-eight of them wore the dress of esquires—red coats and gowns of serge; forty-eight were knights, also in red; then came one alone in the purple of an emperor; then a pope, with twenty-four cardinals, and a number of men in black armour. They marched through the night from Newgate, along Cheapside to London Bridge, thence to Southwark and so to Kennington, where the prince was lodged.

The reception of the young Richard II was equally magnificent. He was met at the gate by the Mayor and aldermen, and was led along streets strewn with flowers and waving with flags. In Cheapside, a special fountain had been built, from which wine was flowing, and around this fountain stood four young virgins in white, holding cups of gold filled with wine, which they presented in turn to the king.

The reception, many years later, of Henry V, after Agincourt, was still more of a jubilee. For this, the Mayor and council, and the traders in red and white hoods, went to Blackheath, and escorted him from there to London Bridge, and so into the city. The two towers of the bridge were dressed with banners bearing the royal arms, and at their

foot was a band of trumpets. On the city side a large tower had been erected, and in the middle of it, against a crimson tapestry, covered by a canopy, was a figure of St. George, wearing a laurel crown set with gems. Alongside was a company of boys, dressed in white, with silver wings, who greeted the king with an anthem. In Cornhill the Conduit had been covered by a crimson pavilion, where the elders of the city, in coats of gold, greeted the king by sending out a flight of sparrows to flutter around him. The smaller Conduit at Cheapside was covered with green cloth bearing various scutcheons. More old men were here, representing in their dress the twelve apostles and the twelve kings. These greeted him with leaves of silver, and wine from the conduits, all of which, that day, ran nothing but sweet wines.

The Cheapside Cross had been developed into a castle, dressed with coloured linens to represent marble and jasper. At the top of the tower of the castle sat small children, singing a paean to the victor, and from its windows young girls threw down imitation gold coins and laurel leaves. The Standard, at the farther end of Cheapside, had a number of pavilions built round it, and from these, fair young girls blew showers of golden leaves from cups of gold. Over the top of the Standard was a canopy painted to resemble the sky. Each of the four corners was held up by a young girl in angelic dress, and on the top was a figure in golden dress representing an archangel. Seated on a throne under the canopy was a figure of imposing presence representing the sun, and around him other angels sounding trumpets and other instruments. How the day ended is not told, but with all the conduits running sweet wines . . .

Of the annual feasts those of May, Midsummer, and Christmas were the most marked by pageant and ceremony. On May Day all citizens, young and old, went into the fields, to pluck flowering May and green branches, with which they decked the streets and their homes, following the pagan ritual of bringing Flora to the hearth. May-poles were set up in each parish, often of immense height—the church of St. Andrew Undershaft got its name from the fact that the may-pole of Leadenhall Street over-topped its tower—and the girls and the morris dancers, garlanded with flowers, danced round them and their Queen. In the evening, bonfires were lit and masques were performed. May Day meant much more to them than it did to those of later centuries, since their winter was indeed a winter. For the poorer people, with little money for fuel and light, winter was a season of some months of confinement in their homes after sunset, of going to bed early and getting up in darkness, and of shivering through the day, and living on salted foods. May Day meant release from that confinement; it meant light and air and warmth and easy living; so that when it came it was not taken for granted: it was met with due salute and thanksgiving.

Some of our earliest English songs, sung in hall and street, reflect the spirit which the year's awakening evoked in them:

Lenten is come with love to toune,
With blosmen any with briddes roune,
That all this blisse bryngeth. . . .

Worship ye that lovers bene this May,
For of your blisse the Kalendis are begonne;
And sing with us, Away, winter, away!
Come, summer, come, the suete sesoun and sonne. . . .

The fields breathe sweete, the daisies kisse our feete,
Young lovers meete, old wives a sunning sit,
In every streete these tunes our ears do greete. . .

But at all times there were kill-joys about, and there were long-faced observers who frowned on the paganism of these frolics:

> Against Maie, Whitsondaie, or some other time of the year, every parish, town, and village, assemble themselves together, both men, women, and children, old and young, even all indifferently; and either going all together, or dividing themselves into companies, they go some to the woods and groves, some to the hills and mountains, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes, and in the morning they return, bringing with them birch boughs and branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withall. And no marvel, for there is a great lord present among them, as superintendent and lord over their pastimes and sports, namely, Satan, prince of hell. But their chiefest jewel they bring from thence is their Maie pole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus: They have twenty or forty yoke of oxen, every ox having a sweet nosegay of flowers tied on the tip of his horns, and these oxen draw home this Maie pole (this stinking idol rather) which is covered all over with flowers and herbes, bound round about with strings, from the top to the bottom, and sometime painted with variable colours, with two or three hundred men, women, and children following it with great devotion. And thus being reared up, with handkerchiefs and flags streaming on the top, they strew the ground about, bind green boughs about it, set up summer halls, bowers, and arbours hard by it; and then fall they to banquet and feast, to leap and dance about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idols, whereof this is a perfect pattern, or rather the thing itself. I have heard it credibly reported by men of great gravity, credit, and reputation, that of forty, three-score, or a hundred maids going to the wood over-night, there have scarcely the third part of them returned home again undefiled.

Naturally; what are the Rites of Spring for? And what else did the may-pole itself mean?

During summer, every saint's day had, on its eve and on the day itself, its pageant and merry-making. After sunset, bonfires were made in the streets, and every household of each street contributed logs and helped to tend to the fires. Those who were prosperous enough set

tables before their doors, with wine and cakes, and invited neighbours and passers-by to stop and have one. Those who had quarrelled during the preceding year made a point of gathering at each others' tables and shaking hands. On St. John's Eve the front of every house was decorated with boughs and flowers, and with iron frames holding a dozen oil lamps which were kept burning all night; and a great procession was made of the watch and of the city officers. First came a band, then the sword-bearer in armour, then the Lord Mayor on horseback attended by his giant, and then a troupe of morris dancers. In the next section came the carabiniers, in white, then a body of archers, pikemen, halberdiers, and bill-men. Each division had its own music, and the whole procession made a circuit of the city through the principal streets. The illumination was lavish. Each section carried a hundred cressets, and each of the two hundred watchmen carried a cresset, the light from which played upon gaudy uniforms, gold-laced cloaks, armour, harness, and the many weapons and musical instruments.

Another summer ceremony was the presentation of a buck to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's by one of their tenants. The buck was carried into the cathedral by the tenant's gamekeeper and his men, and was met at the altar by the Dean and Chapter wearing crowns of roses and special vestments embroidered with a design of a buck. The head was removed from the buck, and the body sent to the cooks, when the head was fixed on a pole and carried round the cathedral before the cross, and out to the steps. There the keeper gave a flourish on his horn, which was answered by the watch on their own horns, and all who had taken part in the ceremony were given a dinner.

One of the most popular and most unpleasant street entertainments of that London was the public penances. Penances were an expression of mercy; a sort of letting off. When the offence was not serious enough for the heavier punishments of death (which was inflicted for a hundred offences, including stealing to the value of more than a shilling) or imprisonment, or sequestration of property, or branding, but was serious enough to merit some notice, justice was served by some shame-making penance. Tradesmen who gave short measure, or sold food unfit for consumption, were ridden round the streets in a dung-cart or on horseback, tied face to tail, with the offending article strung round their necks. Other offenders, such as suborned jurymen, had to ride from Newgate to the pillory in Cornhill, and stand there for the day, wearing paper mitres carrying the story of their offence. For insulting the Mayor or his sheriffs, or committing something like contempt of court, offenders had to carry a lighted candle weighing three pounds from the Guildhall to St. Dunstan's Church in Fleet Street. Two constables, who had arrested a criminal in a church where he had sought sanctuary, had to walk through the filth of the streets bare-footed, and carry lighted candles from Newgate to the scene of their offence, and back again.

Street-walkers were punished by having their hair cut off in public, and being made to walk through the streets in their petticoats, accompanied by rough music on basins and hand-bells. The penance of Jane Shore in 1483 is a familiar story. Richard III had accused her protector, Lord Hastings, of treason, and had had him beheaded. Unable to make a charge against Jane Shoré he denounced her to the Church as a woman of incontinent habits. The sentence of the church was that she should walk in her petticoat, bare-headed and bare-footed, from the bishop's palace to St. Paul's Cross, where she was to make open confession as a woman of loose morals. Holinshed, in his *Chronicles*, gives an impression of the scene:

> In her penance she went, in countenance and pace demure, so womanly that albeit she were out of all array, save her kirtle only, yet went she so fair and lovely, namely, while the wondering of the people cast a comely rud in her cheeks, that her great shame won her much praise among those that were more amorous of her body than curious of her soul. And many good folks that hated her living (and glad were to see sin corrected), yet pitied they more her penance than rejoiced therein, when they considered that the Protector procured it more of a corrupt intent than any virtuous affection.

Other penances were the ducking-stool, for the common scold, the "riding" for the woman who had made her husband a cuckold, and the whipping out of the gates for vagrant beggars, women as well as men.

The people had, indeed, as much amusement as those of to-day, and more public holidays; but with all their labour and merriment went plagues, fires, riots, rebellions, and sudden death. Many of the riots were begun by the prentices, but others were uprisings of the citizens against the demands of the king. In the early years of the fourteenth century, Edward II, having a quarrel with the barons, demanded from the citizens a forced loan and a troop of soldiers. The citizens objected, and Edward deposed the Mayor and put the city in charge of the Bishop of Exeter. On this news, an armed band of citizens marched to the Mayor, before the keys of the gates were taken from him, and themselves took the keys. Then, gathering numbers as they marched, they went to the house of the Bishop, set fire to it, and captured the Bishop, who was warned of their coming, at the door of St. Paul's. From there they dragged him to the Standard at Cheapside, denounced him as a traitor, and asked for sentence. The mob pronounced sentence, an axe was produced, and there and then he was executed. They then went to the house of a citizen who had favoured the king's cause, and took him too to the Standard and executed him on the same block. A brother of the Bishop was also seized, and one of his retainers. These were both dealt with in a few minutes, and the bodies of all four dragged through the streets and flung into one of the ditches.

Some time later, in 1376, the citizens rose again. The cause was a

difference and an exchange of words between John of Gaunt and the Bishop of London. Following this, John of Gaunt demanded that Parliament should abolish the office of Lord Mayor, and that sheriffs and other officers should be appointed by the king. When this was known, the citizens formed themselves into an army, with any weapons they could procure, and went first to the Marshalsea, the home of Lord Percy, Marshal of England. Lord Percy contrived to be not at home, so they tore down his palace, and went on to John of Gaunt's house, the Savoy. He, too, was out; he was, with Percy, a guest at some banquet. So they tore down the Savoy, and in their excitement murdered an innocent nobody who happened to look something like Percy.

With these risings, and casual riots, and conflicts of natives and foreigners, and daily assaults by thieves and assassins, and frequent executions, there was blood in the London streets almost every week of every year.

The Guilds and Companies were often in collision, one accusing the other of infringing on its craft or selling its line of goods. There was such an affair between the Skinners' Company and the Fishmongers' Company, though in this case one cannot easily see what the one could sell that was the right of the other. They agreed to settle it by combat, and each side appointed a champion. Before the appointed day, the champions were going about the streets with their bodyguard, when at some point they met, and there was some biting of thumbs. At once the champions set to, and their bodyguard set to, and soon were joined by some hundreds, carrying staves and swords. As men on either side went down, wounded, they were carried off the field by the "gate," and the battle went on with constant reinforcements.

When news of the battle came to the Lord Mayor, he went out with his aldermen and constables, and ordered the arrest of the two champions. The only effect of this was that which follows when the peacemaker intervenes in a man-and-wife quarrel. The Skinners and the Fishmongers joined forces, and set about the Lord Mayor's men, and arrested the Lord Mayor. Then the sheriffs arrived with an armed band, attacked the rioters, rescued the Lord Mayor, and arrested the two champions and some other ringleaders. Next day, those who were taken were sentenced to death and executed at the Cheapside Standard.

A similar clash, with similar result, happened between the Goldsmiths and the Merchant Taylors. Several hundred men of either side, fully armed, drew up in battle array outside the walls, and charged. In this encounter, nearly a hundred were killed or dangerously wounded, and the number would have been higher but for the prompt arrival of the Mayor and sheriffs, with an armed watch. Goldsmiths and Merchant Taylors broke and fled, but they were pursued on horseback, and about a dozen unfortunates who were in the rear of the flight, were taken. A day or so later, they were hanged at Tyburn.

The prentice riots usually arose haphazard—a word and a blow. The foreign merchants and their artificers were particularly distasteful to the London prentice, and a mere look, a flaunt of the cloak from a foreigner, could start the cry of "Prentices—Clubs! Prentices—Clubs!" which would bring all the prentices of every sort from their shops. Any affront put upon a single prentice was resented by all. There was the case of a prentice who was arrested for the trifling offence of drawing his knife and stabbing an Italian. When it was known that he was arrested, and for that offence, the cry went up and the prentices came out and rescued him from the watch. The watch was reinforced, and attacked the prentices, and a crowd collected, and it was then free-for-all.

The crowd sided with the prentices, and as the row had been started by an Italian (in getting himself stabbed) the crowd made a line towards the houses of the Lombards. These they broke upon, and after helping themselves to whatever appeared valuable, they destroyed the rest and fired the houses. When the Lord Mayor came out with his armed force, a running fight began, in which many on both sides were killed. It ended with the arrest of a large body of rioters, of whom three were hanged.

The May Day prentice riot of the early sixteenth century—an all-night and all-day affair—was more considered. This, too, was an outbreak against the foreign craftsmen who were making fortunes while honest Englishmen were starving; but it was a seriously planned revolt which passed into history under the name of Evil May Day. The early scenes of the anonymous play, *Sir Thomas More*, attributed in part to Shakespeare, show the overbearing behaviour of the foreigners, and the plotting of revenge by the citizens and their leaders—John Lincoln, a broker; Sherwin, a goldsmith; George Betts, a journeyman; Williamson, a carpenter, and his wife, Doll Williamson. In a street scene, Lincoln draws up a table of grievances, and reads it to his companions. He proposes to have it read at St. Paul's Cross by the preacher of the Spital Sermon:

> BETTS. No doubt but this will store us with friends enow, whose names we will closely keep in writing; and on May Day next in the morning we'll go forth a-Maying, but make it the worst May Day for the strangers that ever they saw. How say ye? Do ye subscribe? Or are ye faint-hearted revolters?
>
> DOLL. Hold thee, George Betts, there's my hand and my heart. By the Lord I'll make a captain among ye, and do somewhat to be talked of for ever after.
>
> WILLIAMSON. My masters, ere we part, let's friendly go and drink together and swear true secrecy upon our lives.

When the Lord Mayor and council had news of this movement among the citizens, they took steps on the eve of May Day to prevent any

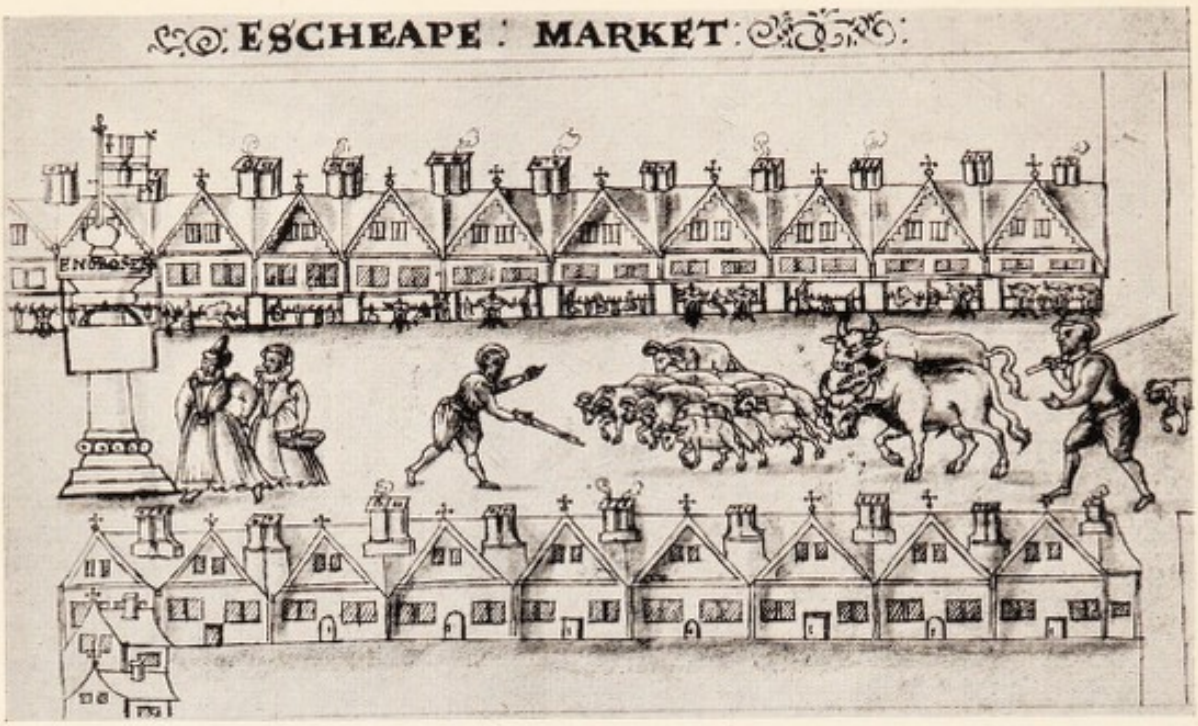
consultation among the conspirators, and any gathering. They issued an order that all prentices and servants should be in their homes at nine o'clock that evening, and remain there (under severe penalties on their masters) until nine o'clock of May morning; by which time the Mayor would have gathered sufficient force to quell any disturbance. At the same time they seized Lincoln, Betts, and Sherwin, and lodged them in Newgate, while some of their known companions were seized and sent to the Counter in the Poultry.

But the outbreak was precipitated by one of the aldermen. Passing through Cheapside just after nine o'clock, he saw two prentices sparring with cudgels. It happened that they had not heard of the order, and when he threatened to call the watch, and have them sent to the Counter, they made saucy noises at him. When he attempted to carry out his threat, they gave the prentices' cry, and a host of their fellows poured out and rescued them. The riot then went forward according to plan. Armed mobs came out from all quarters, and these joined the prentices and marched first to Newgate, to liberate their leaders. The constables of the watch and the men of the Lord Mayor's guard were helpless. The mob battered down the gates of Newgate, and set all the prisoners free. They then went to the Poultry Counter, and released everybody there. They then went to the quarters where the foreigners dwelt, and plundered and tore down their houses. Troops were sent into the city by the king, but by the time they arrived, the rioters had achieved their object, and were satisfied.

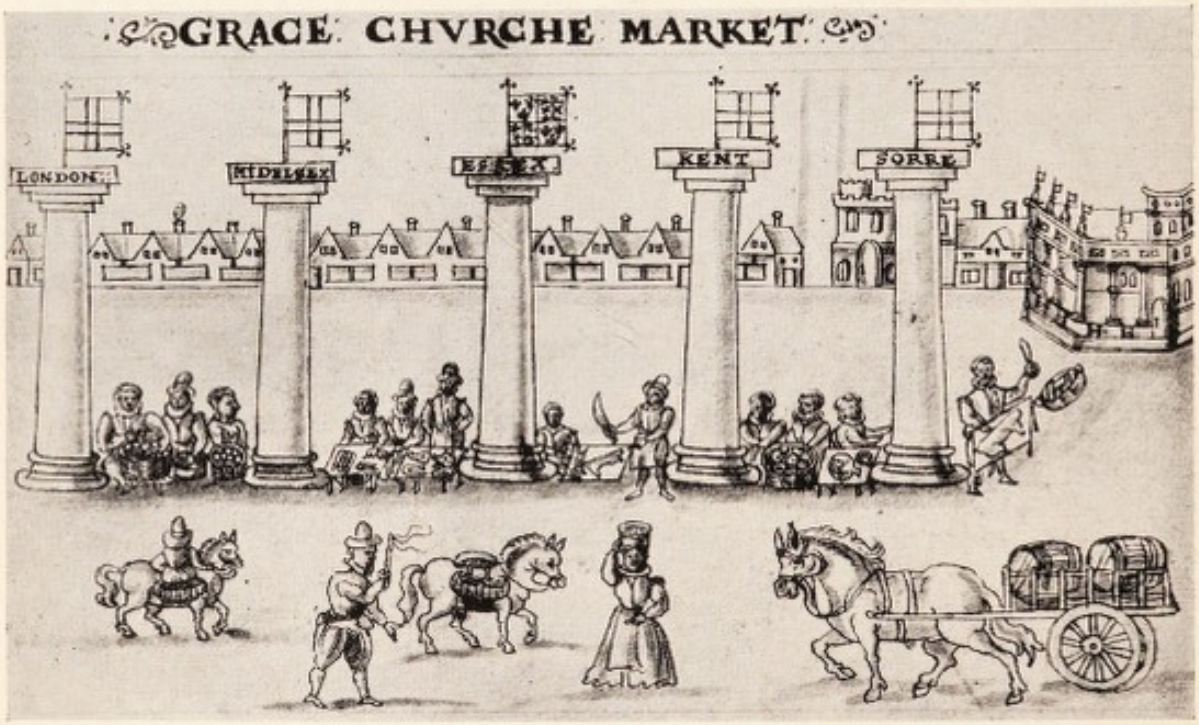
During the day, John Lincoln was re-arrested, with three hundred others, and he and Betts and five companions were put on trial a day or so later, and sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. The fate of the other prisoners was left in suspense. Ten scaffolds were erected at different points of the city, and the condemned men were taken in a body to the first scaffold, where the law was carried out upon Lincoln. The others were then taken to the next scaffold, where Betts was to be turned off; but by that time the king's anger had cooled, and at the second scaffold a courier was waiting with a reprieve.

A familiar feature of the street life of Plantagenet and Tudor London is a feature of the street life of to day. There are few activities so conservative in their methods as crime. A new crime is as rare as a new story. The tricks being played to-day on the shopkeepers of Bond Street and Regent Street were being played on the shopkeepers of those days. The elaborate swindles nursed along and worked in the lounges of our fashionable hotels and in our cocktail-bars were being worked in the inns of those days, and the procedure in both cases is almost identical. The confidence-trick; ringing the changes; ordering goods to be sent on approval, and decamping with them by a side door; horse-nobbling; wallet-dropping—all were familiar to the wideawake

7 A Public Beheading by the Long Sword, Fifteenth Century



8 Eastcheap Market in Tudor Times



9 Gracechurch Market in Tudor Times

Londoner of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Even the "protection" racket of modern America—demanding money from tradesmen in return for not damaging his goods—was in use at that time, as the following note shows:

> BLACK WILL. I have cracked as many blades as thou hast done nuts. The bawdy houses have paid me tribute; there durst not a whore set up, unless she have agreed with me first for opening her shop windows. . . . All the tenpenny ale-houses would stand every morning with a quart pot in their hand, saying, "Will it please your worship drink?" He that had not done so, had been sure to have had his sign pulled down and his lattice borne away the next night.

Posing as a constable or as a member of the council, and accepting a bribe for non-interference, was one of their tricks that was not unknown in later times. Even the Long Firm fraud is not a development of modern business; some bright spirit thought it out and worked it five hundred years ago. Card-sharpers were of course as common as they are to-day, and cogged dice in the dice-rooms were a cause of much bloodshed.

There was then, as now, a current slang, some of which has survived almost to these days. Five hundred years ago a drunken man was "boozy," a companion was a "cove," a group of friends was "the bunch," clothes were "duds" or "slops," stealing from shops was "lifting," a swindler was a "shark," a madman was "cranky," a beggar was a "ragamuffin," the leader of a gang was an "upright cove" (as the modern crook is a "straight-up boy"), and when a man was sent in the hangman's cart to Tyburn he was said to have "gone westward."

Despite the many orders that public places should close after dark, and that people should not be abroad after a certain hour (which was in force up to the early eighteenth century) London then, as to-day, had an unsavoury night-life which was held behind closed doors and in cellars, in the manner of our night-clubs and bottle-parties. Despite the Watch and the Mayor's officers, the wild spirits and their bona-robas kept it up all night. Many of these places were in the centre of the city; a more ruffianly kind was to be found at Southwark. After the middle of the fourteenth century, when an attempt was made to clean up the city, all manner of gangsters, thieves, murderers, and their morts fled across the river and settled themselves in Southwark, where the Mayor had no jurisdiction. Even before those days Bankside, and the streets leading from it, had become the common stews of London. It held, indeed, a royal licence for that purpose, given towards the end of the twelfth century. Its main clauses are quoted by Stow:

> No stew-holder or his wife should let or stay any single woman, to go and come freely at all times when they listed.

No stew-holder to keep any woman to board, but she to board abroad at her pleasure.

To take no more for the woman's chamber in the week than fourteen pence.

Not to keep any single woman in his house on the holidays, but the bailiff to see them voided out of the lordship.

No single woman to be kept against her will that would leave her sin.

No stew-holder to receive any woman of religion, or any man's wife.

No single woman to take money to lie with any man, but she lie with him all night till the morrow.

No man to be drawn or enticed into any stew-house.

The constables, bailiffs, and others, every week to search every stew-house.

No stew-holder to sell bread, ale, flesh, fish, wood, coal or any victuals.

He adds that few Englishwomen were found in the houses; the inmates were chiefly women of Flanders. The institution was so openly recognised that at one time several of the stew-houses were owned by William Walworth, Lord Mayor; who was by no means the last temporal or spiritual magnate to fill his purse from slum property. When Wat Tyler and his men marched through Southwark to London they destroyed many of these houses, and it may have been the knowledge of this that made Walworth so furiously hack and hew the rebel when they met at Smithfield. Southwark maintained its licence to be the Bordello of London up to the middle of the sixteenth century, when Henry VIII, of all people, withdrew it. The moment at which the houses ceased to have the royal countenance was fitly proclaimed by a flourish of the king's trumpets. But the ban was official only; unofficially, Southwark remained one of the chief sinks until well into the eighteenth century.

With the roarers and gallants who were out at night for devilment, and the prowling desperadoes who came over in boats from Southwark, London after dark in those days was full of perils. Peaceable citizens who had legitimate business abroad followed it at the risk of being waylaid, beaten, robbed, and perhaps murdered. The Southwark fellows were out for plunder, but the peppery spirits of the roysterers and the apprentices were just as dangerous to the citizen. They were just as likely to insult him, and to answer his repulse with a cudgel or rapier. Or, if he happened to be passing when a quarrel was going on amongst themselves, he was liable to be attacked on the principle of hit-the-first-man-you-see. Any fight or quarrel always brought out the adventurous spirits, whose heat and haste and lust for a fight never allowed them time to ask about rights and wrongs. Many a man in those days died in the streets because he happened to be on the scene of the quarrel, and was considered fair game for the sword of the new arrival; or was one of a party in the illicit ale-house or gaming-room, where anybody's quarrel was everybody's quarrel; or because he took the wall side of the street, away from the mud, when some roarer claimed it.

Robbery was committed not only by the desperadoes from the huts

and cellars, but often, as in recent Mayfair cases of our own time, by young men of good family and position. An old chronicler of medieval London, quoted by Stow, gives a sober account of the lawlessness of that time:

> It was then a common practice in the city that a hundred or more in a company, young and old, would make nightly invasions upon houses of the wealthy, to the intent to rob them; and if they found any man stirring in the city within the night that were not of their crew, they would presently murder him, insomuch that when night was come no man durst adventure to walk in the streets. When this had continued long, it fortuned that as a crew of young and wealthy citizens, assembling together in the night, assaulted a stone house of a certain rich man, and breaking through the wall, the good man of that house, having prepared himself with others in a corner, when he perceived one of the thieves to lead the way, with a burning brand in one hand . . . he flew upon him and smote off his right hand, and then with a loud voice cried "Thieves!" at the hearing whereof the thieves took their flight, all saving he that had lost his hand, whom the good man in the next morning delivered to Richard de Lucie, the king's justice. This thief, upon warrant of his life, appeached his confederates, of whom many were taken, and many were fled. Among the rest that were apprehended, a certain citizen of great countenance, credit, and wealth, named John Senex, who forasmuch as he could not acquit himself by the water dome, as that law was then, he offered to the king five hundred pounds of silver for his life.

At no time were the watchmen very efficient in protecting the citizen and putting down the night-rogues. The Elizabethan watchman presented in Dogberry was, from all one can learn, not a very gross caricature. From the time of their first institution in 1253, to the "Charlies" of the Stuart period and later times, up to those of George IV, when they were superseded by the "Peelers," they ran fairly true to that type. They were often, where the rich were concerned, inclined to be lenient; an attitude not unknown in times nearer to ours. Often they were asleep at their posts when they should have been on patrol; seldom anxious to engage in a tussle if they could avoid it; and seldom, when honest, alert and strong enough to exert authority and the necessary force. Dekker, in his *Bell-Man of London* describes the watchman of his time:

> I began to talke to my Bell-Man, and to aske him why with such a jangling and bawling, and beating at men's doores, he went about to waken either poore men that were over-wearied with labour, or sick men that had most neede of rest? He made answer unto me, that the ringing of his bell was not (like an allarum in a towne of garrison) to fright the inhabitants, but rather it was musick to charme them faster with sleepe; the beating at their doores assured those within that no thieves were entred, nor that false servants had wilfully or negligently suffered the doores to stand open, to have their masters robbed; and that his crying out so loud was but like the shrill Good Morrow of a cock

to put men (that had wealth enough) in minde of the time how it slydeth away, and to bid those that were full of businesse to be watchful for their due houres when they were to rise. . . . He brought me acquainted with his office as well as he knew it himselfe, and discovered unto me the properties of his walkes, as how far his boundes reached, what mad hobgoblins he oftentimes encountered with, what mischiefs he now and then prevented, what knaveries he was now and then an eye-witness to, and to what secret villanies he was compelled to be, though not the midwife, yet a gossip, present at the labour and deliverie.

And in the *Gull's Horn-Book*, he advises the young gallant how to deal with him when found abroad at improper hours:

If you smell a watch (and that you may easily doe, for commonly they eate onions to keep them in sleeping) or if you come within danger of their browne bills, let him that is your candle-stick, and holds up your torch from dropping, let Ignis Fatuus, I say, being within the reach of the constables staffe, aske aloud, Sir Giles or Sir Abram, will you turne this way, or downe that streete? It skils not though there be none dubbed in your bunch: the watch will winke at you, onely for the love they beare to armes and knighthood; marry, if the Centinell and his court of guard stand strictly upon his martial law and cry stand, commanding you to give the word, and to shew reason why your ghost walkes so late, doe it in some jest—for that will shew you have a desperate wit, and perhaps make him and his halberdiers afraid to lay foul hands upon you.

Much of the night crime and disorder was due, of course, to the darkness. The first arrangement for any general lighting seems to have been made in the early part of the fifteenth century, when the Mayor ordered lanterns to be hung in the streets on winter evenings between the first of November and Candlemas. The only other lights were the cressets carried by the patrolling watch, the torches carried by private pedestrians, and such light as householders casually showed. Not until the time of Elizabeth was lighting made compulsory. In 1588, under the fear of the approaching Armada, an order was made that every householder must hang a light outside his door. Just as citizens of 1940 are fined or imprisoned for showing a light after dark, so the citizens of that year were to be punished with death if they did *not* show a light. This order, with the penalty for neglect reduced to one shilling, was kept in force for over a century, when at last a public lighting company was formed.

As the city grew, it became noisier and noisier. To-day, despite occasional plaintive references to noise, we have nothing like the noise of the past. All our human and wheeled traffic, thick as it is, makes only an orchestral rumble, but in that London the noise was a staccato sequence of harsh and strident explosions. A contemporary satirist lists a few of the most offensive instruments in this unblended uproar:

Witness that hotch-potch of so many noyses,
Black-saunts of so many several voyces,
That chaos of rude sounds, that harmony
And dyapason of harsh Barbary,
Compos'd of several mouthes and several cries,
Which to mens eares turn both their tongues and eies.
There squeaks a cart-wheel, here a tumbrel rumbles,
Here scolds an old bawd, there a porter grumbles.
Here two tough car-men combat for the way;
There two for lookes begin a coward fray;
Two swaggering knaves here brabble for a whore,
There brawls an ale-knight for his fat-grown score.

The main streets of that writer's London are still main streets of to-day. They have the same length and direction, and most of them bear their original names. Not only are the streets of the centre—Cheapside, Eastcheap, Gracechurch (or Gracious) Street, Bishopsgate, Coleman Street, Paternoster Row, Cornhill—still in full life: many of the streets that were beyond the gates also follow their old course and bear the early name: as the Strand, Holborn, Cowcross Street, Houndsditch, Chancery Lane, Gray's Inn Lane, the Hay Market. Some of them still carry the same character, and are centres for the same kind of business. Cheapside, which was once the centre of mercery and haberdashery is still, in its by-ways, engaged with those matters. Paternoster Row was a centre for rosary-makers and text-writers, and is still largely occupied by religious booksellers. Fleet Street was a centre of the law, and though its name to-day chiefly connotes journalism, it still has a strong element of law. Cowcross Street was largely filled with cook-shops for tripe and roast pork, and it is still concerned with meat and with butchers' materials; and Billingsgate now, as then, is concerned with fish.

Even the shape of the city is what it was then. Century by century it has grown larger and larger, but always it has developed in accord with its early shape; and it is now a large, where it was once a small, oyster. Yet the essential London is not very much larger. What we of to-day call London stretches from Ealing in the west to Barking in the east; from Finchley in the north, to Norbury in the south. But for all general purposes we have, even to-day, left London when we have passed Marble Arch or Knightsbridge; when we have crossed one of the bridges; when we have gone beyond Bishopsgate Street; or beyond Euston Road or Marylebone Road.

That early London, like ours, was a city of the world. During the two centuries before Elizabeth, it attracted so many foreigners that, at the time she took the throne, various phrase-books were issued, giving English phrases with their equivalent in French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. A piece of dialogue in one of these books illustrates the babel that must have filled the London air:

"Where shall I find you about twelve a-clock?"

"I will be below in the Change, either walking among the Italians, or trucking with the French, or prattling amongst our English, or carousing with the Flemings at the Cardinal's Hat. And if I be not in these places you shall find me above in the Paune, devising with the fair sempsters."

But whatever sort of people are, at any given time, parading the London streets, whatever clothes they are wearing, whatever idiomatic speech they are using, they make in any century the same kind of crowd.

A Tudor Tavern

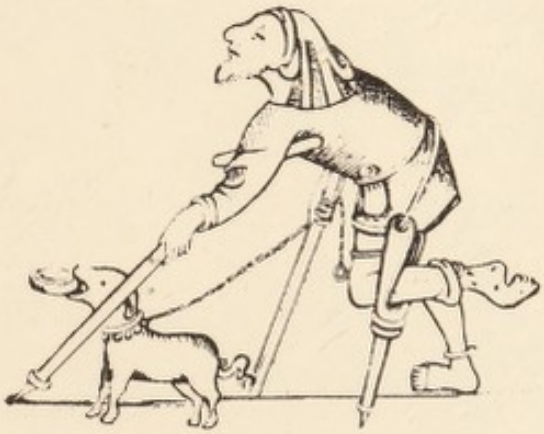
The London crowd has not changed from Chaucer's time. The holiday crowd, the workaday crowd, the ragging crowd, the gangsters, the petty criminals—all are to-day, with very small differences, what they were then. Street-cries are now stilled, but up to the early years of the nineteenth century London was hearing the cries of that youthful London; the cries noted by John Heywood:

Bread and meat—bread and meat—for the tender mercy of God—to the poor prisoners!

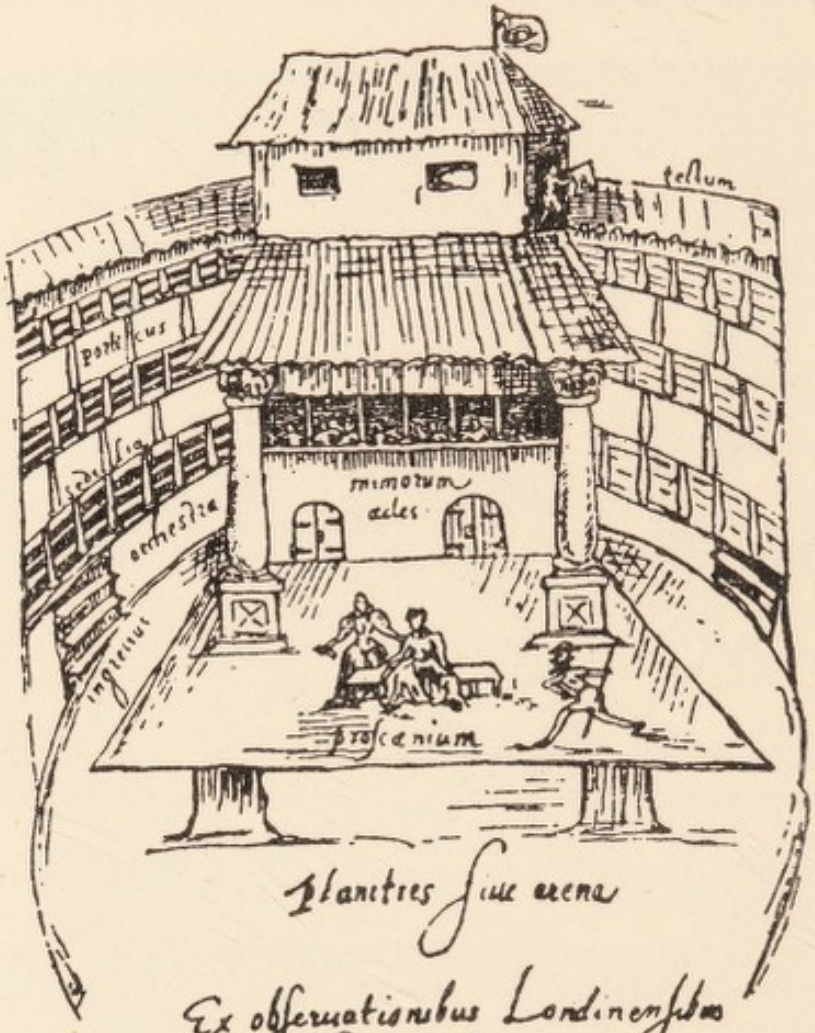
Buy a fine mouse-trap!
Kitchen-stuff, maids, kitchen-stuff!
Have you any wood to cleave!
Have you any work for a tinker?
Buy a mat, a mil mat, or a hassock for your pew!
Hot fine oat-cakes—hot!

New brooms, green brooms, will you buy any;
Come maidens, come quickly, let me take a penny.

And in the suburban taverns of this year you will find the descendants of the tavern company of *Piers Plowman*—Betty, the brewster; Cis, the shoemaker; Tom, the tinker; a fiddler; a scavenger; a trooper; Clement, the cobbler; Bet, the butcher; and Rose of the small shop. There they all are, in different clothes, using a different idiom, but sitting and gossiping of this and of that just as they were doing six hundred years ago.



The Blind Beggar
From a medieval illustration



Swan Theatre, Bankside

Drawn by John de Witt

10 Water Carriers

11 The Gallant and the Lady

12 "Fine Fresh Fish, all Alive!"

13 A Royal Procession through Cheapside in the Reign of Charles I

PART TWO

Under the Stuarts

DURING THE seventeenth century a little improvement was made in the condition of the London streets and the amenities of London life. Paving, draining, and storage of food for the increased population, were looked to. New schools were founded; new theatres built. New streets were made outside the gates, and a pure water-supply was given to the town by the laying of the New River from Amwell, in Hertfordshire, to Clerkenwell. There was a general awakening of civic consciousness. In the preceding century men's minds had been looking abroad. The merchant-venturers, with their far-flung business in the East and West Indies, and the explorer-pirates with their achievements on the Spanish Main, had given London a sense of empire which for a time had kept its leaders from attending to more immediate concerns. But when they had fully indulged this new sense, they awoke to the needs of London, and set about bringing it into line with the new times—though still in a rather perfunctory and haphazard way.

That all this development towards a civilised London should have coincided with the accession to our throne of a king from the barbarian north, is to some people both incongruous and ironic.

Unfortunately, one period of the seventeenth century brought a less pleasant change to the life of the London streets. That life, which had once been so light and bright, took on a sour and gloomy look, and so powerful was the influence of that change that even to-day London life is conscious of it and is governed by it. The middle seventeenth century brought the short but severe régime of the Commonwealth, under which all hearty merry-making was suppressed. Theatres were closed, shows and pageants forbidden, may-poles and pagan holiday-rites denounced, and cakes and ale frowned upon. The Puritans had been a large body in Elizabethan times, but they were then without power. Towards the end of the first half of the century, they enjoyed for a few years the fullest power, and used it so effectively that London life, and indeed the mental attitude of Englishmen, have ever since operated under the Puritan spirit. In 1660 there was a Restoration, which removed many of the abuses of the Commonwealth; but it restored little except outward things. You cannot restore an expired spirit; and, anyway, the point about a restoration or a revival is that it is just that. It is not the natural continuance of a spontaneous way of life; it is a deliberate indulgence in something of the past, and, like all deliberate and considered actions,

such as a "revival" of religion or the modern "revival" of folk-dancing, it is false in itself and in its relation to the times. The gaiety of the Restoration period was as unnatural in its deliberate looseness as the gaiety of the nineteen-twenties. People were not gay from lightness of heart; they were *being* gay.

But in the early years of the century the London streets were still bright with natural merriment and pageantry, and of course riot and bloodshed. One of the important streets of that time—a street that was a centre for the life of the town and a clearing-house for gossip—was not a street at all. It was the middle aisle of St. Paul's Cathedral which by degrees had become less of a sacred building and rather a mixture of Royal Exchange, market, and promenade. It was the rendezvous of the smart and flashy folk of that time, as in later days were the Mall, the Piazza in Covent Garden, the Pantheon, Vauxhall, Rotten Row, and Bond Street; and it was known among its *habitués* as Mediterraneo.

John Earle, in his *Microcosmographie* tells us that it is:

> . . . the land's epitome, or you may call it the lesser isle of Great Britain. . . . The noise in it is like that of bees, a strange humming or buzz mixed of walking tongues and feet; it is a kind of still roar or loud whisper. It is the great exchange of all discourse, and no business whatsoever but is here stirring and afoot. . . . The best sign of a temple in it is that it is the thieves' sanctuary, which rob more safely in the crowd than a wilderness, whilst every searcher is a bush to hide them. It is the other expence of the day, after plays, tavern, and a bawdy-house; and men have still some oaths left to swear here. It is the ear's brothel, and satisfies their lust and itch. The visitants are all men without exceptions, but the principal inhabitants and possessors are stale knights and captains out of service; men of long rapiers and breeches, which after all turn merchants here and traffic for news. Some make it a preface to their dinner, and travel for a stomach; but thriftier men make it their ordinary, and board here very cheap.

Ben Jonson, in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, has some scenes set in "Paule's Walke," in which the characters bring their dogs, and stick on the pillars notices of wanting servants. The tone of the behaviour is set in almost the opening speech of Shift: "I have been taking an ounce of tobacco hard by here, and I am come to spit private in Paul's." Porters and messengers claimed a sort of right-of-way through the cathedral, and some tradesmen even stabled their donkeys in its recesses. The old phrase of "dining with Duke Humphrey," meaning going without dinner, originated with the custom of spending the pre-dinner hour in promenading the middle aisle. One of the larger monuments was a tomb supposed to be that of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, though Stow corrects this and says he was buried at St. Albans. At the dinner-hour, when the crowd dispersed, the penniless, having no means of dining, continued to walk up and down past the tomb, and were

facetiously called members of Duke Humphrey's retinue. The best picture of it is that of Dekker:

> Your mediterranean isle is then the only gallery wherein the pictures of all your true fashionate and complemental gulls are, and ought to be, hung up; into that gallery carry your neat body, but take heed you pick out such an hour when the main shoal of Islanders are swimming up and down. . . . But one note by the way do I especially woo you to, the neglect of which makes many of our Gallants cheap and ordinary, that by no means you be seen above four turns; but in the fifth make yourself away, either in some of the Sempster's shops, the new Tobacco-office, or amongst the booksellers, where, if you cannot read, exercise your smoke. . . . Howsoever, if Paul's Jacks be once up with their elbows, and quarrelling to strike eleven, as soon as ever the clock has parted them, and ended the fray with his hammer, let not the Duke's gallery contain you any longer, but pass away apace in open view. . . . After dinner you may appear again, having translated yourself out of your English cloth cloak into a light Turkey grogram (if you have that happiness of shifting) and then be seen for a turn or two to correct your teeth with some quill or silver instrument, and to cleanse your gums with a wrought handkercher. It skills not whether you dined or no (that's best known to your stomach) or in whate place you dined, though it were with cheese of your own mother's making in your chamber or study. Now if you chance to be a Gallant in the Mercers' books, your Powle's Walk is your only refuge; the Duke's Tomb is a sanctuary, and will keep you alive from worms and land-rats that long to be feeding on your carcase; there you may spend your legs in winter a whole afternoon; converse, plot, laugh, and talk anything. . . .

He then advises the Gallant, if he would be in the fashion, to observe the suits and costumes worn by the most dashing, and to bring his tailor with him who, behind a pillar, will note the material and colour and design, and turn him out in the latest mode—just as, in these days, spies visit the "collections" of the Paris costumiers and make mass-productions of their models. Also, he is to climb to the top of the steeple, and, before coming down, to follow a custom that persists to this day among visitors to ancient monuments:

> Before you come down again, I would desire you to draw your knife, and grave your name (or for want of a name the mark which you clap on your sheep) in great characters upon the leads, by number of your brethren (both citizens and country gentlemen) and so you shall be sure to have your name lie in a coffin of lead when yourself shall be wrapt in a winding-sheet; and indeed the top of Paule's contains more names than Stow's *Chronicle*.

Every kind of business went on in the main walk. Money-lenders and marriage-brokers met their clients there; horses could be bought, houses could be rented, private chaplains hired, and assignations made with women through their keepers. Each pillar of the aisle was a station for a particular commerce, and those seeking rich wives, or the illiterate

seeking letter-writers, knew to which pillar to go. Pickpockets, of course, were busy, as well as confidence-men looking out for gulls from the country, and swaggering captains looking about for some newly arrived gallant from whom, in return for their stories of fabulous exploits, they might get a dinner and a bottle.

During the Civil War, when the Parliament soldiers were billeted on the City, they used St. Paul's as a barracks, and stabled their horses in its chapels. Peaceable citizens, who had grown accustomed to the daily racket of the middle aisle, found the soldiers much more of a nuisance than the gallants and traders, and made many complaints about their playing nine-pins in the aisles at all hours of the night, and sawing up some of the old beams to sell as firewood. The use of the cathedral for these and other purposes continued until it lay in ruins after the Great Fire.

The Puritan attitude, as I said, was seen in London long before the Commonwealth. It first appeared under Elizabeth, when its source was Banbury. By the time of James I it had spread so widely among the more sober citizens of London that when Scotland's Solomon published his *Book of Sports* he sorely offended the aldermen and sheriffs. Under the Banbury teaching, Sunday, which had been a day of relaxation, was to be observed as a sunless Sabbath. James apparently knew nothing of this, and in his book he recommended that the workers and apprentices should employ their Sundays in field games and sports and other manly diversions. The citizens regarded this as a desecration of the Lord's day, and a coolness developed between London and the Stuart throne which lasted until the Great Seal was dropped into the Thames.

But despite this official attitude, London under the Stuarts continued to be merry. Pageants and shows were a regular part of street-life, and the parades of the Livery Companies on their anniversaries are celebrated in many ballads of the time, produced by the tame poet of each Company. Theatres were in the first flush of their youth; the rough sports of Bankside still drew their crowds, despite the theatre's competition; Bartholomew and Southwark Fairs were annual excuses for feasting and uproar; and the public holidays were increased by the anniversaries of Gunpowder Plot, which were zealously observed in every parish with bonfires and effigies. Foreign restaurants began to appear such as Pontac's, in the City; Chatelaine's in Covent Garden; the French House, near Tower Hill; and foreign innovations, such as hackney coaches and sedan-chairs. Before then, the ordinary people made their town journeys on foot or horseback, or by water. Only the very well-to-do could afford private coaches, and the introduction of hackney-coaches at reasonable fares aroused much resentment from the watermen. The air of that early Stuart London still echoes the complaints of their spokesman, John Taylor, the Water-poet:

Carroaches, Coaches, Jades and Flanders Mares
Do rob us of our shares, our wares, our fares;
Against the ground we stand and knock our heels,
Whilst all our profit runs away on wheels.

Other foreign notions that helped to enliven the streets were expressed in costume. The young men who had made the Grand Tour brought home fashions and fabrics from Italy, France, and Spain, and went about in brilliant colour and swaggering line. The gallant would have a cloak of crimson velvet, with an under-coat of silk embroidered with gold lace. The buttons would be gold or silver. He would wear a silver chain about the neck; silver spurs; Toledo sword with jewelled hilt; riding-boots to the knee, and a wide beaver hat with flaunting feather. His hair would be dressed in ringlets, with a love-lock over one ear. He would mostly be followed by a page or a lackey. Prentices would stare at him and do their best to copy him.

St. Paul's aisle was not the only public rendezvous where all classes met. Other places were the Royal Exchange, the New Exchange in the Strand, Westminster Hall, and the Tennis Courts. Both the Exchanges had an upper gallery, which was a sort of bazaar. It was lined with little shops selling silks and haberdashery and fans, and if contemporary accounts are reliable the young sempstresses in charge of these stalls were experts not only in high-pressure salesmanship but in midnight conversation. The atmosphere of the Royal Exchange gallery, known as The Pawne, is conveyed in one of the phrase-books of the period:

1ST GIRL. What seek you, sir?
2ND GIRL. Come here, my friend; see here fine ruffs, handkerchers, socks, coifs and cuffs wrought with gold and silver.
3RD GIRL. Would you have any fine Holland? Any Cambric?
MAN. Hark, my love, will you take a pint of wine?
3RD GIRL. Thanks, sir, not now.
1ST GIRL. Come hither, buy something of me, Northern man.
MAN. Ah, my love, I have not money enough.
PANDAR. Will you buy a pretty wench to carry into the North with you?
MAN: By my troth, no.

Westminster Hall was the seat of the law courts, and was a rendezvous for those with "cases," for touting lawyers, for witnesses who, for a fee, would swear to anything (they wore a wisp of straw in their shoe; hence the term "men of straw") for the general public, and of course for pick-pockets. Around the walls were bookstalls, fancy shops, and milliners' stalls. With the noise of the public and the stall-keepers, the lawyers in the courts around commonly had to raise their voices in conducting their cases. Many contemporary references may be found to the "hellish din" of the place, and if the people of that London found it

noisier than any other place, it is almost impossible for our inner imaginative ear to evoke any semblance of it. They spoke of it as a place "where the lawyers do Billingsgate loudly out-bawl," and one of Jonson's charac-

A Seventeenth-century Inn: The Bell, Holborn (now demolished)

Drawn by Roland W. Paul

ters offers to purge an offence by doing penance in the noisiest parts of London—in a belfry, at Paris Garden, at Billingsgate, at Westminster Hall.

It was a London of gasconade and swagger, of loud manners and loud voices; a London jingling all day with the movement of harness and spurs and swords, and churned by the attitudes of Bully Ruffs and Roaring Girls. Disorder was a part of everyday life, and brawls happened every

hour. Political riots, too, were as frequent as ever, and increased the bad feeling between the citizens and the Stuarts. There was the affair of the Spanish ambassador in the last years of James I. Spain was not popular with the people, nor was the Spanish Match; and they resented the favour that seemed to be shown to its ambassador. When, therefore, on a certain occasion, he appeared on foot in the city streets, the prentices set upon him and pelted him with stones and garbage. This led James to threaten the City with martial law, but it was a threat that other monarchs had made, and none had carried out.

A few years later his son made a similar threat, and *almost* executed it. The provocation in this case was more serious. It was an outbreak of popular feeling against a friend of Buckingham's—a Dr. Lamb, quack doctor and alchemist. On the principle among friends that "any friend of yours is a friend of mine," the citizens took the view that any friend of Buckingham's was an enemy of theirs.

The trouble began with his appearing alone in Cheapside, when two or three shop-boys recognising him, shouted, without much purpose: "There goes the wizard! Down with the wizard!" This cry was taken up with hoots and jeers, and soon the apprentices came out in force, and with them all sorts of rascals from the back-alleys. Stones and sticks were hurled at him, and when he began to run the crowd followed him with cries of "Down with him. Down with the wizard!" In Wood Street they got him down and belaboured him with their clubs; they then dragged him into Cheapside and down to St. Paul's. It went on long enough, apparently, for news of it to reach Westminster, and before the crowd had finished with him, the king himself arrived with a troop of horse. They were then dragging their victim along by his hair, beating him as they went. The king called upon them to hold, and promised that if the man had in any way offended he should be tried in the courts; but by that time the doctor was dead. The result was that the City was fined some thousands of pounds, and ordered to search out and deliver up the ringleaders, on pain of the cancelling of all its charters. The City could not, or did not try to, find the ringleaders, and Charles, probably foreseeing that any withdrawal of the Royal Charters would lead to much more serious disturbance, let the matter drop.

Bartholomew Fair and Southwark Fair were more legitimate events for high spirits. Certainly the proclamation with which the Lord Mayor opened it forbade any kind of disorder, and there was a summary court, held at the Hand and Shears tavern, the Court of Pie-Poudres, for dealing with offenders; but "disorder" is a term to which different generations give different meanings. The Lord Mayor, indeed, set the note of the doings himself, since part of the opening ceremony ordained that at Newgate, on the way to the Fair, he should stop and drink a pot of wine, nutmeg, and sugar. The order of the opening was this:

The aldermen meet my lord and the sheriffs at the Guildhall Chapel, at two of the clock after dinner, in their violet gowns lined, and their horses without cloaks, and there hear Evening Prayer; which being done they take their horses and ride to Newgate, and so forth to the gate entering in at the Cloth Fair, and there make a proclamation. So many aldermen as dine with my lord mayor and the sheriffs, to be apparelled in their scarlet gowns lined, and after dinner their horses be brought to them where they dine, and those aldermen which dine with the sheriffs, ride with them to my lord's house, to accompany him to the wrestling. Then when the wrestling is done, they take their horses, and ride back again through the Fair, and so in at Aldersgate.

Some of the clauses of the Proclamation are worth quoting, since contemporary records show that almost all of them were broken by almost everybody in the Fair:

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of the city of London, and his right worshipful brethren the aldermen of the said city, streightly charge and command that all manner of persons, of whatsoever estate, degree, or condition they be, having recourse to this Fair, keep the peace.

That all manner of sellers of wine, ale, or beer sell by measures ensealed, as by gallon, pottle, quart, and pint, upon pain that will fall thereof.

That no person sell any bread, but if it keep the assize, and that it be good and wholesome for man's body, upon pain that will fall thereof.

That no manner of person buy or sell, but with true weights and measures, sealed according to the statute in that behalf made, upon pain, etc.

That no person or persons whatsoever, within the limits and bounds of this Fair, presume to break the Lord's Day in selling, showing, or offering to sale, or in buying or offering to buy, any commodities whatsoever, or in sitting, tippling, or drinking in any tavern, inn, ale-house, or cook's-house, or in doing any other thing that may lead to the breach thereof, upon the pain and penalties contained in several acts of Parliament, which will be severely inflicted upon the breakers thereof.

The scenes in the fair-ground in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, which convey the roar and colour and smell common to all fairs, are familiar to most people. Less familiar is a pamphlet reproduced in Morley's history of the Fair, which pretends to expose "the several Enormities and Misdemeanours which are there seene and acted." Like most promised "exposures," it is really rather tame:

There are more motions in a day to be seen than are in a term in Westminster Hall to be heard. But while you take notice of the several motions there, take this caution along with you, let one eye watch narrowly that no one's hand make a motion to your pocket. . . . The fair is full of gold and silver drawers: Just as Lent is to the fishmonger, so is Bartholomew Fair to the pickpocket; it is his high harvest, which is never bad but when his cart goes up Holborn. Some of your cut-purses are in fee with cheating costermongers, who have a trick now and then to throw down a basket of refuse pears, which prove cloake-pears to those who shall lose their hats or cloaks in striving who

14 The Mantua-Maker

15 The Masked Lady
(*Hollar*)

16 An Apothecary's Shop in the Seventeenth Century
(*W. Faithorne*)

17 Southwark Fair, 1640

From an old drawing in the possession of the Publishers

shall gather fastest. . . . They are excellently well read in Physiognomy, for they will know how strong you are in the purse by looking in your face. . . .

It is remarkable and worth your observation to behold and hear the strange sights and confused noises in the fair. Here a Knave in a Fool's Coat, with a trumpet sounding, or on a drum beating, invites you and would fain persuade you to see his puppets; there a Rogue like a Wild Woodman, or in an antick shape like an Incubus, desires your company to view his motion; on the other side Hocus Pocus with three yards of tape or ribbon in's hand, showing his art of Legerdemain to the admiration and astonishment of a company of cock-roaches. Amongst these you shall see a gray goose-cap with a What do ye lack? in his mouth, stand in his booth shaking a rattle, or scraping on a fiddle, with which children are so taken that they presently cry out for these fop-peries. Here there are also your gamesters in action; some turning of a whimsey, others throwing for pewter, who can quickly dissolve a round shilling into a three half-penny saucer.

Long Lane at this time looks very fair, and puts out her best clothes with the wrong side outward, so turned for their better turning off; and Cloth Fair is now in great request; well fare the ale-houses therein; yet better may a man fare in the Pig market, alias Pasty nook or Pie Corner, where pigs are all hours of the day on the stalls piping hot.

Looking at the number of amusements, some innocent, some not so innocent, that were put down by Parliament men, it is surprising to find that they did not put down Bartholomew Fair. They suppressed bull-baiting and the other animal "sports." They closed the taverns. They closed all the pleasure-gardens excepting the Mulberry Garden. They forbade Christmas festivals, Christmas services in churches, May Day festivals, and all public dancing. But they let Bartholomew Fair go on, merely suppressing those side-shows that gave plays with living actors. The motions, or puppet-shows, and all the other fun-of-the-fair, went on as before. Theatres had been closed in 1642, under the threat of Civil War, and five years later, plays were entirely suppressed. An order was made that all theatre seats, boxes, and galleries were to be broken up; that any persons found engaged in the acting of plays should be whipped at the cart's tail; and that any persons making part of the audience at a play should be fined. This law, of course, was often broken, and just as, under religious persecution, people found means of following their forms of worship in secret, so those who loved the theatre were able to find fugitive companies of players to give them what they wanted.

There were rebels, too, against the suppression of May Day, though there is no record of their being whipped or fined. A contemporary account of their doings, written from the Puritan side in 1654, is no more than a grieved head-shaking over back-sliders:

This day was more observed by people going a-Maying than for divers years past, and, indeed, much sin committed by wicked meetings with fiddlers,

drunkenness, ribaldry, and the like. Great resorts came to Hyde Park, many hundreds of coaches, and gallants in attire, but most shameful powdered-hair men, and painted and spotted women. Some men played with a silver ball, and some took other recreation. But his Highness the Lord Protector was not thither, nor any of the Lords of the Council, but were busy about the great affairs of the Commonwealth.

Another odd thing about the Puritan rule. Sober as the streets were in their lack of colour and dashing deportment, their lack of ballad-singers and other performers, and their lack of popular pageantry (until the funeral of Cromwell) one old-time entertainment still flourished. The brothels were as many and as infamous as ever; and not only on Bankside. A ballad of the period—a Farewell to London and the pleasures of the town—gives a sort of directory to all the branch-resorts of lewdness, perhaps for the use of those who were coming up to town instead of retiring to the innocence of the country. It names, in addition to Bankside, Turnbull Street (at Smithfield); Kent Street, Southwark; Ratcliff Highway; Whitecross Street; Cowcross Street; Shoe Lane; Catherine Street (Strand); and Drury Lane. All those streets are part of the London of to-day, but of a different social tone from that implied in the ballad. Their tone at that time proves what enlightened rulers have always known—that imposed laws are futile; laws must reflect an already existing desire of the people. The spread of the night-houses from Bankside to other parts of the town seems to have had an effect upon the behaviour of quite respectable women. It is under the Puritan rule, of all times—in 1654—that Evelyn notes in his diary: "I now observed how the women began to paint themselves, formerly a most ignominious thing and us'd only by prostitutes."

Five scenes that the streets of London witnessed about the middle of the century were so impressive that they were talked of in the time of Queen Anne by those who were old enough to have seen them. These were: the execution of Charles; the funeral of Cromwell; the re-entry of Charles II; the evacuation of London during the Plague; and the Great Fire. High enough events for one lifetime.

The scene at the Banqueting Hall on January 30th, 1649, was described by many witnesses, and is familiar to most readers. Charles was brought from St. James's Palace through St. James's Park on foot, escorted by a guard of soldiers before and behind him, drums beating, colours flying. His Groom of the Chambers, Sir Thomas Herbert, has left a record of that last walk:

In this manner went the King through the Park: and coming to the Stair the King passed along the galleries unto his bed-chamber where, after a little repose, the Bishop went to prayer; which being done his Majesty bid Mr. Herbert bring him some bread and wine, which being brought the King broke

the manchet and eat a mouthful of it and drank a small glassful of claret wine. . . .

A Guard was made all along the galleries and the Banqueting House, but behind the soldiers abundance of men and women crowded in, though with some peril to their persons to behold the saddest sight England ever saw. And as his Majesty passed by with a cheerful look, heard them pray for him, the soldiers not rebuking any of them: by their silence and dejected faces seeming rather afflicted than insulting. . . . There was a passage broken through the wall by which the King passed unto the scaffold, where, after his Majesty had spoken a little, the fatal stroke was given by a disguised person.

Cromwell's funeral, it seems, was pompous but less impressive. According to Evelyn, who saw it:

He was carried from Somerset House in a velvet bed of state drawn by six horses, houss'd with the same; the pall held up by his new lords; Oliver lying in effigie in royal robes, and crown'd with a crown, sceptre, and globe, like a king; the pendants and guidons were carried by officers of the army; and the imperial banners, achevements, etc., by the heraulds in their coates; a rich caparison'd horse, embroider'd all over with gold; a knight of honour arm'd cap-a-pie, and after all, his guards, souldiers and innumerable mourners. In this equipage they proceeded to Westminster; but it was the joyfullest funeral I ever saw, for there were none that cried but dogs, which the soldiers hooted away with a barbarous noise, drinking and taking tobacco in the streetes as they went.

After the death of Cromwell, the streets became more lively—or rather, more disorderly. Protector Richard commanded little respect, and various factions began to contend for power—the royalists, the army, the parliament, with sub-divisions of each group. Riots and demonstrations of all kinds were frequent. During the sitting of the Rump Parliament, an army of apprentices and others from the City marched to the House of Commons demanding a dissolution. When they refused to disperse, the soldiers were called out, with orders to fire, and one of the demonstrators was killed. The mayor and aldermen thereupon sent a strong protest, and backed the citizens' demand for a new Parliament. The existing Parliament retorted by sending Monk and the army to take down the gates of the City, and its other defences, and occupy it. This was done, but Monk, who had been waiting to see which way the country's feeling was turning, suddenly rejected the Parliament and sided with the city. He and the army marched to Whitehall and ordered that the existing Parliament should quit and that a new, and more representative Parliament, be summoned. As the army was entirely in his hands, Parliament was compelled to obey. The dissolution of that Rump Parliament was hailed with wild celebrations in all the streets of the city. Peals were rung from the bells of all the churches. Bonfires were lit in the roads at such short intervals that,

according to Pepys, there were fourteen between St. Dunstan's and Temple Bar, and at Strand Bridge thirty-one. All down Cheapside, from St. Paul's to the Stocks Market, was a line of bonfires, and at each bonfire was a crowd of revellers, drinking and roasting rumps at the fire. Rumps were tied to poles and carried round the streets. At the May-pole in the Strand the butchers made a fire, and sacrificed rump after rump with a salute of marrow-bones and cleavers. The celebrations continued all through the night and made every street a lane of fire and feasting. A side-show was provided by the apprentices, who marched to the house of Praise-God Barebones, and broke all the windows.

Three months later, the entry of Charles II brought a larger crowd into the streets than had been seen for many years. The town was overflowing with visitors from the country, and the hawkers and ballad-makers had a restoration of their own. Charles was escorted by a procession of 20,000 horse and foot, with drawn swords; by the lords and nobles and esquires; by the Mayor and aldermen; and by the members of all the City Companies in their respective liveries. All the bells of London were ringing; the roadway was strewn with flowers, and the windows of the houses hung with coloured tapestries. The conduits, as usual, supplied wine in place of water, and every section of the procession had its own accompaniment of trumpets, fifes, and drums. Seven hours were taken in its passing a given point; the head of the march was seen at two o'clock, and the last straggling remnant limped by at nine o'clock. After sunset every street was illuminated with torches, and of course bonfires, and the windows of every house were filled with candles. Any windows that were not lit—and a few Quaker households were dark—were smashed.

London life became again cheerfully Cockney. In the succeeding months, theatres were reopened and the old rough blood-sports were resumed. Apart from those sports at Bankside, others were presented at Charing Cross. Huge crowds assembled there, in brutal mood, to witness the hanging and quartering of those regicides who had not escaped, and to jeer and gibe at them in their last moments. A crowd will always do what no single member of it would do. Men alone are always decent, but a crowd, whether of the fourteenth, seventeenth, or twentieth century, is a being for which there is no parallel even in the jungle. A similar crowd gathered a few months later at Tyburn to see the gibbeting of the bodies of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton.

The parks became centres of fashion and loose behaviour. The game of Pell Mell was introduced in St. James's Park, and the people gathered to see the mighty strokes of His Majesty, who, according to Waller, had such a drive that the ball went half down the Mall, "as from a smoking culverin 'twere shot." All about the town, music and dancing were revived. Ribbons and frills were flaunted, and the streets were as noisy and the people as frivolous as they had been—and more. That social

license, for which the term Restoration is almost a synonym, became the habit of both town and court. It was, as I have said, a natural and too self-conscious reaction of the people from the Puritan severity. But by some trick of perspective it has been attached to the returned king; just as the advances in science, philosophy, literature, invention, industry, and exploration, in the nineteenth century have been attached to the lady Victoria, who had nothing to do with them. It is particularly ironical that the dour-visaged, black-browed, harem-keeping, and never satisfied Charles Stuart, every one of whose portraits betrays constitutional melancholy—hence his long and rapid walking—should have passed into history as the Merry Monarch. Only when merry is used as a synonym for womanising and drinking, could it be applied to him. Those nearest to court and political affairs have shown us that he brought little merriment to the people of London and England, who had to pay his expenses.

But the streets of London, during his reign, saw one merry little show. It had nothing to do with him. It arose from differences between two ambassadors at his court. From contemporary accounts it appears that these Excellencies had standards of manners akin to those of a recent German ambassador to this country. It all turned on a question of precedence. The French and the Spanish ambassador each thought he should take precedence of the other. They had already, at certain functions, exchanged ugly looks, and a good deal of pushing and pulling; and when they were invited to be present at the reception of a Swedish ambassador at the Tower, they and their respective entourages gave out that they would, if need be, fight for the precedence. Charles heard of this, and with acid humour ordered that no Englishmen should interfere in the matter, but leave them a clear field. To this end the train-bands were called out to keep the citizens in order and prevent their making it a free-for-all. Pepys was there, or thereabouts:

> So I went to the Spanish Embassador's and the French, and there saw great preparations on both sides; but the French made the most noise and ranted most, but the other made no stir almost at all; so that I was afraid the other would have too great a conquest over them. Then to the Wardrobe, and dined there, and then abroad and in Cheapside hear that the Spanish hath got the best of it, and killed three of the French coach-horses and several men, and is gone through the City next to our King's coach; at which, it is strange to see how all the City did rejoice. And indeed we do naturally all love the Spanish, and hate the French. But I, as I am in all things curious, presently got to the waterside, and there took oares to Westminster Palace, and run after them through all the dirt and the streets full of people: till at last, at the Mewes, I saw the Spanish coach go, with fifty drawn swords at least to guard it, and our soldiers shouting for joy. And so I followed the coach, and then met it at York House, where the embassador lies; and there it went in with great state. So then I went to the French house,

where I observe still, that there is no men in the world of a more insolent spirit where they do well, nor before they begin a matter, and more abject if they do miscarry, than these people are; for they all look like dead men, and not a word among them, but shake their heads. The truth is, the Spaniards were not only observed to fight most desperately, but also they did outwitt them; first in lining their own harnesse with chains of iron that they could not be cut, then in setting their coach in the most advantageous place, and to appoint men to guard every one of their horses, and others for to guard the coach, and others the coachmen. And, above all, in setting upon the French horses and killing them, for by that means the French were not able to stir. There were several men slain of the French, and one or two of the Spaniards and one Englishman, by a bullet. Which is very observable, the French were at least four to one in number, and had near 100 case of pistols among them, and the Spaniards had not one gun among them; which is for their honour for ever, and the others' disgrace. So, having been very much daubed with dirt, I got a coach, and home.

The streets, as the above shows, were no cleaner under the new régime than they had been. A few tentative efforts were made towards improvement. There was a Bill for abating the smoke nuisance by the forced removal of certain trades from the centre of the town, and a Commission for regulating the buildings, roads, streets, and hackney-coaches. Paving was laid in certain well-used streets that were till then almost marshes. "Piquidilla" began to be built up, and a Mr. Neal built the odd conceit of Seven Dials, "where seven streets make a star from a Doric pillar placed in the middle of a circular area." The footway of the main streets was marked from the road by posts and chains; and the pent-house shops were pushed back to make them even with the fronts of the houses. Printed orders were circulated for the daily cleansing of the streets; but the people were stubborn in the matter of dirt. They felt that too much fuss was made about it, and the orders, like many others, were generally ignored, and enforcement made difficult. The Fire did a certain amount of cleansing but the streets were never really clean until well into the nineteenth century, when public opinion had become more informed.

It was no doubt the destruction of the masses of close-packed, insanitary hovels that put an end to the recurrent plagues that London had so long suffered. The Plague of 1665, which took off one hundred thousand Londoners, was the last great pestilence that the city was to have. It really began in 1664. The summer of that year had been unusually dry, and every house had suffered from a plague of flies—flies in hundreds on every ceiling, flies swarming on the door-posts and on windows—and all the streets had been thick with ants and other insects. The first deaths occurred towards the end of that year, in St. Giles and Drury Lane; and during the spring months of 1665 the infection spread, at first slowly, and then rapidly, eastward; taking in the City, and then Stepney, and spreading across the river to Rotherhithe and Deptford.

The deaths mounted month by month until in August and September, they were between four thousand and five thousand per week.

The first deaths drew little notice. The people were not unused to plagues, though for eighteen years they had been free of them. But when, in April, the sickness broke out inside the gates, and spread from house to house like fire, all those who were rich enough to be able to leave town, packed up and bolted for their lives; just as their equals did in September 1939. For many months the centre and the court end of the town were almost deserted. The streets became quieter than London streets had ever been. Grass began to grow in the roadways. Traffic ceased. Once again, all taverns and playhouses were closed, all sport and gatherings were forbidden, and people had to be indoors by nine o'clock. It was almost literally a city of the dead, since at one time there were not enough living men to bury the vast number of dead. Crafts and trades came to a standstill, which, for the workers engaged in them, meant starvation:

> In some whole street (perhaps) a shop or twain
> Stands open, for small takings and less gain.
> And every closed window, door, and stall
> Makes each day seem a solemn festival.
> Dead corses carried and re-carried still,
> While fifty corses scarce one grave doth fill.
> While *Lord have mercy upon us*, on the door,
> Which (though the words be good) doth grieve men sore.
> And o'er the door-posts fixed a cross of red. . . .

The Plague went on, in gradually decreasing violence, until the summer of 1666, and then came the purge of the Fire. This brought such a disaster to the streets of London, and afforded such a spectacle, as has never since been seen. Evelyn, who had remained in London through the Plague months, was in town at the time of the Fire, and followed it day by day. For two nights, he tells us, London, within a radius of ten miles, was as light as day. The people, including the Mayor and aldermen, were so overwhelmed by this disaster, coming when they had only just recovered from the horrors of the Plague, that they made no attempt to stop it. Some saved whatever goods they could carry, and took them to the river, or pushed them on hand-carts to the fields; but the majority stood dumbfounded. The fire was like no other fire. So dry was the air, that the flames of one burning street would leap over an adjoining street and fall upon the houses in a more distant street.

> Oh the miserable and calamitous spectacle! [says Evelyn] such as haply the world had not seen the like since the foundation of it, nor be outdone till the universal conflagration of it. All the sky was of a fiery aspect, like the top of a burning oven, and the light seen above forty miles round about for many nights. God grant mine eyes may never behold the like, who now saw above

10,000 houses all in one flame; the noise and cracking and thunder of the impetuous flames, the shrieking of women and children, the hurry of people, the fall of towers, houses and churches, was like an hideous storm, and the air all about so hot and inflamed that at the last one was not able to approach it. . . . The clouds also of smoke were dismal and reached upon computation near 56 miles in length. . . .

The stones of Paul's flew like granados, the melting lead running down the streets in a stream, and the very pavements glowing with fiery redness, so as no horse nor man was able to tread on them, and the demolition had stopped all the passages, so that no help could be applied. . . . The poor inhabitants were dispersed about St. George's Fields, and Moorfields as far as Highgate, and several miles in circle, some under tents, some under miserable huts and hovels, many without a rag or any necessary utensils, bed or board, who from delicateness, riches, and easy accommodations in stately and well-furnished houses, were now reduced to extremest misery and poverty.

Once the fire had burnt itself out, Londoners turned to thoughts of rebuilding the city, for which every man with any ideas at all had a different idea. Plans were drawn and submitted to the king. Evelyn himself was so zealous in the matter that he submitted his plan within two days of the stoppage, only to find that "Dr. Wren had got the start of me." Wren's plan, as we know, was never adopted, nor was Evelyn's or anybody's; otherwise, the London of to-day would not be the jumble that it is. The rebuilding was done in haste, with no central idea behind it, and little official control. Streets were rebuilt on their existing form, and by the middle of the eighteenth century the city was again a labyrinth of winding lanes, with nests of courts and alleys without light and with little air.

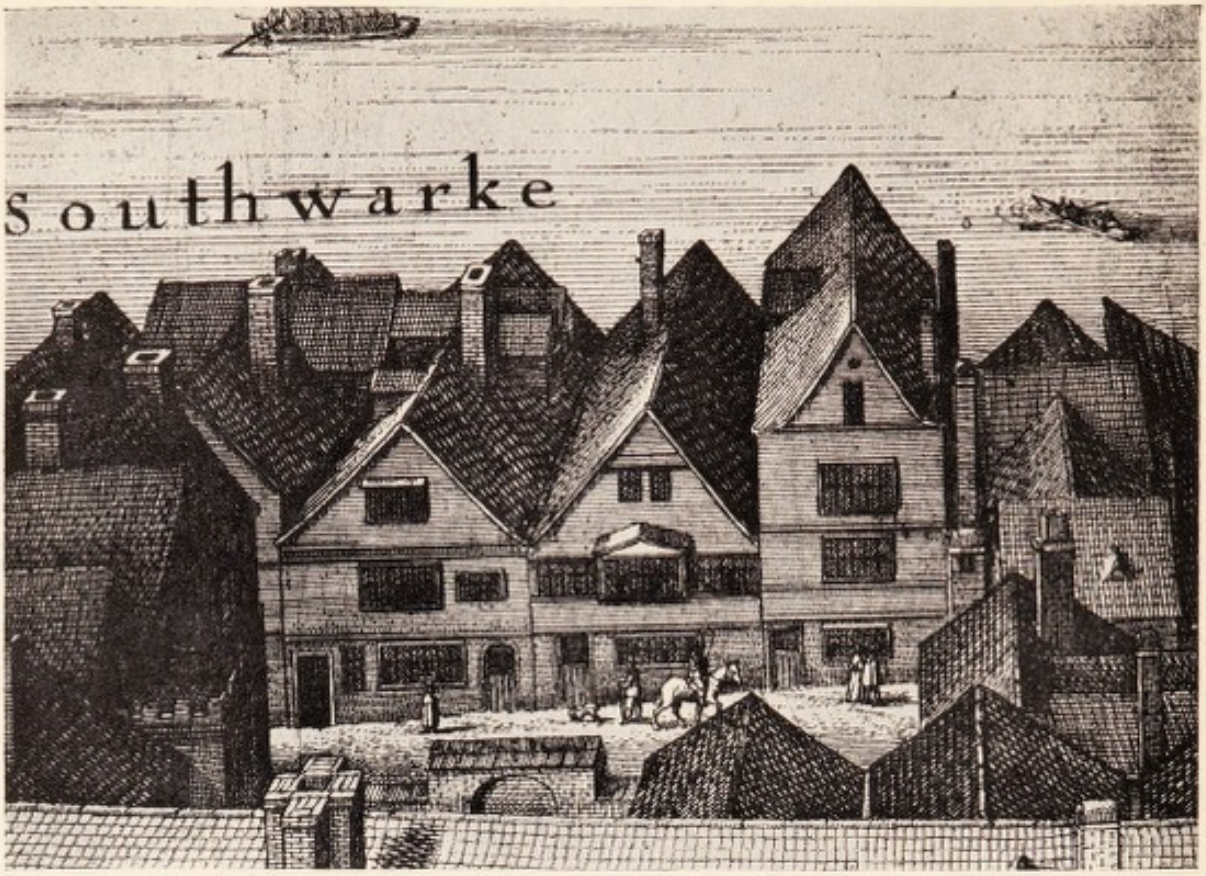
But for air there were St. James's Park, Hyde Park, Spring Garden, and Mulberry Garden, for the western end of the town; and for the city there were Moorfields, Totnam Court, Lamb's Conduit, Hoxton, Bednal Greene, and Hackney. But the citizens and apprentices used the parks as much as the nobility and gallants; to the disgust of the latter, who considered the parks as their own preserve. Manners in the parks were much more free than those of to-day, and the official attitude was by no means so severe as in our free and enlightened twentieth century. There was no closing at dark; St. James's Park was open till midnight and later; and, in the various unlit walks, women of what was then a respectable class paraded in masks and exchanged badinage with the men who accosted them, and sometimes made assignations. Wycherley, in *Love in a Wood*, shows us this side of London's night-life:

RANGER. Hang me, if I am not pleased extremely with this new-fashioned caterwauling, this midnight coursing in the park.

VINCENT. A man may come after supper with his three bottles in his head, reel himself sober, without reproof from his mother, aunt, or grave relation.

18 London from Southwark, 1647

From the etching by Wenceslaus Hollar



19 Old Houses in Southwark, 1647
Detail of an etching by Wenceslaus Hollar

20 A Seventeenth-century Inn: the Oxford Arms, Warwick Lane
From a photograph taken in 1875, just before its demolition

RANGER. May bring his bashful wench, and not have her put out of countenance by the impudent honest women of the town.

DAPPER. And a man of wit may have the better of the dumb show of well-trimmed vest or fair peruke—no man's now is whitest.

RANGER. And now no woman's modest or proud; for her blushes are hid, and the rubies on her lips are dyed, and all sleepy and glimmering eyes have lost their attractions.

If he and other dramatists of about that time may be trusted—and they would hardly have drawn their pictures entirely from fancy—then the manners of the best people of their day were very much more Yahoo than those of a nineteenth-century Bank holiday crowd at Hampstead Heath. There is indeed no reason why we should not trust them. Theirs was not, as many people think, an entirely artificial comedy: its characters were mainly drawn from originals. But it did not, of course, show or pretend to show the whole of society. It showed only a small section of it, but that section, like our own Mayfair, was noisy and exhibitionist, and, having no genuine claim to notice, liked to attract notice by any means. Thus it attracted the notice of the satirists, and, again like our juvenile Mayfair, was flattered by being ridiculed on the stage.

There is confirmation of the dramatists outside their works. Pepys gives us many pictures of actual happenings which equal anything devised by the dramatists, and Evelyn has a note of a slanging-match in the Mall between Nell Gwyn and Charles, which he overheard and for which he was "heartily sorry." And there is a story of the king's mistress, Lady Castlemaine, walking in the park at night, masked, and being overtaken by two men in masks who recognised her and told her just what the country thought of her and her influence over the king. The terms must have been fairly strong, since the Castlemaine, who was no simpering miss, fairly ran to her home, and, on arriving, fainted.

In Spring Garden and the Mulberry Garden, the tone was the same, and we see the aristocracy behaving like clerks and shop-girls of to-day on a Monkey's Parade, playing that game which the Cockney used to call Getting Off. Sir Charles Sedley's play, *The Mulberry Garden*, is full of incidents of that kind and of the cross-talk of inuendo and *double entendre;* and Sedley should have known his world since he helped to set its pace. His pranks are well known, especially that one which Pepys recorded, though the record is apologetically obscured in almost all editions of the Diary. It must be obscured here, but its main points are that he, with Lord Buckhurst and Sir Thomas Ogle, got drunk at the Cock Tavern in Bow Street, kept by one, Oxford Kate; and then went on to the balcony and carried a strip-tease act to its conclusion. They then preached an indecent sermon to the crowd of over a thousand people whom their behaviour had attracted (if that is the right word) and then Sedley did such odious things with a wine-glass, including

drinking what he had put into it, and performed such antics with his two friends, that the crowd began to stone the house, and would have killed the three of them if the constables had not taken them under arrest. They were tried for riotous conduct, but as their particular antics were not named in any law, they escaped with a reprimand. Five years later, Sedley and Buckhurst were at it again, "running up and down the streets with their . . . bare," and then fighting each other and being fought by the watch, and again arrested.

The dialogue in *The Mulberry Garden* obviously takes its note—though of course he amplified it—from what he had observed there, and from his own way of life; though it does observe a certain boundary between the just bawdy and the definitely indecent. All the dramatists of that time placed certain scenes of their plays in the parks. There is Wycherley's Lady Flippanta, bemoaning the lack of adventure: "Unfortunate lady that I am. I have left the herd on purpose to be chased, and have wandered this hour here; but the Park affords not so much as a satyr for me and (that's strange) no Burgundy man or drunken scourer will reel my way." Each garden had a restaurant, which was open at night for suppers, and in each were a number of dark arbours:

> Come, gallant, we must walk towards the Mulberry Garden.
> I'm afraid, little mistress, the rooms are all taken up by this time.
> If the rooms be full, we'll have an arbour.
> At this time of night! Besides, the waiters will ne'er come near you.
> They will be observant of good customers as we shall be.

Wandering musicians strolled about, waiting to be engaged to strike up a serenade for the chosen lady of the minute, and there were both men and women touts of the kind that hung about the modern night resorts of Montmartre. A writer of the period, supposedly a foreigner, gives a little picture of Spring Garden and the kind of supper served there:

> The company walk in it at such a rate as you would think all the ladies were so many Atalantas contending with their wooers: and there was no appearance that I should prove the Hippomenes who would with very much ado keep pace with them. But, as fast as they run, they stay there so long as if they wanted not time to finish the race; for it is usual here to find some of the young company till midnight: and the thickets of the garden seem to be contrived to all advantages of gallantry, after they have been refreshed with the collation, which is here seldom omitted, at a certain cabaret in the middle of this paradise, where the forbidden fruits are certain trifling tarts, neats-tongues, salacious meats, and bad Rhenish: for which the gallants pay sauce, as indeed they do at all such houses throughout England.

The midday promenade was the Mall, where Charles sometimes showed his prowess at pell-mell, and at other times walked among his people, open to be addressed by almost anybody. At that time and well

into the eighteenth century, it was crowded as it never is to-day, except when some national event draws the people to Buckingham Palace. It was the centre of smart London. As the foolish term goes, "everybody" went there every day. Hawkers of all kinds plied their trades there. Flower-girls, milkmaids drawing milk from the cow, orange-girls, were there, as well as women with stalls of feminine finery—pomatum, night-masks, patches, handkerchers, ribbons, false eyebrows, etc. These women also acted as messengers to convey notes from admirers to "unknown fairs." Flirtation, and loud-voiced criticism of faces and dresses, went on in daytime as well as night; pamphleteers of the time give particulars of the code of flirtation. Much byplay could be made with a coach window, the gallant letting it down suddenly when a handsome woman passed, pulling it up, and letting it down again when he next passed her in the circuit of the Ring. A woman in a coach, catching an agreeable eye, could signify interest by turning her coach and again passing the gallant. The dropped handkercher was, as always, a signal to advance, and a bold stare from a man met by a virago-like insult from the woman, told him that he was favoured.

The promenade was usually held before and after dinner. Dinner was taken at two o'clock, and was followed at four o'clock by the theatre. The queue for the theatre was not then known; people just arrived at the door, and made a crowd, and struggled in to the best of their pushfulness. According to one account, the behaviour at theatre doors was such as terrified the timid, for people "did rudely press, and with evil language and blows." But those who were fearful of facing this struggle used a custom which is familiar to us of to-day. Most people think it an invention of our time, but it was known to the audiences of the Restoration years. Just as modern theatre-goers who cannot afford stalls, and do not want to stand for an hour or more, engage messenger-boys to keep places for them in the queues, so the timid and frugal of that time sent their footmen to struggle into the pit and to keep seats until they arrived.

A new kind of resort that appeared in town at this time was the coffee-house. The earliest was the Rainbow, in Fleet Street; then came Dick's, in the City; then the Covent Garden (later Will's), and Tom's, in Change Alley. The fashion soon spread, and by the end of the century they were established in all parts of the town, each with its own political or social note. From them grew the earliest clubs, and from those clubs, meeting in private rooms of the coffee-houses, developed in the late eighteenth century the club with its own building, as we know it to-day in St. James's Street and elsewhere. The effect of the coffee-houses on the life of the streets was not so sobering as some had hoped, since they did not restrict themselves to coffee; they sold wine and all the other liquors. Many a duel had its origin in a coffee-house of that time, and many a midnight spree. The Hectors and Scowrers were often seen in them.

The streets at night seem to have become much noisier than in Tudor times. Funerals then were usually conducted at night, and one of Shadwell's characters makes complaint of this:

> When, after all my persecutions I think to ease myself at night by sleep, at a solemn funeral the bells set out. . . . A curse upon 'em. This was no sooner past, but about two in the morning comes the bell-man, and in a dismal tone repeats worse rhymes than a cast poet of the nursery can make; after him come those rogues that wake people with their barbarous tunes, and upon their tooting instruments make a more hellish noise than they do at a Play-house when they flourish for the entrance of witches.

Another writer makes a list of night noises and night freaks:

> A deed which shall with terror make
> The sons of midnight, wrapt in flannel, quake.
> Frightening of cullies, and bombastine whores,
> Wringing off knockers, and from posts and doors
> Rubbing out milk-maids' and some other scores;
> Scowring the watch, or roaring in the streets,
> Lamp-blacking signs, with divers other feats. . . .

But while complaints were constant, no Society for the Abatement of Noise was formed, and young men, and sometimes old men, could make night as hideous as they pleased. Another of Shadwell's types of the period outlines his night-amusements with: "I was plaguy boosy last night with Squire Belfond. We had fiddles, whores, scoured, broke windows, beat watches, and roared like thunder. He swears, sings, roars, rants, and scours with the best of us."

The word "boosy," by the way, which, as I mentioned earlier, was in use in the fifteenth century, and retains the same meaning to-day, was one of many words that are still, in certain circles, used in the same sense. In the middle seventeenth century, "the rhino" and "the ready" were terms for money, and up to the late nineteenth century they had the same meaning. Other terms that were in use until recent years, and were used in the Restoration days, are "prog" for food; "old jokers" for elderly men, and "old Harry" for the devil. In the film-world they speak to-day of a story being "re-vamped" for the films. In the seventeenth century they spoke of a Beaumont and Fletcher play being "new vamped" by Thomas Shadwell. A word that has been heard in the London streets ever since there were London streets, and is still heard to-day—it must be, with "booze," the oldest of English slang—is "arse." Another common term of these days is much older than its users suspect: Pepys, making an entry on a winter's day, speaks of the weather as being "bloody cold."

Pepys might indeed be a court of appeal for some of those whose English is questioned by their superiors. Many a Cockney boy of the

Council Schools is treated with amused contempt by those of better education for speaking of his mother and his brother as his "muvver" and "bruvver." But he is, as the poor often are, speaking as educated people of the past were speaking. Pepys consistently writes Twelfth Night, Erith, and Queenhithe, as "Twelf Night," "Eriff," and "Queenhive."

One of the most interesting quarters of the London of that time, where much of the current slang was coined—along with other coining—was the Whitefriars quarter, known as Alsatia; a sanctuary for debtors. It stretched from Salisbury Court to the Temple. Bailiffs or catchpolls risked their lives in entering those streets—streets that were a nest of every kind of animal debauchery and savagery. The toughest men and the most fearsome type of female (beside whom the ordinary prostitute, even of that time, was gentle) overran the houses and cellars of those streets and alleys; and drinking, gaming, robbery, open lewdness, and secret murder were their common pursuits. Shadwell's picture, in *The Squire of Alsatia*, is no doubt deliberately dramatised, but there is enough contemporary evidence to support him. One of his scenes shows the reception accorded to a stranger who entered the precincts. A father is seeking his prodigal son, and is met by a sound of horns, the signal from the look-out that a stranger has appeared. The drunken company in a boozing-ken hear the horn and cry out:

> What's this?
> They're up in the Friars. Pray Heaven the sheriffs' officers be not come.
> 'Slife, 'tis so. Shift for yourselves.
>
> (*Cry without:* "The tipstaff. An arrest! An arrest!" *The horn blows. Posse of Friars drawn up. Women with fire-forks, spits, firing-shovels, etc. Rabble beat the constable, and* TIPSTAFF *runs away. They take* SIR WILLIAM *prisoner.*)
>
> Now we have you in the Temple. We'll show you the pump first. To the pump, to the pump! Pump him! Pump him! Pump him, old prig! Pump! Pump! To the Pump! Huzza!

Whitefriars was not the only sanctuary. There were some others, though none with so unsavoury a reputation. These were the Savoy, in the Strand; the Mint, in Southwark; the Minories, by the Tower; a street off Gray's Inn Lane, and the Clink, in Southwark, whose name has become a common term for any prison. These were mainly sanctuaries for debtors, but as offenders of all sorts crowded into them, and not only defied the law on their past offences, but turned the districts into Hell's Delights with new offences, they and Alsatia were, at the end of the seventeenth century, put down. The poor debtor then had no refuge; he could leave London, but if that was not possible he could expect at any corner to be touched on the shoulder and lodged in the Marshalsea, the Fleet, or the King's Bench.

London had quarters just as rough as Whitefriars, but they were not sanctuaries; they were just resorts of the dregs of the people. Among them were the streets and courts around Drury Lane; certain streets around Smithfield; parts of Shoreditch (where the earliest theatres stood); the courts of Wapping, and Whetstone Park, off Lincoln's Inn. All these quarters were danger-spots at night, and in Whetstone Park in 1671 three royal dukes murdered a beadle of the watch. They suffered nothing for this offence beyond being lampooned in a few street-ballads.

Whetstone Park also had a group of what were euphemistically called "academies" or "boarding-schools," and on two occasions—1668 and 1682—it was the scene of desperate riots. A contemporary paper, *Poor Robin's Intelligencer*, has a note on one of these places, giving Poor Robin, one supposes, the kind of intelligence that would interest him:

> Notwithstanding the discourses that have been to the contrary, the boarding-school is still continued here, where a set of women may be readily untaught all the studies of modesty or chastity; to which purpose they are provided with a two-handed volume of impudence, closely bound up in greasy vellum, which is tied by the leg to a wicker chair, and is always ready to give you plain instructions and directions in matters relating to immorality.

The riots, on each occasion, were made by the prentices of the City. The precise cause is not known. Probably it was the cause that led some Australian soldiers, in the war of 1914–18, to destroy a certain quarter of the city of Alexandria. Anyway, whether some apprentice had suffered in health or in purse by a visit to one of these houses; whether it was an outburst of unusual piety among apprentices; whether it was just one of their Shrove Tuesday frolics; or whether their anger was against the Old Abbesses as bad employers—whatever the cause, they set out on a Shrove Tuesday to demolish all the brothels of Whetstone Park. News of their approach reached Whitehall, and so tender was the official attitude to these "boarding-schools" that the military were called up and put on duty. Pepys, of course, was there:

> Alarms were beat by drum and trumpet through Westminster, and all to their colours and to horse, as if the French were coming into the town. So Creed, whom I met here, and I to Lincoln's Inn Fields, thinking to have gone into the fields to have seen the prentices; but here we found these fields full of soldiers all in a body, and my Lord Craven commanding of them, and riding up and down to give orders like a madman. And some young men we saw brought by soldiers to the guard at White Hall, and overheard others that stood by say that it was only for pulling down the brothels; and none of the bystanders finding fault with them, but rather of the soldiers for hindering them. And we heard a Justice of Peace this morning say to the King, that he have been endeavouring to suppress this tumult, but could not; and that imprisoning some of them in the new prison at Clerkenwell, the rest did come and break open the prison and release them; and that they do give out that they are for pulling down the brothels, which is one of the great grievances of

the nation. To which the King made a very poor, cold, insipid answer: "Why, why do they go to them, then?"—and that was all, and had no mind to go on with the discourse. . . .

The Duke of York and all with him this morning were full of the talk of the prentices, who are not yet put down, though the guards and militia of the town have been in armes all this night and the night before; and the prentices have made fools of them, sometimes by running from them and flinging stones at them. Some blood hath been spilt, but a great many houses pulled down; and, among others, the Duke of York was mighty merry at that of Daman Page's, the great bawd of the seamen; and the Duke of York complained merrily that he hath lost two tenants by their houses being pulled down, who paid him for their wine-licences 15*l.* a-year. But these idle fellows have had the confidence to say that they did ill in contenting themselves in pulling down the little brothels, and did not go and pull down the great one at White Hall. And some of them have the last night had a word among them, and it was "Reformation and Reducement." This do make the courtiers ill at ease to see this spirit among people, though they think this matter will not come to much.

The second attack on the same quarter happened fourteen years later. Leigh Hunt quotes from a newspaper of the day a report of this affair, showing that a new draft of apprentices had the same attitude to these places as those before them:

On Saturday last, about five hundred apprentices, and such like, being got together in Smithfield, went into Lincoln's Inn Fields where they drew up, and marching into Whetstone Park fell upon the lewd houses there, where, having broken open the doors, they entered and made great spoil of the goods; of which the constables and watchmen having notice, and not finding themselves strong enough to quell the tumult, procured a party of the king's guards, who dispersed them, and took eleven, who were committed to the New Prison; yet on Sunday night they came again, and made worse havoc than before, breaking down all the doors and windows, and cutting the feather-beds in pieces.

A familiar sight in the streets around the Tower and along the river, throughout the seventeenth century and indeed up to the end of the Napoleonic wars, was the press-gang. At the time of the Dutch war, the press was working so zealously that able-bodied men were afraid to go out of doors. Nor did it limit itself to the able-bodied. With the zeal of other times, it roped in every man who could walk, and if those who, to even a layman's eye, were sick men, happened to die under training or to overflow the full hospitals, that was no affair of the press-gang. The literature and journals of the period give us many sidelights on this scandal of illegal conscription. Often it caused great inconvenience to the public. They would arrive at the waterside, wanting to cross the river, or go up or down, and find no scullers. On a rumour that the press was out, the watermen would bolt to their cellars and stay there till the danger was past. Sometimes there was strenuous resistance. On one occasion, when a captain and his band

tried to seize a number of men from the river, the men put up a fight, and the captain and one of his company were drowned, and several others injured. Pepys was at one time much concerned with the press. Officialdom worked then in its well-known way; each department did its job independently, without consultation with other departments. Officers of the Navy were told to secure men, and they did secure men. But nobody gave any instructions what to do with them between the time they were taken and the time they were shipped. So there was no money for them, and no food, and for some days they were half starved:

> Mightily troubled all this morning with going to my Lord Mayor and other places about getting shipped some men that they have these last two nights pressed in the City out of the houses; the persons wholly unfit for sea and many of them people of very good fashion, which is a shame to think of, and carried to Bridewell they are, yet without being impressed with money legally as they ought to be. . . . I did out of my own purse disburse £15 to pay for their pressing and diet last night.

Just as in 1914–18 skilled men were conscripted out of essential trades, and sent to France, and then sent home again; so at that time they took men from the contributory services—even the victualling services and the ammunition boats—and so injured the whole Fleet. At Bridewell, during one week, three hundred pressed men were lodged, and were in such a state of revolt, after being confined for three days with no money and scarcely any food that Pepys dare not go among them. He notes about the same time that on a fine day the streets were crowded, but though he saw many women of the meaner sort, he saw no men of the same estate. They were all in hiding.

He gives a moving picture of the shipping of the men from Bridewell:

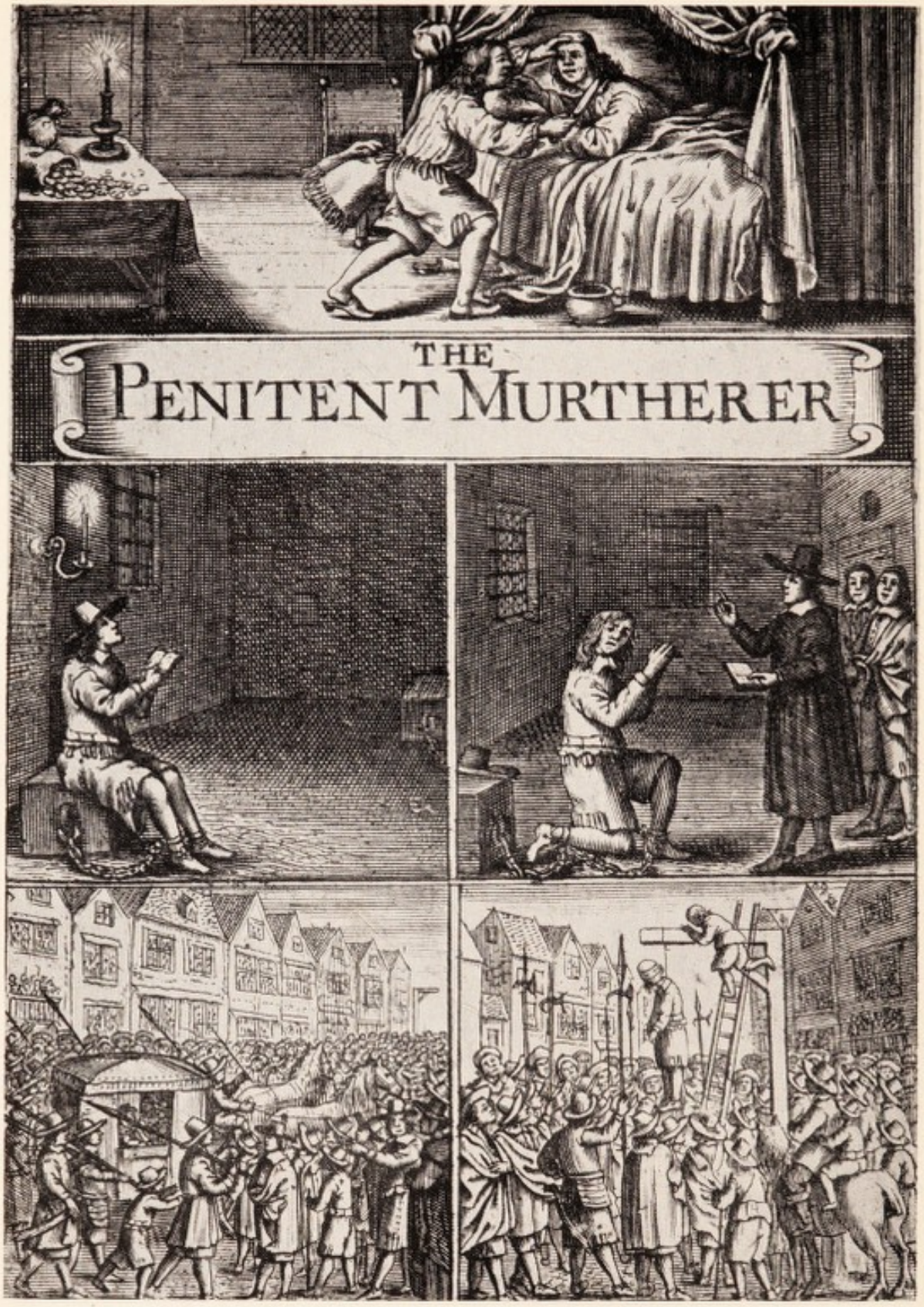
> To the Tower several times, about the business of the pressed men, and late at it till twelve at night shipping of them. But, Lord! how some poor women did cry; and in my life I never did see such natural expression of passion as I did here in some women's bewailing themselves, and running to every parcel of men that were brought, one after another, to look for their husbands, and wept over every vessel that went off, thinking they might be there, and looking after the ship as far as ever they could by moone-light, that it grieved me to the heart to hear them. Besides, to see poor patient labouring men and housekeepers leaving poor wives and families, taken up on a sudden by strangers, was very hard, and that without press-money.

During those years this was an almost daily sight. But the men seldom went tamely. Fights and rescues, in which the women joined, were frequent, and sometimes the press was scattered and forced to retire; a sight which gave great joy to those who preferred law and order to tyranny and disorder.

A happier side of street-life was one that could be seen from London's

21 Burning Rumps at Temple Bar, 1660
An engraving for "Hudibras," by William Hogarth

22 A Seventeenth-century Street Brawl



23 Seventeenth-century Prison and Execution Scenes: a Drama in Five Acts

From an engraving by W. Faithorne

earliest days almost up to the present, and was a rich part of the streets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I mean the street-performers, the side-shows, the Wonders and Curiosities. These, of course, were always seen, and still are seen, at the Fairs; but they were not confined to the Fairs. They were on view at all times in the streets, and were always sure of drawing a crowd. Evelyn was of higher estate than Pepys, and not so fond of common life. He mixed with the more sober aristocracy and with the men of science. But even he found entertainment in these things, and often went out of his way to see them. He records going to see "a sort of Cat," shaped and snouted like a racoon, with the body of a monkey, and a long tail, which it wound round its body. Rope-dancing, on the tight or slack rope, was as popular then as dirt-track racing to-day. The star of this act, for many years, was Jacob Hall, who had given performances before the king and the court. Pepys found his performance "such action as I never saw before, and mightily worth seeing." He was glad to seize the chance of meeting such a prodigy. "Here took acquaintance with a fellow that carried me to a tavern, and by and by Jacob Hall himself, with whom I had a mind to speak, to hear whether he had ever any mischief by falls in his time. He told me Yes, many, but never to the breaking of a limb. He seems a mighty strong man."

Evelyn was equally pleased with another rope-dancer, called The Turk. This man would go up an almost perpendicular rope, attached to a church steeple, climbing only by his toes. He would then slide down from the top, head foremost, arms and legs extended. He danced blindfold on a high tight-rope, with a small boy tied to one of his feet; and he stood on his head on the top of a lofty mast. On the day that Evelyn saw this performance, he saw also the Hairy Woman. Her eye-brows covered her forehead; a lock of hair grew out of each ear, and she had a thick beard and moustachios. He was curious to ask her about her parents and any brothers or sisters, and was told that neither the parents, nor their other children, ran to hair.

Then there was the Dutch boy who was on view at Charing Cross. He had on the iris of one eye the words, in small letters, *Deus Meus*; and on the iris of the other, in Hebrew letters, *Elohim*. Physicians and philosophers examined the boy and, as usual, disagreed; some saying it was natural, others that it had been done since birth, though, since the boy's sight was unimpaired, they could not imagine how.

Another prodigy of the streets was Richardson, the fire-eater, who chewed and swallowed hot coals, ate melted glass, took a hot coal on his tongue, put an oyster on it, had the coal heated with bellows till it flamed and cooked the oyster, and then swallowed the lot. He ended his show by taking a much-needed drink. The drink was pitch and wax and sulphur, which he drank flaming. Then there was the show called Paradise, at Hatton Garden. This was a room filled with cardboard

animals, cleverly painted from nature, jointed and fitted with bellows, so that they flew or crawled, and emitted their respective cries.

In the parks there were coach-races, wrestling and hurling matches, and prize-fights with cutlasses. Punch and Judy arrived in the year of the Fire, with a booth at Charing Cross; and there were the jugglers, conjurors, and knife-swallowers; the Posture Masters, or contortionists, who twisted themselves into deformity; the man who could lift 400 pounds weight with the hair of his head; the street-corner men (who are seen to-day outside works and factories) with card-tricks and thimble-rigging; the dancing-bear, the giants and dwarfs, the learned pig; and, for the children, the peep-show or raree-show. And towards the end of the century there was the Great Frost, which brought all London to see Frost Fair on the Thames.

The river was as solid as a road—more solid than most of the roads of that time—and among the sports held on it were cock-shies (throwing at tethered cocks with small cudgels), football, bull-baiting, and a fox-hunt. An ox was roasted whole, ale-houses were set up, and there were a score of other diversions, which Evelyn saw and noted:

Jan. 9. I went crosse the Thames on the ice, now become so thick as to bear not only streets of booths, in which they roasted meats, and have divers shops of wares, quite acrosse as in a town, but coaches, carts and horses passed over. . . .

Jan. 24. The Thames before London was still planted with booths in formal streets, all sorts of trades and shops furnished and full of commodities, even to a printing press, where the people and ladies took a fancy to have their names printed, and the day and year set down when printed on the Thames; this humour took so universally that 'twas estimated the printer gained £5 a day for printing a line only, at sixpence a name, besides what he got by ballads, etc. Coaches plied from Westminster to the Temple, and from several other stairs to and fro, as in the streets; sleds, sliding with skeetes, a bull-baiting, horse and coach races, puppet plays and interludes, cooks, tippling, and other lewd places, so that it seemed to be a bacchanalian triumph or carnival on the water, whilst it was a severe judgment on the land, the trees not only splitting as if by lightning-struck, but men and cattle perishing in divers places, and the very seas so locked up with ice, that no vessels could stir out or come in. . . . London, by reason of the excessive coldness of the air hindering the ascent of the smoke, was so filled with the fuliginous steam of the sea-coal, that hardly could one see crosse the streets, and this filling the lungs with its gross particles, exceedingly obstructed the breast, so as one could scarcely breathe. Here was no water to be had from the pipes and engines, nor could the brewers and divers other tradesmen work.

Feb. 5. It began to thaw, but froze again. My coach crossed from Lambeth to the Horseferry at Millbank. The booths were almost all taken down, but there was first a Map or Landskip cut in copper representing all the manner of the camp, and the several actions, sports and pastimes thereon, in memory of so signal a frost.

From this frost the watermen suffered severely; nothing that floated could move, and the cry of "Next Oars!" was not heard for nearly thirty days. The watermen were a surly lot, by all accounts; something like the drivers of the "growlers" of the late Victorian times, whom the elderly of to-day remember with no pleasure. But they had many trials and vexations. A day of rain stopped their business; a strong wind made it difficult and hazardous; and there were the competition of sedans and coaches; the loss of trade by the removal of the theatres from Bankside to the north bank; and that eternal enemy, the bilker. John Taylor, who detailed all the grievances of the watermen, has given a picture of the bilker—the gallant who, when landed at his destination, asks the waterman to wait to take him back, and enters a waterside tavern at one door and goes out by the other. Later in the century, we have Vanbrugh's "Young Fashion," working a variation of the game:

YOUNG FASHION. Come, pay the waterman and take the portmanteau.
LORY. Faith, I think the waterman had as good take the portmanteau and pay himself.
Y. F. Why, sure there's something left in't.
LORY. But a solitary old waistcoat, upon my honour, sir.
Y. F. Why, what's become of the blue coat, sirrah?
LORY. Sir, 'twas eaten at Gravesend; the reckoning came to thirty shillings, and your privy-purse was worth but two half-crowns.
Y. F. 'Tis very well.
WATERMAN. Pray, master, will you please to despatch me?
Y. F. Ay, here a—Canst thou change me a guinea?
WATERMAN. Change a guinea, master! Ha, ha, your honour's pleased to compliment.
Y. F. Egad, I don't know how I shall pay thee then, for I have nothing but gold about me. . . . What dost thou expect, friend?
WATERMAN. Why, master, so far against wind and tide is richly worth half a piece.
Y. F. Why, faith, I think thou are a good conscionable fellow. I'gad I begin to have so good an opinion of thy honesty, I care not if I leave my portmanteau with thee, till I send thee thy money.
WATERMAN. Ha! God bless your honour; I should be as willing to trust you, master, but that you are, as a man may say, a stranger to me, and these are nimble times; there are a great many sharpers stirring. Well, master, when your worship sends the money, your portmanteau shall be forthcoming. My name's Tugg, my wife keeps a brandy-shop in Drab Alley at Wapping.
Y. F. Very well; I'll send for 't to-morrow.
LORY. So—Now, sir, I hope you'll own yourself a happy man, you have outliv'd all your cares.
Y. F. How so, sir?
LORY. Why, you have nothing left to take care of.

The gallant always considered himself above the law. The streets were his playground, and the lower orders existed for his service. He

could pay them or bilk them, as he chose, and he often chose to bilk. He could curse them and beat them, and in extreme cases kill them, with little or no penalty. Street deaths were as many as in the fifteenth century. Gallants knocked out not only the lower orders, but their equals. The lower orders, too, knocked each other out. These killings usually developed from a quarrel over some trifle that in later years would breed only a "look"; but with the choleric temper of the people of that time, due perhaps to high living, anything could lead to murder. The language used in these brawls was such as is never heard in the London of to-day, not even in those quarters whose names were once a synonym for "language." Even some women, of good social position, freely used when quarrelling such terms as "bitch," "whore," "strumpet," "bawd." The watch were, as always, ineffectual when quarrels were going on. They were either incompetent, or, when the quarrel was between the well-dressed, corrupt and easily bought off or put out of countenance by their "betters." Pepys had many experiences with them, and always bought his way out:

> Home in a coach round by the wall; where we met so many stops by the watches, that it cost us much time and some trouble, and more money, to every watch to them to drink; this being encreased by the trouble the prentices did lately give the City, so that the militia and watches are very strict at this time; and we had like to have met with a stop for all night at the constable's watch at Mooregate by a pragmatical constable; but we came well home at about two in the morning.

Sometimes the cause of the most furious quarrel was a dispute about the fare of a coach; sometimes bloodshed and death were brought about by a derisive gesture; sometimes they developed from "words" between drivers whose wheels were locked. There is a record of a quarrel in one of the City streets between a drayman and the coachman of a noble lord; this came to blows, and one of the lord's footmen was killed on the spot. In a traffic tangle during some London show, a man got out of a coach with drawn sword and attacked the driver of the coach in front. When the man fell, bleeding from wounds, he was left to die in the kennel. Pepys tells the story of two brothers, both drunk, one of whom killed the other because he tried to stop him from killing a coachman. The first young man drew his sword to run the offending coachman through; his brother got between them and snatched the sword away; and the other then drew his knife and stabbed his brother through the heart. Another slip of nobility was twice in trouble at that time by his high temper; but the law did nothing to punish him. He was a son of Lord Gerard, and he first, without provocation, killed a page in St. James's Park; and some time later ran his sword through a porter who was not sufficiently respectful. On that occasion he was almost lynched by the crowd, but was rescued by the Lord Mayor.

There was Colonel Blood, of the Crown Jewels exploit, who was aptly named. Evelyn describes him as having "a villainous, unmerciful look and a false countenance." He and some others made an attack on Lord Ormond in St. James's Street, dragged him out of his coach, and were about to dispatch him when some footmen appeared and drove them off. A mere difference of opinion in a tavern, between a member of the St. John family and Sir William Estcourt, led in a minute or so to the death of Estcourt. It was called manslaughter, and St. John bought a pardon, as you could in those days, with a payment of over a thousand pounds.

About the same time there was the murder in Pall Mall of Mr. Thynne—"Tom of Ten Thousand"—a murder committed by a brave ruffian, one Vratz, who was hired for the job by a cowardly aristocrat, Count Konigsmark; and ten years later came the murder of Mountford, the actor, in Norfolk Street, on a point of jealousy over the actress Mrs. Bracegirdle. Lord Mohun, who was concerned in this, though not as a principal, was tried and, of course, acquitted. As a general rule, it was only killers of the lower class at that time who rode to Tyburn.

Tyburn, as it had been, and as it remained until the end of the eighteenth century, was on hanging days one of the shows of the town. Hangings were then done in batches. There was first the procession from Newgate, up Holborn Hill and along the Oxford Road. Those for whom the crowd had a kindly feeling, such as highwaymen, received bouquets of flowers on the way, and girls and women blew kisses. Those who were not popular were rendered half dead before they reached the fatal Tree. At a tavern by St. Giles the procession halted for the prisoners to receive the customary free bowl of ale. At the Tree itself the crowd was always immense, and a great trade was done by hawkers with gingerbread, pies, fruit, and Last Dying Speech and Confession. Pickpockets, too, found opportunities of business, and took them—right under the Tree itself. Wooden stands were erected for the best people; the ordinary people sat on the park walls, or climbed into trees, and had a general day out. Even children were taken to these shows, and not with any idea of giving them an Awful Lesson; hanging-days were just something to see.

Blood must have coursed unusually high at that time, since even the many outlets for excess energy already existing were not enough to cool it. The great festivals were Guy Fawkes' Day, Lord Mayor's Day, the King's birthday and Restoration Day, the three principal Fairs, May Day, with its many parades, and Twelfth Day. To these the people added demonstrations, processions, and hullabaloos, sometimes arranged with a purpose, sometimes impromptu and with no purpose. One of these, usually as carefully organised as an official pageant, was made whenever there was the smallest sign of favour towards the Catholics. This was the burning of the Pope in effigy at Temple Bar. Roger North

saw one of these shows from the windows of the Green Dragon tavern in Fleet Street, and has left a note of it:

> It was very dark, but we could perceive the street to fill, and the hum of the crowd grew louder and louder; and at length, with help of some lights below, we could discern, not only upwards towards the bar, where the squib-war was maintained, but downwards towards Fleet Bridge, the whole street was crowded with people, which made that which followed seem very strange; for about eight at night we heard a din from below, which came up the street, continually increasing till we could perceive a motion; and that was a row of stout fellows that came, shouldered together, cross the street, from wall to wall on each side. How the people melted away, I cannot tell; but it was plain those fellows made clear board, as if they had swept the street for what was to come after. . . . Behind this wave (which, as all the rest, had many lights attending) there was a vacancy, but it filled apace, till another like wave came up; and so four or five of these waves passed one after another; and then we discerned more numerous lights, and throats were opened with hoarse and tremendous noise; and with that advanced a pageant, borne along above the heads of the crowd, and upon it sat a huge Pope, *in pontificalibus*, in his chair, with a seasonable attendance for state; but his premier minister, that shared most of his ear, was Il Signior Diavalo, a nimble little fellow, in a proper dress, that had a strange dexterity in climbing and winding about the chair, from one of the Pope's ears to the other.
>
> The next pageant was a parcel of Jesuits; and after that (for there was always a decent space between them) came another, with some ordinary persons with halters; and one with a stenterophonic tube sounded "Abhorrers! Abhorrers!" most infernally; and lastly came one, with a single person upon it, which some said was the pamphleteer, Sir Roger L'Estrange, some the King of France, some the Duke of York; but certainly it was a very complaisant, civil gentleman, like the former, that was doing what everybody pleased to have him; and, taking all in good part, went on his way to the fire.

But there were a few people who were not easy about all this hot blood and wild manners. During the last few years of the sixteen-hundreds complaints were raised that so many robberies, street murders and duels, so much atheism, profanity, and blasphemy among all classes of people would, if continued, bring some judgment from God. Accordingly a Society was formed with the object of bringing about a new way of life, and seeing that the laws were more firmly enforced and executed upon offenders. Its effects, however, were not immediate, and in any event were small. The only society that brought order to the streets, and a more tolerant way of living as between man and man, was that uniformed society created over a century later by Robert Peel. Until then, people continued to take the law into their own hands.

One of the familiar street-sights of that time, which did no great harm to anyone, was the visitation to those who were obnoxious to their neighbours. Much of the time and work of the modern police-court is given to settling disputes between neighbours. In those days they did

not trouble the magistrates; they settled the thing themselves by mob-law. Where husband and wife created a nuisance by constant quarrelling, the neighbours abated it by carrying the wife to the ducking-stool, or running the husband out of the parish. A pickpocket, caught in the act, was ducked by the crowd in the nearest ditch or sewer, and allowed to go. Quack doctors, catchpolls, and fraudulent tradesmen were ducked. A poet of the period describes how the people, in anger, or just for fun:

> Do punish pick-pockets or whores,
> For filching, or too fond amours;
> A decent guerdon too for bailiffs
> That lurk in close by-lanes and alleys,
> Or lie perdue in some blind ale-house,
> To nab some needy honest fellows;
> But being seiz'd and hamper'd first,
> Are carried straight to quench their thirst,
> To a strange wooden kind of Fountain,
> That doth great score of water contain;
> And there, without a cup to fill,
> Are forc'd to drink against their will.

Young girls who brought discredit on a respectable street by loose behaviour were ducked by matrons. Informers were stoned and rubbed in the muck-heap. Where a husband had allowed his wife to cuckold him, the neighbours treated him to a Charivari, or rough-music—serenade on tin cans, kettles, and marrow-bones. This ceremony is described in *Hudibras*, to which, years later, Hogarth did a spirited illustration.

The end of the century brought a slight—a very slight—move towards those quieter manners which the newly formed Society was advocating. The vehicle was the suburban spas and tea-gardens, which are celebrated in many songs of the period:

> At Islington
> A fair they hold,
> Where cakes and ale
> Are to be sold.
> At Highgate and
> At Holloway
> The like is kept
> Here every day,
> At Totnam Court,
> And Kentish Town,
> And all those places
> Up and down.

These spas and gardens were to have their greatest vogue in the succeeding century, but on their first arrival they at once caught popular

fancy. On Sundays the apprentices and their girls, instead of loafing about the streets and starting riots, went out to Islington Spaw (or the New Tunbridge Wells), the London Spaw (at Clerkenwell), Pancras Wells, Lambeth Wells, the Pimlico Gardens, the New Spring Garden at Vauxhall, or the floating coffee-house on the Thames, the Folly, which was moored off Somerset House. There they strolled about, or sat in arbours and took syllabubs and cheesecakes, Rhenish and claret and tarts. Most of these places, to which admission was usually threepence, provided orchestral and vocal concerts; and this, with the drinking of medicinal waters, which was a ceremony and a novelty, had some effect upon deportment. The rowdy type was there, of course, but even he was not quite so rowdy as in the streets. Girls from the Exchange galleries were there, and family parties of the tradesmen, his wife and children. The "abbess" brought her latest "nuns" to be seen by the beaux; cullies brought their punks, and sharpers came to look out for "bubbles." From 1700 onward these gardens multiplied in all parts of inner and outer London, and had a great effect upon manners and social amenities generally. They died only in the latter nineteenth century; the passing of Cremorne was the end of a fashion that had begun under James II.

24 Charles II at Whitehall

From a contemporary painting by Stoop

25 The City of London from Richmond House, *ca.* 1746

From the painting by Canaletto, reproduced by gracious permission of H.M. the King

26 The Thames from the Garden of Old Somerset House, *ca.* 1750

School of Samuel Scott

PART THREE

The Eighteenth Century

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY was scarcely begun when the London streets suffered the greatest storm they had known. There had been great storms on the night before Cromwell's death and on the entry of Charles II to the City; and, on the burial of the Queen of Bohemia, daughter of James I, a terrific storm of wind, hail, thunder, and lightning, which tore up a number of houses and started many fires.

But the storm of November 1703, linked with no royal occasion, was the storm of storms. It lasted nine hours. During the night, all the ships in the river were driven ashore; barges were driven against the arches of London Bridge and smashed to splinters; and four hundred of the watermen's wherries were sunk or broken. Two thousand chimneys were blown down. Spires and pinnacles of churches crashed to the ground. The roofs of many houses were whirled off, and in some parts of the town many houses were uprooted. The lead on the roofs of the highest buildings was rolled up like paper, and a score or more night-wanderers were killed by falling tiles and stones. It produced, of course, a bale of poems and pamphlets, and much moralising on God's visitation of the town's wickedness; it also gave Addison a chance for a figure that "made" his Blenheim poem.

Under Queen Anne, the London of fashion affected a dancing-master "elegance" and a French mode of speech, in place of the swagger of the preceding years. But the untravelled Londoner was free from those influences, and his life was of much the same hue and temper as it had been. His street activities and amusements at this time found many commentators. Three of these—who were writing from the 1690's to about 1712—afford a bridge between the two centuries. Tom D'Urfey, Tom Brown, and Ned Ward are minor writers of a rather down-at-heel sort. They are only not-forgotten because their cursory writings do give us a picture of certain phases of London life. They did not present the life of the quiet, everyday people, or the life of the court. They presented only that life for which the word "bohemian" had not then been invented. But at that time it was a very assertive phase of the London scene, and the pictures they give us complement the more polite pictures of Addison, Steele, Budgell, and the other writers of the miscellanies.

What is called "low life" had a great attraction for the journeyman writer, from the time of Nash and Greene onward; perhaps because

they were living it or because it was most easily observed. Fashionable life had its satirists in many a pamphlet, but the bulk of the ephemeral literature of the first half of this century is concerned with the life of the rough and rude. Even Swift, who moved mostly in court circles when in London, devotes the few lines of his *Morning in Town* to the doings of the lower orders. Until the coming of the magazines, nobody paid much attention to the life of the majority; nothing more than an occasional contemptuous reference to "the middling classes" or "cits." They had no high lights, no strong lines which could be quickly drawn by the facile Grub Street hacks; nothing that would yield scandalous or grotesque effects; and so they were ignored.

A very popular literary form of the times was the "perambulation" of the town and the exposure of its follies, in both high and low life. The form remained popular well into the nineteenth century, and what was begun by Harman and Dekker and Greene ended with Pierce Egan and Charles Westmacott. Artists also used the form, and that artist whose pictures are almost writings had his greatest success with his high and low life scandals—his *Rake's Progress*, *Idle Apprentice*, *Marriage à la Mode*, *Harlot's Progress*, *Southwark Fair*, and *Gin Lane*.

A rough sketch of modes and manners at the opening of the century may be seen in Tom Brown's *Amusements*. In 1703 he published a series of parody-forecasts in the manner of the almanack-makers; thus:

Wednesday. Afternoon noisy and bloody at Her Majesty's Bear Garden at Hockley-in-the-Hole. Coffee to be had at the Rainbow at 4. Hot furmety at Fleet Bridge by 7. Excellent pease pottage and tripe in Baldwin's Gardens at 12. A constable and two watchmen killed, or near being so, in Westminster; whether by a lord or a lord's footman the planets don't determine.

Friday. Damsels whipped for their good nature at Bridewell, about 10. Much swearing at 3 among the horse-coursers in Smithfield.

Monday. Whores turned out of the Temple, Gray's Inn, etc., about 6.

Friday. Doleful procession up Holborn Hill about 11. Men handsome and proper, that were never thought so before, arrive at the fatal place by 12.

Thursday. Lord Mayor's Day. Windows in Cheapside stuck with more faces at ten than the balconies with candles on an illumination night. Wicked havoc of neats' tongues and hams in the barges about 11. Artillery men march two by two, burlesqued in buff and bandoliers—need not wear head-pieces, their wives having fortified that part to their hands. The vintners and brewers, the butchers and apothecaries, jostle about precedence. The ladies pelted with dead cats instead of squibs.

Monday. Beggars take up their respective posts in Lincoln's Inn Fields and other places by 7 that they may be able to praise God in capon and March beer at night. Vintners buy up sloes in all the markets at 8; put them to another use than their forefathers ever knew of. The new invention of making good Bordeaux wine of Herefordshire cyder, and good Herefordshire cyder of Middlesex turnips practised every day in their cellars.

27 Southwark Fair

From the engraving by William Hogarth

28 Mayday Parade of Milkmaids, wearing head-dresses of silver plate

From an engraving of ca. 1760

29 An Arrest by Bailiffs in St. James' Street

From the painting by William Hogarth in "The Rake's Progress" Series

30 The Country Girl's Arrival in London

An engraving by William Hogarth from "The Harlot's Progress" Series

Hockley-in-the-Hole, mentioned in the opening, was an amusement place in that little dip, north of Clerkenwell Road, which was, in the nineteenth century, the Italian quarter, but at that time was unbuilt. It offered the same crude amusements provided in the preceding century by Bankside. Bull-baiting, bear-baiting, sword-matches, cudgel-matches, wrestling, cock-fighting, dog-fighting, and boxing-matches between women, were some of its attractions. One of its announcements is sufficient to give an idea of its "sport":

> A mad bull to be dressed up with fireworks, and turned loose. A dog to be dressed up with fireworks all over, and turned loose with the bull. Also a bear to be turned loose, and a cat to be tied to the bull's tail.

Steele has an excellent description of a sword-match—one of the *Spectator's* few excursions into the underworld—and other works have numerous references to the "champions" and their victories. Their challenges, and the speed with which they were taken up by the challenged, make interesting reading in these days, when two boxers, each certain of finishing the other in the second round, spend eight months in cross-talk before they can be got together:

> I, George Grey, born in the city of Norwich, who have fought in most parts of the West Indies in all twenty-five times, and upon the stage, and never yet was worsted, and being now lately come to London, do invite James Harris to meet and exercise at these following weapons, viz., backsword, sword and dagger, sword and buckler, single falchion, and case of falchions.
>
> I, James Harris, master of the noble science of self-defence, and formerly rid in the Horse Guards, and have fought an hundred and ten prizes, and never left the stage to any man, will not fail, God willing, to meet this brave and bold inviter at the time and place appointed, desiring sharp swords and from him no favour.

The women's challenges and acceptances kept a similar "manly" note:

> I, Elizabeth Wilkinson, of Clerkenwell, having had some words with Hannah Highfield, and requiring satisfaction, do invite her to meet me on the stage and box for three guineas, each woman holding half a crown in each hand, and the first woman that drops her money to lose the battle.
>
> I, Hannah Highfield, of Newgate Market, hearing of the resoluteness of Elizabeth Wilkinson, will not fail, God willing, to give her more blows than words, desiring home blows, and of her no favour.

The sword-fight that Steele saw was between James Miller, a sergeant, and Timothy Buck, of Clare Market; Miller a man of audacious look, Buck a man with perfect composure. Miller was concerned with attack, Buck with defence. The contest was short:

> Miller's head laid him open to the rebuke of the calm Buck, by a large cut on the forehead. Much effusion of blood covered his eyes in a moment, and the huzzas of the crowd undoubtedly quickened the anguish. The assembly was divided into parties upon their different ways of fighting; while a poor nymph in one of the galleries apparently suffered for Miller, and burst into a flood of tears. As soon as his wound was wrapped up, he came on again with a little rage, which still disabled him further. But what brave man can be wounded into more patience and caution? The next was a warm eager onset which ended in a decisive stroke on the left leg of Miller. The lady in the gallery, during this second strife, covered her face. . . . The wound was exposed to the view of all who could delight in it, and sewed up on the stage.

These Hockley-in-the-Hole sports were intended for, and mostly supported by, the riff-raff, but just as the writers concerned themselves so much with the underworld, so did the nobility. Slumming, and sharing in the sports of the mob, and often behaving like the mob, was a fashionable diversion. Two morning entertainments that were popular with the rich and leisured—as murder trials are popular with their successors—were a visit to Bedlam to see the miserable behaviour of the mentally afflicted; and a visit to Bridewell to see girls and women whipped. Other sights are listed by a contemporary:

> Assemblies, parks, coarse feasts in city-halls,
> Lectures and trials, plays, committees, balls,
> Wells, Bedlams, executions, Smithfield scenes,
> And fortune-tellers' caves and lions' dens,
> Taverns, Exchanges, Bridewells, drawing-rooms,
> Instalments, pillories, coronations, tombs,
> Tumblers and funerals, puppet-shows, reviews,
> Sales, races, rabbits and (still stranger) pews.

An interesting note on the superficial nature of the "politeness" of the time is afforded by George Farquhar's preface to his play, *The Twin Rivals*. This was one of the first productions of the new reign, and the author claims for it that, in contrast to those plays that had been winning success by taking debauchery for their subject, his play was an exposure of villainy, in which virtue was made triumphant. Here (he almost says, and certainly suggests) is a play to which even Mr. Jeremy Collier could make no objection. He then goes on to complain of the poor success of the play, and quotes a citizen as saying that he and his friends were disappointed in it—"we never go to that end of the town but with an intention to be lewd." What the citizen expected does not appear. Anyway, the first nine speeches of the play present a young man suffering from V.D., the second scene and a later scene are set in the house of a corrupt midwife who is also a procuress, and the dialogue to modern ears is as Restoration as it could be. Indeed, most contemporary accounts of the life of the streets, and of entertainment,

show that neither manners nor language had much improved. The only difference was that men and women were rude in a more elegant way; they said lewd things with a finer accent, and kicked citizens with a touch of polish.

The rowdiness of night-life, and the frequent robberies, caught the attention of the Government quite early in the reign. The night-watchmen were overhauled, and the more elderly were retired and replaced by younger, able-bodied men prepared to stand up to the rowdies and capable of arresting them. Further, every householder in the City district was compelled to do a night-watch each week, or to pay a stated sum for the services of a reliable understudy. These laws for a time made the streets a little quieter, but a few years later a new body of disturbers appeared. In succession to the Hectors, Muns, and Scowrers, a more brutal set of ruffians paraded the streets after dark; young men of what is called "good family" who styled themselves Mohocks. Nobody who was alone was safe from their cowardly assaults. They attacked at random any unarmed person who was out after dark. They assaulted unprotected women; they drove their swords through the sides of sedan-chairs; they pulled men from coaches and slit their noses with razors, stabbed them with pen-knives, ripped the coaches to pieces, and, in some cases, killed.

The Government took them so seriously that it offered £100 reward for the arrest of any members of the gang. But when the new energetic watchmen arrested four Mohocks in the act, and it was found that they were scions of important families, the Mohocks were fined 3*s.* 4*d.* each, and nothing is said about the payment of the reward. Later times saw somewhat similar procedure when zealous constables arrested rackety sons and nephews of the illustrious. Some people attributed to the gang a political purpose, but they had none. Swift has several references to them in his Journal to Stella: "I came home in a chair for fear of the Mohocks." . . . "Lord Treasurer advised me not to go in a chair, because the Mohocks insult chairs more than they do those on foot." . . . "Lord Winchelsea told me to-day at court that two of the Mohocks caught a maid of old Lady Winchelsea's, at the door of their house in the park, where she was with a candle. . . . They cut all her face, and beat her without any provocation." . . . "There is a proclamation out against the Mohocks. One of those that are taken is a baronet."

Addison, in one of his papers, goes to human psychology for an explanation:

> The motive of this monstrous affectation I take to proceed from that noble thirst of fame and reputation which is planted in the hearts of all men. . . . As the desire of fame in men of true wit and gallantry shows itself in proper instances, the same desire in men who have the ambition without proper faculties runs wild and discovers itself in a thousand extravagances, by which they would signalise themselves from others and gain a set of admirers.

> When I was a middle-aged man there were many societies of ambitious young men who, in their pursuits after fame, were every night employed in roasting porters, smoking cobblers, knocking down watchmen, overturning constables, breaking windows, blackening sign-posts, and the like immortal enterprises. . . . One could hardly find a knocker at a door in a whole street after a midnight expedition of these *beaux esprits*.

The Mall was still the fashionable promenade for day and evening, though the quality, and more particularly the near-quality, made indignant complaint that they could not use it on Sundays because of the presence of the untouchables—aldermen, citizens, apprentices, footmen, etc. One of the complainants, in a pamphlet, affected to recognise these people however they disguised themselves by fashionable dress. He knew them, he claimed, by their walk, and could distinguish the Ludgate Hill Hobble, the Cheapside Swing, the City Jolt and Wriggle, and so on.

A secondary promenade was the Piazza, at Covent Garden, which was rather more rakish. This was a day and night rendezvous, where flighty but otherwise respectable women allowed themselves to be "picked up" for the evening, and where the young beaux went hunting. This picking-up was often done by coach, and a *Spectator* paper gives us particulars of the method, and the technique to be observed by each party. It was done apparently as early as eight o'clock in the morning. Roysterers who had been up all night might then see women, attended by their maids, buying fruit and flowers. On this occasion, the early wanderer spotted an agreeable young woman getting into a coach, and at once engaged another coach to follow it. This was so recognised a procedure that the respective coachmen, by whip-signals, could ask a question as to destination and give a reply. In this case, the leading coachman, by signal, intimated that he was going through Long Acre to St. James. At the Newport Street end of Long Acre, the leading coachman slowed until the follower came up, and then got into a jam, and began an argument with the second coach for trying to pass him. This had the required effect of bringing down the window of the lady's coach, to enable her to see what the trouble was. The pursuer gave her the usual ogling glance, and when she went to draw up her window, it stuck and would not move. By this he knew that she was an experienced coach-woman, and for an hour and a half, by the skill of their coachmen, they were constantly brought alongside each other, and made exchanges of glances adoring, languishing, reproving, rallying, bold, and dissembling. The story, unfortunately, is left at that; after we have been drawn into the zest of the chase we never learn whether an assignation was made; whether he was contemptuously dismissed; or whether his coachman lost the leading coach.

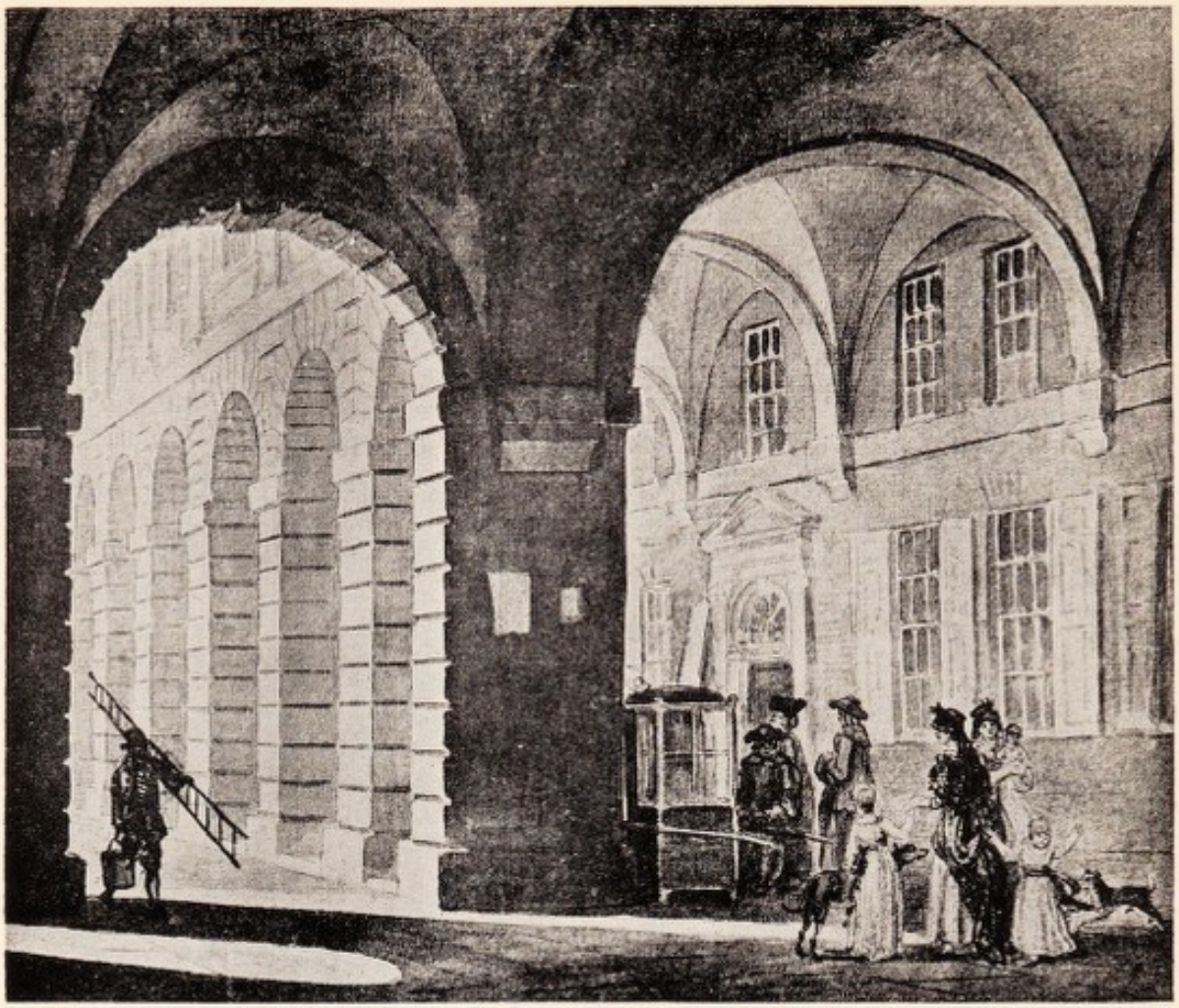
Ned Ward is not a wholly reliable guide to the London of his day; not even to the shabby side he knew so well. He was so anxious, in his

31 "The Female Orators." An Eighteenth-century Street Scene

From an engraving by John Collet

32 "A Brawling and Scratching Match between two Drunken Drabs"

From a print by Rowlandson



33 The Piazza, Covent Garden, in the late Eighteenth Century
From a drawing by T. Sandby, R.A., reproduced by gracious permission of H.M. the King

34 Street Scene

35 The New Exchange

various works, to make his narrative spicy that whether the places he visited were of a scandalous sort or not, he made them so. Much that he could print in the "polite" days of Queen Anne would send the Morality Councils and Watch Committees of this enlightened and broad-minded twentieth century into a cold sweat. Quotation therefore must be limited and selective. But under the litter of blunt phrasing with which his *London Spy*, *Vulgus Britannicus*, *Vade Mecum for Maltworms*, *Hudibras Redivivus*, and other things are strewn, there is a good deal of fact and truth; and his pictures of the street life of the London of William III and Anne, allowing for his jaundice and his journalism, are probably near reality. He is emphatic on the dirt and evil smells of his London, and on the poverty and consequent crime, and his pages are shot with that feeling for the outcast and the economically oppressed which did not become fully vocal until later in the century, through Rousseau; and was not put into action until almost the end of the century. His views on Bridewell were not at that time commonly held. After giving a picture of the women at work, beating hemp, under a brutal male overseer armed with a switch, he goes on to the Justice Room:

> . . . up a pair of stairs into a spacious chamber, where the Court was sitting in great grandeur and order. A grave gentleman, whose awful looks bespoke him some honourable citizen, was mounted in the Judgment Seat, armed with a Hammer, like a change-broker at Lloyds Coffee House, when selling goods by inch of candle; and a woman under the lash in the next room; where folding doors were opened, that the whole Court might see the punishment inflicted; at last down went the hammer, and the scourging ceased. . . . The honourable Court, I observed, were chiefly attended by fellows in blew coats, and women in blew aprons. Another accusation being then delivered by a Flat Cap against a poor wench, who having no friend to speak in her behalf, Proclamation was made, viz., *All you who are willing E—— T—— should have present Punishment, pray hold up your hands;* which was done accordingly. And then she was ordered the civility of the House, and was forced to show . . . to the grave sages of the august assembly.
>
> Finding little knowledge to be gained from their proceedings, and less pleasure and satisfaction from their punishments, my friend and I thought it better to retire, and leave them to flog on till the accusers had satisfied their revenge and the spectators their curiosity. Now, says my friend, pray give me your thoughts of what you have seen, whether you think this sort of correction is a proper method to reform women from their vicious practices, or not? Why, truly, said I, if I must deliver my opinion according to my real sentiments, I only conceive it makes many whores, but that it can in no measure reclaim 'em.

His night-piece of that London takes us right into it:

> The modest hour of nine being just proclaimed from every steeple, the joyful alarm of Bow Bells called the weary apprentices from their work to their

paring-shovels, to unhitch their folded shutters, and button up their lying sanctuaries, their shops, till the next morning; wherein there are more untruths asserted in one day than false oaths taken in Westminster Hall in a whole term. . . . My ears were so serenaded on every side, with the grave musick of sundry passing bells, the rattling of coaches, and the melancholy ditties of Hot Bak'd Wardens and Pippins, that had I had as many eyes as Argos, and as many ears as Fame, they would have been all confounded, for nothing could I see but light and nothing hear but noise. . . . [Here follows a rather too detailed description of a night-soil-cart.] As we stumbled along, my friend bid me take notice of a shop wherein sat three or four very provoking damsels, with as much velvet on their backs, as would have made a burying-pall for a country parish, or a holiday coat for a physician; being glorified at bottom with gold fringes, that I thought at first they might be parsons daughters, who had borrow'd their fathers' pulpit-clothes, to use as scarfs, and go a-visiting in; each with as many patches in her market-place as are spots in a leopard's skin or freckles in the face of a Scotchman.

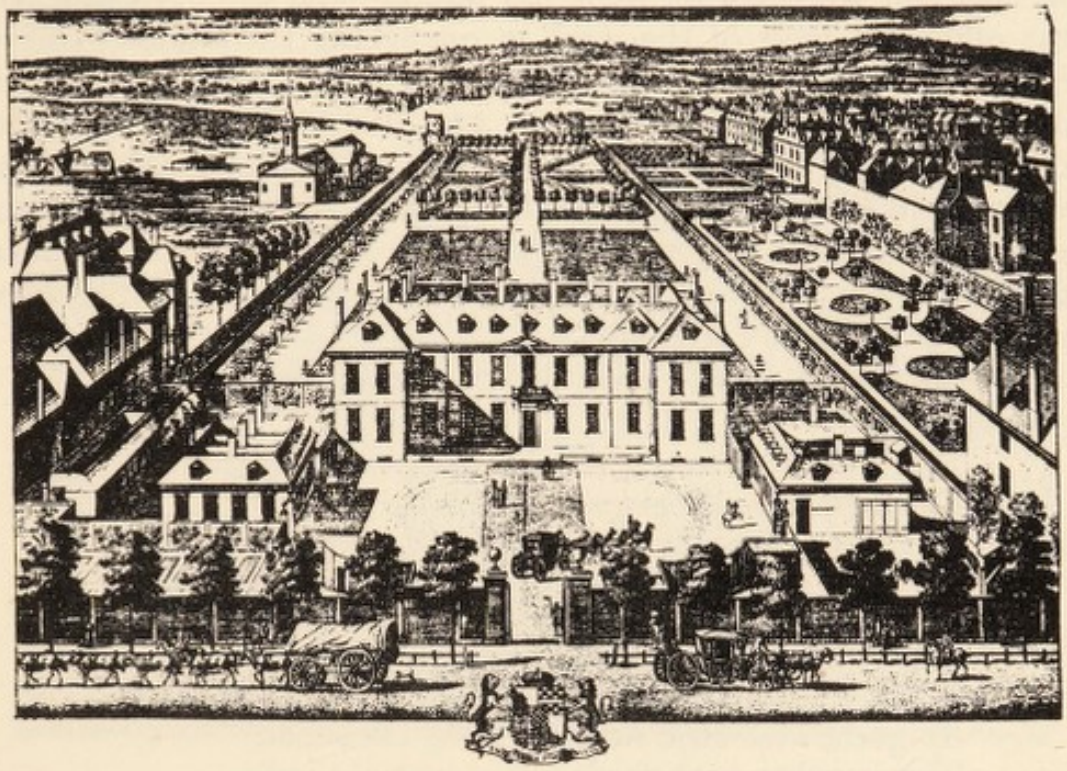
I ask'd my friend what he took them for? Who answer'd, They were a kind of first-rate punks by their rigging, of about a guinea purchase. I further queried what reason he had to believe them to be lechery-layers? He reply'd, because they were sitting in a head-dresser's shop; which, says he, is as seldom to be found without a whore as a bookseller's shop in Paul's Churchyard without a parson.

His description of a street-market of the time does catch the coarse spirit of the thing:

We mov'd on till we came to Fleet Bridge, where nuts, ginger-bread, oranges, and oysters lay pil'd up in moveable shops that run upon wheels, attended by ill-looking fellows, some with but one eye and others without noses. Over against these stood a parcel of Trugmoldies, Straw-Hats, and Flat-Caps, selling socks and furmity, night-caps, and plum-pudding. Just as we pass'd by, a feud was kindling between two rival females who, from the brimstone of lust, had blown up such a fire of jealousy between 'em, the one call'd the other Adulterous Bitch, and charg'd her with lying with her husband, and robbing her of his love, and . . . then with teeth and nails made a violent assault upon her rival, who roar'd out for help, and crying out she was quick with child, the mob, hearing her plead her belly, were moved to compassion, and so parted 'em, their coifs having received the greatest damage in the fray. Just as the squabble was ended, before the rabble was dispers'd, who should be stumbling along upon his hide-bound prancer, but one of the horse-mountebanks; who seeing so rare an opportunity to hold forth to a congregation already assembl'd, spurs up his founder'd Pegasus, and halts into the middle of the crowd, plucks out a packet of Universal Hodg-Podg, and thus begins an Oration to the listening herd. . . .

The population at this time was about a million, and London was rapidly enlarging itself for the accommodation of increasing numbers. It did this in face of an Act to prohibit further building within three miles of the gates; but there had been many of these Acts, and most of

them had been either ignored or walked through. One was made in the latter fourteenth century; others by Elizabeth and Charles I. The Fear of London had been present to all governments, once it overflowed its gates, and it has lasted up to this time. As I write these notes, Mr. Herbert Morrison, of the L.C.C., is saying that something ought to be done to limit the further spread of London. Exactly what they were saying in 1550, in 1641, in 1703, in 1785, in 1900, and in 1925. London has been too strong for any imposed restraint, and just as the earlier Acts were ignored, so was that of Anne. New streets



Burlington House and Piccadilly in 1735
From the engraving by Kip

sprang up every few months. Albemarle, Dover, and Bolton Streets had been made off Piccadilly by 1700, and were followed by Bond Street, though only about a third of its present length. Some of the West End squares were laid out, and Leicester Fields was built up. Other districts outside the gates—Charing Cross, St. Giles, Soho, Clerkenwell, Holborn, and Bloomsbury began to grow to the north and west. Marylebone and Knightsbridge, Chelsea and Pancras, remained rural communities, with open spaces between them and the town; but the town went on growing, and its business went on growing.

A little earlier, some enterprising men, who had noticed this, had turned it to profit. They had engaged a number of men-messengers, and had created the first Penny Post, by which four times a day letters were carried from one part of the town to another at a penny a time. With this continued growth a rival appeared with a Halfpenny Post,

but he lasted only a few weeks. Increased building brought many new fire-insurance offices. Each office kept its own fire-fighters in a special uniform, with a silver badge showing the name or crest of the respective office. The offices then were the Phoenix, the Friendly, the Hand-in-Hand, the Sun, and the Westminster. Their men provided the only fire-brigades the town possessed, and one of the sights of London was the call to a fire, and the pell-mell rush of the firemen of the office with which the house was insured, with their hand-trucks and their primitive hoses. Every insured house carried on its front the badge of the office —you may still see them on some old houses—and of course the men of that office did most of the work in quenching the flames. One of their fire-fighting appliances was an iron hook on a rope, which could be thrown up to catch on the roofs and sills of hopelessly burning buildings, and pull them down. Sometimes innocent adjoining houses were treated in this way to prevent the spread of the fire down a whole street. For extreme emergencies they carried a keg of gunpowder with which to blow up a burning building and bring it to the ground, where it could more easily be extinguished.

Gay, in his *Trivia*, gives a vivid description of their work:

> Now with thick crowds th'enlightened pavement swarms,
> The fireman sweats beneath his crooked arms;
> A leathern casque his venturous head defends,
> Boldly he climbs where thickest smoke ascends.
> Moved by the mother's streaming eyes and prayers,
> The helpless infant through the flame he bears. .
> See forceful engines spout their levelled streams,
> To quench the blaze that runs along the beams;
> The grappling hook plucks rafters from the walls,
> And heaps on heaps the smoky ruin falls. . . .
> Hark! the drum thunders! far, ye crowds, retire;
> Behold, the ready match is tipt with fire,
> The nitrous store is laid, the smutty train
> With running blaze awakes the barrell'd grain;
> Flames sudden wrap the walls; with sullen sound
> The shatter'd pile sinks on the smoky ground.

About this time, street-lighting was taken in hand by government, and a public company was formed to manage the actual lighting and collect a tax from every householder. Even so, the lighting was maintained only between sunset and midnight. After that hour, the only lights were those carried by the patrolling watch. Those who then had business abroad went by their own coaches or by chair; or on foot attended by linkmen with flambeaux. After midnight, anybody was likely to be stopped by the watch, but, as we have seen in earlier times, the well-dressed were stopped only for the purpose of extracting a

gratuity. Ned Ward shows that the abuse was dealt with by the knowing ones as Pepys in his time dealt with it, and as Dekker did in his time:

Popping on us unawares, his well-fed Majesty bid his Guard de Corp halt, and with a Hem, clapping his painted scepter to the ground, as hard as a pavier does his rammer, bid us stand and come before the constable. We, like prudent ramblers, obey'd the voice of authority, and with uncover'd heads, paid reverence to his awful presence. He demanded of us, after an

Cornhill in the Eighteenth Century

austere manner, who and what we were; and had as many impertinent questions at his tongue's end as an apothecary has hard words, or a midwife bawdy stories. My friend, in order to satisfy his worship's curiosity, and make him something the wiser, answer'd his foolish examination with as much submission and respect as a proud peevish dunce in authority could expect. He asked my friend what was his profession? He answer'd him a Surgeon. A Surgeon! says our learned potentate, in great derision; and why not a Chirurgeon, I pray, Sir?

'Twas a mistake, Mr. Constable, said I, pray excuse it, and be not so severe with us, we are very sober civil persons, who have been about business, and are going quietly to our own habitations.

Civil and sober persons, said he, how do I know that, Mr. Prattlebox? You may be drunk for ought I know, and only feign yourselves sober before my presence to escape the penalty of the Act.

My friend put his hand in his pocket, plucks out a shilling; indeed, Mr. Constable, says he, we tell you nothing but the naked truth; there is something

for your watch to drink; we know it is a late hour, but hope you will detain us no longer.

With that Mr. Surlycuff directs himself to his right hand Janizary, Hem, hah, Aminadab, I believe they are civil gentlemen. Ay, Ay, said he, Master, you need not question it; they don't look as if they had fire-balls about 'em. Well, gentlemen, you may pass; but pray go civilly home. Here Colly, light the gentlemen down the hill, they may chance to stumble in the dark, and break their shins against the Monument.

The streets by day presented a picture of luxury and dirt, colour and grime, rags and riches. The brilliant clothes of men and women of the

Whitehall in 1735: notice the sedan-chair rank
From the engraving by Kip

better class; the coloured and gilded coaches; the liveries of the footmen and of the negro pages, who followed master or mistress at a "respectful" distance; the gaudy signs that hung above every house and shop—these gaieties were offset by the thick mud or dust of the street, the overflowing filth of the kennel, the sore faces of the beggars, the reeling drunkards, and the draggle-tailed hawkers and ballad-singers. The condition of the streets was reflected in the individual person. It was an age of patches, powder, and perfume, with very little physical soap-and-water washing. Outward show; but underneath it a state that would horrify our hygienic selves. The city was a picturesque slum, and the stripped citizen—if he ever did strip—would have suggested a stronger figure.

That was the note of the eighteenth century, and when you look at

Hogarth's pictures of the London of George I you can see its dirt and glitter, and can smell the reek of it. As to the poverty, there is a contemporary picture of a procession of thanksgiving for Marlborough's victory in the last year of Queen Anne. The procession is passing down the Strand before terraced benches of The Charity Children of London. There are so many benches, and the children are so close-packed, that unless the artist went wild with artistic license, London's charity-children must have formed a quarter of its child-population.

Another picture, of a little later, presents the poverty in a much higher light. A man who owned some houses near Fleet Market had one or two standing empty. A possible tenant turned up one day, and the owner took him to view one of these houses. He threw open the door of a room on the first floor, and there, on the bare boards, was a naked woman—dead. The owner, sickened by the sight, ran out of the house, but the tenant went on to inspect the other rooms. On the next floor, he found two dead women. Going up to the garret floor, he found two women, and a girl of eighteen, alive, but in the last stages of starvation. All these women, it appeared, were strangers to each other, and homeless. They had been sleeping in the empty house for two months. The three dead women had been basket-women in Fleet Market, but trade had been bad, and food scarce. All three had died of starvation. Enquiry showed that all the women, the dead and the living, bore good characters.

Addison's paper on *Street Cries* affords an echo of the vocal racket that must have filled the London air of his time. He mentions the shrill cry of the milk-girl; the sometimes bass and sometimes treble cry of the chimney-sweep; the harsh cries of the small-coal man and the vendors of brick-dust and broken glass. He complains of the immense noise made by those who have the smallest things to sell, such as the hawkers of card-matches and the newsmen selling Gazettes by sound of tin trumpet; and of those humorists who, not content with the traditional cries, have invented songs and tunes of their own, such as the pie-man, known as Colly-Molly-Puff, and the vendor of powder and washballs. Also, those whose cries are unintelligible, so that country visitors go to their doors to buy apples of a bellows-mender, or gingerbread from a knife-and-scissors grinder.

About this time a new figure appeared in the streets; one that is still with us—the boot-black. In those streets he must have had constant employment, and one wonders why he was so long in inventing himself. A little later, other benefactors appeared—the crossing-sweepers, men and women, who were familiar London figures up to the early nineteen-hundreds. Both those figures must indeed have filled a long-felt want, though their reward was only that of casual halfpennies. Most women on days of rain went on pattens. Gay's *Trivia*, which is a fairly

complete guide to the London of the first years of George I, shows how the prudent woman dressed herself for wet weather:

> Good housewives all the winter's rage despise,
> Defended by the riding-hood's disguise;
> Or underneath th'umbrella's oily shed,
> Safe through the wet on clinking pattens tread.

A vivid picture of the misery of a wet day in those times is sketched in Swift's *City Shower*. One could not then find much shelter under shops or walls, since the gutters of the roofs projected beyond the walls and discharged themselves to the pavement:

> Now in contiguous drops the flood comes down,
> Threatening with deluge this devoted town.
> To shops in crowds the draggled females fly,
> Pretend to cheapen goods but nothing buy.
> The Templar spruce, while every spout's abroach,
> Stays till 'tis fair, yet seems to call a coach,
> The tuck'd-up sempstress walks with hasty strides,
> While streams run down her oil'd umbrella's sides.
> Here various kinds, by various fortunes led,
> Commence acquaintance underneath a shed.
> Triumphant Tories and despondent Whigs,
> Forget their feuds and join to save their wigs.
> Box'd in a chair, the beau impatient sits,
> While spouts run clattering o'er the roof by fits,
> And ever and anon, with frightful din
> The leather sounds; he trembles from within. . . .
> Now from all parts the swelling kennels flow,
> And bear their trophies with them as they go:
> Filths of all hues and odours seem to tell
> What street they sail'd from by their sight and smell.
> They, as each torrent drives, with rapid force,
> From Smithfield or St. 'Pulchre's shape their course,
> And in huge confluence join'd at Snowhill ridge,
> Fall from the conduit prone to Holborn Bridge.

A night-scene peculiar to that time was provided by perambulating musicians calling themselves the City Waits. A contemporary poet mentions them as a regular feature of the streets:

> He, as his custom was, got drunk,
> And then went strolling for a punk.
> Six links and lanterns, 'cause 'twas dark yet,
> He press'd from Covent Garden Market;
> Then his next captives were the Waits,
> Who play'd lest he should break their pates.

A more detailed description is given by Ned Ward:

> We heard a noise so dreadful and surprising, that we thought the Devil was riding on hunting through the City, with a pack of deep-mouth'd hell-hounds, to catch a brace of tallymen for breakfast. At last bolted out from the corner of a street, with an Ignis Fatuus dancing before them, a parcel of strange hobgoblins cover'd with long frize rugs and blankets, hoop'd round with leather girdles from their cruppers to their shoulders and their noddles button'd up into caps of martial figure, like a knight-errant at tilt and tournament, with his wooden head lock'd in an iron helmet; one arm'd, as I thought, with a lusty faggot-bat, and the rest with strange wooden weapons in their hands in the shape of clyster-pipes, but as long, almost, as speaking-trumpets. Of a sudden they clapp'd them to their mouths, and made such a frightful yelling that I thought the world had been dissolving, and the terrible sound of the last trumpet to be within an inch of my ears.
>
> Under these amazing apprehensions, I ask'd my friend what was the meaning of this infernal outcry? Prithee, says he, what's the matter with thee? Thou look'st as if thou were Gally'd; why these are the City Waits, who play every winter's night through the streets, to rouse each lazy drone to family duty. . . These are the Topping Tooters of the Town; and have gowns, silver chains, and salaries for playing Lilla Burlera to my Lord Mayor's Horse through the City.

The dangers of the streets at evening, as well as night, are presented in detail in *Trivia*; danger from traffic and ill-kept roads, and danger from fellow-creatures. There is the danger of the apprentice letting down the shutter-flap of the shop, without looking to see if you are standing under it; the danger of the workman carrying a long ladder through the twilight; the danger from coal-carts rushing up the narrow streets from the river to the Strand; the danger, in a traffic-block, of receiving a cut from a whip during a whip-fight between draymen; the danger of a drover's bull running amuck. The pickpocket is always about. He will slip your sword from its sheath, as well as your watch or your snuff-box from your pocket. There was an artful trick of stealing wigs. A porter would pass you, carrying a basket on his shoulder. In the basket was a small boy, who, in the dusk, could reach out from the basket, snatch a wig from a passing head, and duck unseen and unsuspected back to his basket. Or thieves would work from upper windows with thin and almost invisible lines of wire, fitted with hooks with which they fished for hats. You are not to stop to listen to a ballad-singer. He or she is singing only to draw a crowd, upon whose pockets the confederate's fingers can get to work. Other dangers are water thrown from fish-stalls, buckets emptied from above, open cellar-flaps, wheel-barrows pushed upon you from behind, and porters' loads left unguarded on the pavement.

Another poet, of a few years later, has left his note of these nuisances and dangers:

By some rude porter I am tost
With broken elbow 'gainst a post;
The flourish'd whip, from rattling hack,
Now makes me smart with sudden smack;
I mend my pace as much dismay'd
As on myself the whip were laid.
Full in my face some spiteful girl
Her drizzly mop contrives to twirl.
Another, while I musing trail,
Discharges an unlucky pail.
And now I dodge a spouting dray,
That totters with uncertain sway;
And now a cart, with nodding load
Of clinking iron or clatt'ring wood;
One single plank on't, let me tell ye,
Good knight, would jam me to a jelly. . . .

More serious perils awaited you in the less frequented streets. Lincoln's Inn by day was notorious for its beggars, but after dark they sometimes changed their state, and you would find:

The lurking thief, who, while the daylight shone,
Made the walls echo with his begging tone.
That crutch, which late compassion mov'd, shall wound
Thy bleeding head and fell thee to the ground.
Though thou art tempted by the linkman's call,
Yet trust him not along the lonely wall;
In the mid-way he'll quench the flaming brand,
And share the booty with the pilf'ring band.

Pleasure resorts of the quieter kind were now appearing in all parts. The citizen class was growing, not only numerically, but in influence; and entertainment-managers began to cater for it. Spring Gardens and Mulberry Gardens ceased to be, and with them went many things that were not regretted:

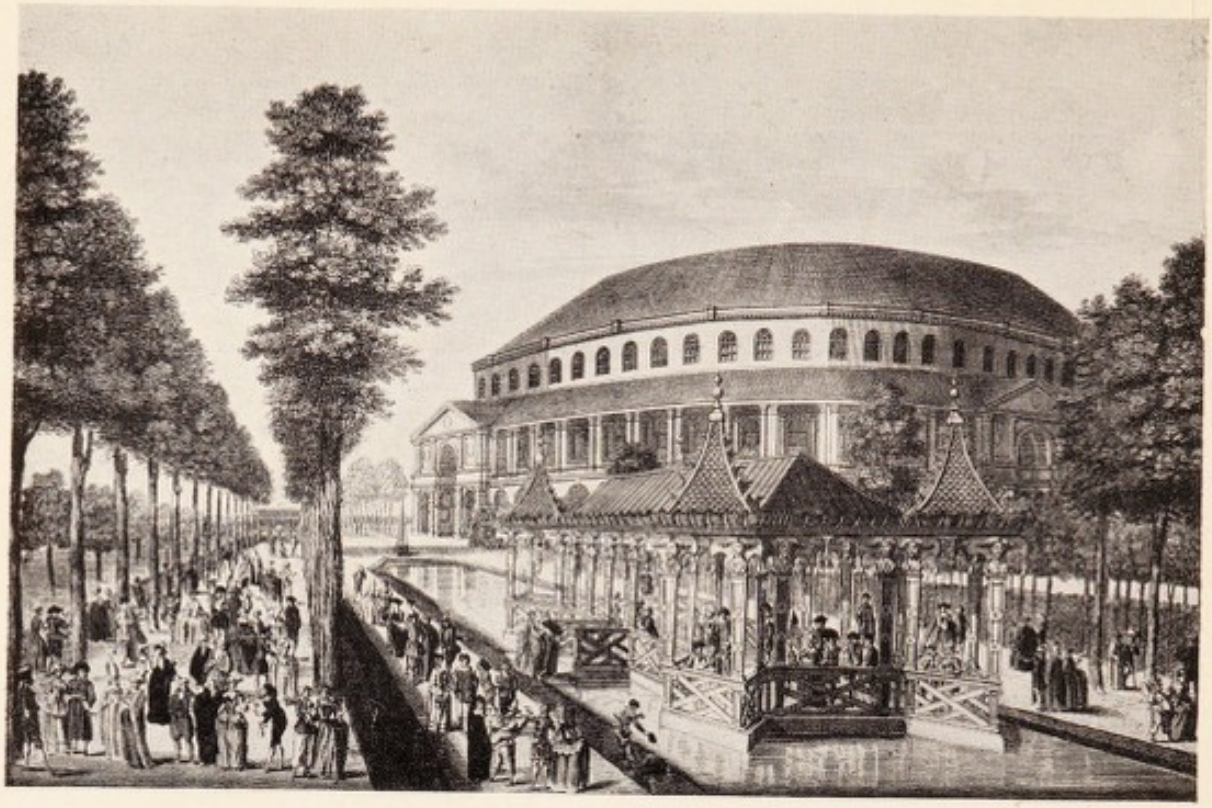
Now Locket's stands where gardens once did spring,
And wild ducks quack where grasshoppers did sing.
A princely palace on that space does rise,
Where Sedley's noble muse found mulberries.

(Locket's was one of the fashionable ordinaries of the time, and the "princely palace" was Buckingham House, where Buckingham Palace now stands.) The Fairs were still held, though May Fair was suppressed as a nuisance in 1720, and Southwark's Our Lady Fair, in 1763. Bartholomew's alone lived into the nineteenth century. But Bartholomew's had many more shows than the others, both puppet and theatrical—many actors of the theatres royal of later years served their apprenticeship in its booths—and more legitimate claim to be an amusement place. Hogarth's picture of Southwark Fair shows it to be little more than a

36 Cheapside in the late Eighteenth Century

"When Europe shakes with War's Alarms
'Tis Trade can Find Britannia Arms."

37 "The Beau's Disaster." A scene near Temple Bar in the mid-Eighteenth Century



38 Ranelagh: the Chinese House, the Rotunda, and the Company in Masquerade

39 Vauxhall: the Interior of the Music Room

riot, and a contemporary's description of May Fair presents it as little more than a rendezvous for drink and disorder:

> By the help of a great many slashes and hey-ups, and after as many jolts and jumbles, we were dragg'd to the Fair, where the harsh sound of untunable trumpets, the catterwauling scrapes of thrashing fiddlers, the grumblings of beaten calves-skin, and the discording toots of broken organs set my teeth on edge, like the filing of a hand-saw. . . . We order'd the coach to drive through the body of the Fair, that we might have the better view of the tinsey heroes and the gazing multitude, expecting to have seen several corporations of strolling vagabonds, but there prov'd but one company, amongst whom Merry Andrew was very busy in coaxing the attentive crowd into a good opinion of his fraternities and his own performances. . . . Beyond these were a parcel of scandalous boosing-kens, where soldiers and their trulls were skipping and dancing about to most lamentable music, perform'd upon a crack'd crowd by a blind fiddler. In another hut, a parcel of Scotch pedlars and their moggies, dancing a highlander's jig to a hornpipe. Over against 'em the Cheshire Booth, where a gentleman's man was playing more tricks with his heels in a Cheshire Round than ever were shown by the Mad Coffee Man at Sadler's Music House. . . . We now began to look about us, and take a view of the spectators; but could not, amongst the many thousands, find one man that appear'd above the degree of a gentleman's valet, nor one whore that could have the impudence to ask above sixpence wet and sixpence dry, for an hour of her cursed company. In all the multitudes that ever I beheld, I never, in my life, saw such a number of lazy lousie-look'd rascals, and so hateful a throng of beggarly, sluttish strumpets. . . .

No wonder it was "presented" to the magistrates as a place of lewdness and irregularity. It was described as "greatly frequented by prize-fighters, thieves, and women of bad character"—the favourite resort of the profligate and abandoned. Its suppression was ordered in 1702, but when, after its opening, the constables arrived to close it, they were met by soldiers and prize-fighters. A pitched battle then took place in which one of the constables was killed. The magistrates appear to have yielded to this display of force, and it ran, with an occasional interval, for another eighteen years.

The milder entertainment which the citizens sought was supplied by the tea-gardens and the new Spring Gardens, which later became known as Vauxhall Gardens and remained, with Ranelagh, the favourite evening resort of Londoners for over a century. The new tea-gardens were a little farther afield than the spas mentioned in the last chapter. Among them were the Marylebone Gardens, which grew around the Rose of Normandy tavern; the Assembly House, Kentish Town; Copenhagen House; White Conduit House, Pentonville; Jenny's Whim, Pimlico; Belsize House; Hampstead Wells; and the Dog and Duck, St. George's Fields. Towards the end of the century there were many more, and a scene in *Evelina* (1778) throws up a few of them:

The conversation turning upon public places, young Branghton asked if I had ever been to George's at Hampstead.

"Indeed, I never heard the place mentioned."

"Didn't you, Miss," cried he, eagerly, "why, then you've a deal of fun to come, I'll promise you; and, I tell you what, I'll treat you there some Sunday soon. So now, Bid and Poll, be sure you don't tell Miss about the chairs, and all that, for I've a mind to surprise her."

"George's at Hampstead," repeated Mr. Smith, contemptuously, "how came you to think the young lady would like to go to such a low place as that. But pray, Ma'am, have you ever been to Don Saltero's at Chelsea?"

"No, sir." . . .

"Pray, Cousin," said Mr. Branghton, "have you been at Sadler's Wells yet?"

"No, sir."

"No! Why then, you've seen nothing." . . .

"Well, but Ma'am," said Mr. Smith, "how do you like Vauxhall and Marylebone?"

"I never saw either, sir."

"No—God bless me—you really surprise me—why Vauxhall is the first pleasure in life." . . .

Miss Branghton voted for Saltero's Coffee House; her sister, for a party to Mother Red Cap's; the brother, for White Conduit House; Mr. Brown, for Bagnigge Wells; Mr. Branghton, for Sadler's Wells; and Mr. Smith for Vauxhall.

Vauxhall and Ranelagh were the chief and most expensive of these gardens, and there is scarcely a novel or journal of that period that does not describe a visit to one or both of them. They, and all other gardens, were laid out with an aim, achieved or not achieved, at elegance. The buildings were copies of Chinese, Greek, Moorish, and other exotic originals. Teas were served and various drinks—chocolate, ratafia, orange-brandy, arrack, punch, etc. There was always some kind of al fresco entertainment—masquerades, music and dancing, fireworks and grand illuminations. Famous singers were engaged for operettas and ballad-concerts. Famous acrobats gave displays of rope-walking and balloon ascents. It was all an agreeable revelation to those who remembered the crudities of the old gardens. These assemblies were useful, too, to the authorities. The press-gang was still at work, but for the army, at that time, instead of the navy. In those gardens they were sure of finding every evening large numbers of sturdy young men, and once a week or so there was a round-up. A frequent item in the newspapers was a paragraph to the effect that at this or that Garden a body of young fellows considered suitable for His Majesty's service were arrested and taken to a House of Detention. From there they were taken before something like a tribunal, to show cause why they should not serve.

Descriptions and pictures of Vauxhall and Ranelagh are, as I say, familiar to all, but their effect upon a young girl of the period—the

niece in Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*—may be worth quoting and setting alongside her uncle's view of them:

> Ranelagh looks like the enchanted palace of a genius, adorned with the most exquisite performances of painting, carving, and gilding, enlightened with a thousand golden lamps, that emulate the noon-day sun; crowded with the great, the rich, the gay, the happy, and the fair; glittering with cloth of gold and silver, lace, embroidery and precious stones. While these exulting sons and daughters of felicity tread this round of pleasure, or regale in different parties, and separate lodges, with fine imperial tea and other delicious refreshments, their ears are entertained with the most ravishing delights of music, both instrumental and vocal.
>
> At nine o'clock, in a charming moonlight evening, we embarked at Ranelagh for Vauxhall, in a wherry so light and slender that we looked like so many fairies sailing in a nutshell. . . . I was dazzled and confounded with the variety of beauties that rushed all at once upon my eye. Imagine to yourself, my dear Letty, a spacious garden, part laid out in delightful walks, bounded with high hedges and trees, and paved with gravel; part exhibiting a wonderful assemblage of the most picturesque and striking objects, pavilions, lodges, groves, grottoes, lawns, temples, and cascades; porticoes, colonnades, and rotundas; adorned with pillars, statues, and painting: the whole illuminated with an infinite number of lamps, disposed in different figures of suns, stars, and constellations; the place crowded with the gayest company, ranging through those blissful shades, or supping in different lodges on cold collations, enlivened with mirth, freedom, and good-humour, and animated by an excellent band of music.

Uncle saw them with the eye of middle-age:

> What are the amusements of Ranelagh? One half of the company are following one another's tails, in an eternal circle, like so many blind asses in an olive mill, where they can neither discourse, distinguish, nor be distinguished; while the other half are drinking hot water, under the denomination of tea, till nine or ten o'clock at night, to keep them awake for the rest of the evening. As for the orchestra, the vocal music especially, it is well for the performers that they cannot be heard distinctly. Vauxhall is a composition of baubles, overcharged with paltry ornaments, ill conceived, and poorly executed, without any unity of design, or propriety of disposition. . . . Here a wooden lion, there a stone statue; in one place a range of things like coffee-house boxes covered a-top; in another, a parcel of ale-house benches; in a third, a puppet-show representation of a tin cascade; in a fourth, a gloomy cave of a circular form, like a sepulchral vault, half-lighted; in a fifth, a scanty slip of grass-plot, that would not afford pasture sufficient for an ass's colt. The walks, which Nature seems to have intended for solitude, shade, and silence, are filled with crowds of noisy people, sucking up the nocturnal rheums of an agueish climate; and through these gay scenes a few lamps glimmer like so many farthing candles. When I see a number of well-dressed people, of both sexes, sitting on the covered benches, exposed to the eyes of the mob, and, which is worse, to the cold, raw, night air, devouring sliced beef, and

swilling port, and punch, and cider, I can't help compassionating their temerity, while I despise their want of taste and decorum.

While these Gardens drew crowds every summer evening, some of the citizens chose to take jaunts to more distant places—to Richmond, Greenwich Park, Epsom and Barnet and Windsor. This annoyed a splenetic poet of the period; but anything the citizens did outside the city seems to have evoked criticism from the other end of the town:

> Time was, when satin waistcoats and scratch wigs
> Enough distinguished all the City prigs,
> Whilst every sunshine Sunday saw them run
> To club their sixpences at Islington;
> When graver citizens, in suits of brown,
> Lin'd every dusty avenue to town,
> Or led the children and the loving spouse
> To spend two shillings at White Conduit House.
> But now the 'prentices in suits of green
> At Richmond or at Windsor may be seen;
> Where in mad parties they run down to dine,
> To play at gentlefolks and drink bad wine;
> Whilst neat post-chariots roll their masters down
> To some snug box a dozen miles from town. . . .
> Hence spring assemblies with such uncouth names,
> As Deptford, Wapping, Rotherhithe, Shad Thames,
> Where every month the powder'd white-gloved sparks,
> Spruce haberdashers, pert attorneys' clerks,
> With deep-enamour'd 'prentices prefer
> Their suit to many a sighing milliner.

Another scene of popular and populous life was the river. This was still used for passenger transport, and for royal processions—such as that for which Handel composed his Water Music—but it was also used in fine weather for pleasure-trips. A feature of its life was the surprising flow of insult which the waterman and passengers of one boat shouted at the waterman and passengers of passing boats, and the license of language taken by people of all classes. There was indeed a recognised River License, and even members of the royal family, when on the river, had to take their share of brutal personal criticism which, if uttered against them in the street, would have brought the penalty of criminal libel, if not treason.

One of the Roger de Coverley papers shows him being badgered in this way: "One of them asked us what queer old putt we had in the boat, and whether he was not ashamed to go a-wenching at his years, with a great deal of the like Thames-ribaldry." There is the classic story of Dr. Johnson crushing the pert waterman of a passing boat, who was crying obscene remarks on his face and figure: "Sir—under pretence of keeping a bawdy-house, your wife is a receiver of stolen goods."

A more fruity specimen is given by an earlier writer, though in these days of freedom it is necessary here and there to blue-pencil him:

> A scoundrel crew of Lambeth gardeners attack'd us . . . one of them beginning with us after this manner: You couple of treacherous sons of Bridewell b——s who are pimps to your own mothers, and cock-bawds to the rest of your relations, who were begot by huffling and christen'd out of a ——, how dare you show your ugly faces on the river of Thames? To which our well-fed pilot, after he had clear'd his voice with a Hem, most manfully reply'd, You lousie starv'd crow of worm-pickers and snail-catchers; you offspring of a dunghill and brothers to a pumpkin, who can't afford butter to your cabbage, or bacon to your sprouts; you —— rogues, who—— Hold your tongues, you nitty radish-mongers, or I'll whet my needle upon my —— and sow your lips together. This verbal engagement was no sooner over, but another squabbling crew met us, being most women, who, as they past us, gave us another salutation, viz.: You tailors! Who pawn'd the gentleman's cloak to buy a wedding-dinner, and afterwards sold his wife's clothes for money to fetch it out again? Here, Timothy, fetch your mistress and I three-ha'porth of boil'd beef, see first they make good weight, then stand hard for a bit of carrot. To which our Orator, after a puff and a pull-up, being well-skill'd in the water-dialect, made this return: You dirty —— brood of night-walkers and shop-lifters, which of you was it that ty'd her apron about her neck, because she would be kiss'd in a night-rail; and reckon'd her gallant a shilling for—— Have a care of your cheeks, you whores, we shall have you branded next sessions that the world may see your trade in your faces. You are lately come from the hemp and hammer. O Good Sir Robert, knock; pray, Good Sir Robert, knock.
>
> The next board we met was freighted with a parcel of city shop-keepers, who, being eager, like the rest, to show their acuteness of wit, and admirable breeding, accosted us after this manner, viz.: You affidavit scoundrels, pluck the straws out of the heels of your shoes. You Oats journeymen, who are you going to swear out of an estate at Westminster Hall, though you know nothing of the matter? You rogues, we shall have you in the pillory when rotten eggs are plenty. You are in a safe condition, you may travel anywhere by water and never fear drowning.
>
> Thus they run on, till our spokesman stopp'd their mouths with this following homily: You cuckoldly company of whiffling, peddling, lying, over-reaching ninny-hammers, who were forced to desire some handsome bachelor to kiss your wives and beg a holiday for you, or else you would not have dared to come out to-day—go make haste home, that you may find fowls at the fire. If I had as many horns on my head, as you are forc'd to hide in your pockets, what a monster should I be? You little think what your wives are providing for you against you come home. Don't be angry friends, it's many a honest man's fortune. . . .

The May Day pleasures of this century were not concerned with going out to the fields, and bringing in boughs of May, or dancing round the may-pole. But the workers and traders did observe the day. Since they lived in an age which had become industrial and

money-getting and stock-broking, they observed it rather as small boys of to-day observe the Fifth of November; they used it as a means of extracting small donations from the public. The sweeps dressed themselves in fancy costumes, and arranged themselves round a leader covered in green leaves, who was Jack-in-the-Green. With them they took the chimney-climbing infants, their faces well-sooted, with collecting-boxes; and in this manner they danced through the streets to the music of pipes and brush-against-shovel. The butchers marched out in their smocks, and made music with marrow-bones and cleavers. The milkmaids dressed themselves in their best, with ribbons and flowers, and borrowed any silver articles they could get hold of—dishes, tureens, tankards, coffee-pots, trays. These they arranged in a pyramid, and fastened them on their heads in place of their pails. Then, with fiddlers, they went from house to house of their customers, and did a song-and-dance before the door until the usual offering was sent out. The watermen made a procession on the river; the sedan-chairmen and the coachmen dressed their chairs and their horses; and the link-boys, street-porters, and coal-heavers made their own processions.

In summer-time all sorts of impromptu sport was got up, not only in the parks but in the streets. A noble lord would make a bet that his footman could race any horse down Pall Mall. Another would back one pair of sedan chairmen against another pair to carry their chair, with passenger, from Charing Cross to St. Paul's. Smock races for women were frequent events. Some of these were held in the streets, and some under cover; some were announced, and some just happened on the whim of the moment. One of the arranged events was announced in these terms: "On Whitsun Tuesday will be run-for an holland shift by a number of smart girls, six times round the riding-school." One of the events got up casually, and cried round the town, offered a Holland smock, a pair of laced shoes, a pair of clocked stockings, and a cap, to the winner of a race for girls down Pall Mall. It drew such a crowd of entrants, and such a mob of sightseers, that further races in Pall Mall were forbidden. Another race was run through the streets by "ladies in hooped petticoats."

The non-stop cycling races and non-stop dancing of modern America are not entirely new. They were doing something of the same kind in that London. A Leadenhall Market-man made a bet that he would walk 202 times round Moorfields in twenty-seven hours; and did it. Endurance contests in pudding-eating and tripe-eating were frequently held at the lower sort of tavern. In one of these, a man laid wagers, and found many takers at five pounds, that he and a friend would eat a bushel of tripe and drink four bottles of wine in an hour. The scene was set, with the cooked tripe and the four bottles, in the yard of a tavern. The proceedings began by the man appearing alone, and eating

40 The Pillory at Charing Cross

Engraved after Thomas Rowlandson

41 An Execution outside Newgate

From a drawing by Thomas Rowlandson

42 A Broadside commemorating the South Sea Bubble

a plate of tripe and drinking half a bottle of wine. He then poured all the rest of the wine over the mountain of tripe, and introduced his friend—a bear.

Donkey-races also were popular. For one of these a group of clubmen presented a piece of plate to be run for in Tyburn Road by six donkeys ridden by chimney-sweeps. A donkey-race for boys, with a prize of a wooden spoon, brought a vast mob of spectators, on foot and horseback, and an extraordinary amount of betting on each boy. Another little diversion for the public was arranged by the bright sparks of one of the coffee-houses, apparently after the third bottle. They hired a hackney-coach, harnessed six horses to it, dressed a coachman and postilion in street-scavenger's clothes, put half a dozen small shoe-blacks on the footman's platform at the rear, with their footstools on their heads, and had the turn-out driven round and round the Ring at Hyde Park at the peak of the fashionable hour.

One of the indoor amusements has some interest for students of slang. At the Haymarket end of Piccadilly was the footman's dance-academy, or, as it was called, The Threepenny Hop. This term for a cheap dance-hall, as learned Londoners may know, survived in Cockney circles up to the early nineteen-hundreds—refer Miss Kate Carney. Another indoor amusement has a curiously modern ring. We have heard from America of their method of adding a little zest to the tedium of card-gambling by playing strip-poker and strip-bridge, in which the players stake various articles of their clothing until they have no more to stake. This again is not America's invention; merely a revival of an old English custom. A ballad of the early part of the century, in which the usual old lady shows the young how much more decorous young women were in *her* day, has a verse on this pastime:

I never thought Cantharides
Ingredient good in posset;
Nor never stript me to my stays
To play the punk at basset.

Another event that brought some excitement to the streets was the drawing of the lotteries. The South Sea Bubble did not quench the love of a gamble, or the get-rich-quick fever. There were both public and State Lotteries. A print of about the middle of the century, of a part of Cheapside and Poultry, shows on one side the office of the State Lottery, with the Royal Arms, and, on the other side, Richardson and Goodluck's Lottery Office. (The second partner was no doubt mythical.) In many of these Lotteries the prizes were high. There was a public Penny Lottery, in which the first prize was a thousand pounds, equivalent in spending value to about three thousand of our money. But one of the State Lotteries went far beyond that. Its first prize was a thousand pounds per annum for thirty-two years. Tickets were ten

pounds each. These State Lotteries drew vast sums of money to the Treasury; sometimes indeed they almost covered the cost of one of the many little wars of the period. The drawing of numbers from the wheel was done in the Guildhall by two boys from Christ's Hospital, and the procession of the wheel from Somerset House to Guildhall, escorted by a troop of Life Guards, drew an immense holiday crowd to the route. It seems a pity that 1826 should have seen the last of them; they might have helped to ease our present burden of rates and taxes.

A feature of street life peculiar to the first half of the century was the touts, or barkers as they were called, who stood around the Fleet Market and the Fleet Prison, inviting couples to walk in and be married by one of the parsons in prison for debt. The fee was much below that of the regular church—twenty shillings, ten shillings, or a few bottles of gin. They did so well that at one time they were marrying between five and six hundred couples a month. The business at last received official notice, and in 1754 the Clandestine Marriages Act was passed, making marriage, except in an authorised church, illegal.

All sorts of people were married at the Fleet and, in a similar way, at the Mint, in Southwark; rich and poor, old and young, sailors and prostitutes, fortune-hunters and heiresses, young boys and elderly women, and runaway couples of good family. Certain men found a profitable line in being married to single women who were pursued for debt. A married woman could not be imprisoned for debt; the husband was responsible for all debts. So the parson was paid to fake his register, and enter the marriage at an earlier date than the actual ceremony. The woman could then produce the certificate and show that at the time she incurred the debt she was married, and therefore could claim immunity. The husband, of course, gave a false name and address, and she would say that he had deserted her. At the taverns round the Fleet there was always a "stock" bridegroom who had been married in this way to numbers of women.

The touts worked day and night outside the prison, or at the taverns within the liberties—many of which had a room fitted up as a chapel. Their usual invitation to any passing couple was "Will you please to walk in and be married?" or "Do you want the parson, sir?" No questions were asked; no banns required; marriage could be made at five minutes' notice; and many a young couple, confronted by a parson ready to join them for a few shillings, got married on impulse an hour after they had first met. Signs also were hung out—Marriages Performed Within or Cheap Weddings. Sometimes the touts were bullies, and would terrorise young people into entering their chapels, or actually hustle them in, and fight other touts for possession of them. A number of the marriages were not entered in the register at all, if the bridegroom desired it and paid an extra fee. In this way young sparks often "married" trusting Lydias and Letitias, who, after a week or two, found

themselves thrown off by the "husband" of their Fleet Prison wedding, with no means of proving their status.

A picture of the freedom of a debtors' prison is given by Smollett in *Sir Launcelot Greaves*. This particular prison was the King's Bench, which stood where Borough Road now joins the Borough.

> The knight having bespoke dinner at a tavern in the Borough, was, together with Captain Crowe, conducted to the prison of the King's Bench, which is situated in St. George's Fields, about a mile from the end of Westminster Bridge, and appears like a neat little regular town, consisting of one street, surrounded by a very high wall, including an open piece of ground, which may be termed a garden, where the prisoners take the air, and amuse themselves with a variety of diversions. Except the entrance, where the turnkeys keep watch and ward, there is nothing in the place that looks like a jail, or bears the least color of restraint. The street is crowded with passengers. Tradesmen of all kinds here exercise their different professions. Hawkers of all sorts are admitted to call and vend their wares as in any open street of London. Here are butchers' stands, chandlers' shops, a surgery, a tap-house, well frequented, and a public kitchen, in which provisions are dressed for all the prisoners gratis, at the expense of the publican. Here the voice of misery never complains; and, indeed, little else is to be heard but the sounds of mirth and jollity. At the farther end of the street, on the right hand, is a little paved court, leading to a separate building, consisting of twelve large apartments, called state rooms, well furnished and fitted up for the reception of the better sort of Crown prisoners; and on the other side of the street, facing a separate division of ground, called the common side, is a range of rooms occupied by prisoners of the lowest order, who share the profits of a begging-box, and are maintained by this practice, and some established funds of charity. . . .
>
> Under the auspices of Mr. Norton he made a tour of the prison, and, in particular, visited the kitchen, where he saw a number of spits loaded with a variety of provision, consisting of butchers' meat, poultry, and game. He could not help expressing his astonishment, with uplifted hands, and congratulating himself in secret upon his being a member of that community which had provided such a comfortable asylum for the unfortunate. His ejaculation was interrupted by a tumultuous noise in the street; and Mr. Norton, declaring he was sent for to the lodge, consigned our hero to the care of one Mr. Felton. . . . When Sir Launcelot asked the cause of that uproar, he told him that it was the prelude to a boxing-match between two of the prisoners, to be decided in the ground or garden of the place.

A more cheerful picture than we could draw of any English prison to-day, whether a convict prison or a prison for rate-defaulters. It may be taken as accurate, since Smollett himself served a term in that same prison for libel, and in it wrote the book from which the passage is taken.

By the middle of the century, London streets had assumed a new dignity of appearance. The overhanging gables and timbering of

medieval London began to go out, and the main streets and the new squares were built up with those flat but comely shops and houses that we know as Georgian. In 1760 all the gates of the City, which had been such hindrances to traffic, were taken down, excepting only Temple Bar. New roads were made leading out of the town, notably that road from Islington to Paddington (now Pentonville Road, Euston Road,

Gracechurch Street in the Eighteenth Century

and Marylebone Road) which was then known as *the* New Road. It was made chiefly to enable drovers from the west to get their flocks to Smithfield without congesting the city streets, and also to facilitate the movement of troops in time of emergency.

About the same time an order was made that every street, at either end, should bear its name, clearly painted; and a little later began the numbering of houses. Before that date, most houses were distinguished, like public-houses to-day, by a sign. Pavements of Aberdeen granite, with a kerb, replaced in parts of the town the old cobble-stones flat with the road; and the lighting was taken over from the contractors by

43 St. Martin's-le-Grand, looking to St. Paul's

From a drawing by Thomas Girtin (1815)

44 Hanover Square towards the close of the Eighteenth Century

Engraved by Pollard & Jukes after E. Dayes

the Corporation itself. Under the old arrangement the lamps were extinguished at midnight. Under the new arrangement they were kept alight from sunset to sunrise. The principal and most expensive shopping streets were Ludgate Street, Cheapside, the Strand, and Pall Mall. Most shops were lighted at night by lines and circlets of candles. They kept open till nine o'clock.

But with all these improvements, the streets still were not kept clean. A pamphleteer of the time draws attention to the muck-heap at the back of the Royal Exchange, which had been untouched for a year, except by additions; and to muck-heaps in certain minor streets which were becoming little hills. There was a law against shooting dust into the streets, but the public gave it a literal interpretation. Anything that was not dust they continued to shoot anywhere out of doors. If it was originally dust, they complied with the law by soaking it. There were other nuisances which a complainant enumerated:

> He would wish to see the butchers' boys, who gallop through the streets of London, punished for so doing, or at least their horses seized for the use of the poor of the parish in which they offend; for though a poor man's life may not be worth preserving, his limbs may be of use to him while he crawls upon earth.
>
> Brewers starting their butts in the day-time, he considers as an intolerable nuisance.
>
> Ruinous houses ought to be pulled down, because they may as well tumble upon the head of an alderman as upon that of a cobbler.
>
> A regulation in Smithfield market, he thinks, ought to take place, because a mad ox may as well gore the lady of a knight-baronet as a poor oyster wench.
>
> That cheesemongers should not set out their butter and cheese so near the edge of their shop-windows, nor put their firkins in the path-ways, by which many a good coat and silk gown may be spoiled; as by advertising in the papers his shop will be sufficiently known, without carrying home the shop-bill upon our clothes.
>
> Ladders, pieces of timber, etc., should by no means be suffered to be carried upon men's shoulders within the posts of this city, because, by a sudden stop, they may as well poke out the eye of a rich man as that of a poor one.
>
> Chair-men, as they are a kind of human nags, ought to amble without-side the posts as well as other brutes.
>
> It is needless for ladies of a certain cast to patrol the streets at noon-day with a bundle in one hand, as they carry an evident sign of their profession in their eye.
>
> Barbers and chimney-sweepers have no right by charter to rub against a person well-dressed, and then offer him satisfaction by single combat.

The chief slums at that time were the districts of Drury Lane, St. Giles, Southwark, Clerkenwell, and parts of Westminster just beyond the Abbey. St. Giles may be seen in Hogarth's Gin Lane; a picture that is confirmed by writers of the period, who speak of it as a rookery of squalor, rags, drunkenness, and every kind of savagery. The watch

in all parts of town was still perfunctory. A visitation of the watch-houses and patrol posts of Westminster, carried out by the High Constable, produced a report from which these items are taken:

> *St. Margaret's.* Three quarters past eleven. Constable came after I was there, house-man and beadle on duty; 41 watchmen, with St. John's united, at eightpence-halfpenny per night. . . . Was obliged to take a soldier into custody for being out of his quarters and very insolent, with several more soldiers in the streets at twelve o'clock; called out "Watch!" but could get no assistance.
>
> *St. Clement's Danes.* Past 3. No constable on duty, found a watchman there at a great distance from his beat; from thence went to the night-cellar facing Arundel Street in the Strand, which is in the Duchy, and there found four of St. Clement's watchmen drinking.
>
> *St. Mary-le-Strand.* No attendance, having only two constables which only attend every other night; three watchmen, Duchy included, at one shilling each; a very disorderly cellar near the new church for selling saloop, etc., to very loose and suspected persons.

The middle of the century was a period of great commercial prosperity and imperial expansion. This was reflected in the obesity of the individual. Both men and women of middle-age were of gross, almost dropsical figure, especially those from east of Temple Bar. Hogarth, and the minor artist-lampoonists contemporary with him—and later, Rowlandson—make such particular play with the fatness of the citizens that the type must have been common to almost every street. The prints of those artists emphasise another aspect of their London—its racket. Hogarth's pictures, whether of high or low life, fairly shout at you. You can hear the people talking at the tops of their voices, and can feel the large clumsy movements, the crush and the press caused by hooped skirts, large bellies, swollen legs, and stiff coats. The new street entertainment that arrived about this time could only have been given in the more secluded squares. In the crack and clatter of an ordinary street the elfin tones of the musical-glasses would never have been heard.

It is curious that Austin Dobson, who knew as much about eighteenth-century London as any man who had not lived in it could know, should have stretched poetic license so far as to invent for his verse that "old-world" London of ease, leisure, and delicacy; all minuet, pavane, and harpsichord. That London gets no confirmation from those who were living in it; not from Addison and Swift, nor from Hogarth and Fielding, nor from Walpole and Sheridan. One needs to set it against some contemporary sketch, such as that of Smollett's Matthew Bramble:

> It must be allowed, indeed, for the credit of the present age, that London and Westminster are much better paved and lighted than they were formerly. The new streets are spacious, regular, and airy, and the houses generally

convenient. . . . But notwithstanding these improvements, the capital is become an overgrown monster, which, like a dropsical head, will in time leave the body and extremities without nourishment and support. The absurdity will appear in its full force when we consider that one-sixth part of the natives of this whole extensive kingdom is crowded within the bills of mortality. . . . The tide of luxury has swept all the inhabitants from the open country; the poorest squire, as well as the richest peer, must have his house in town, and make a figure with an extraordinary number of domestics. The plowboys, cowherds, and lower hinds, are debauched and seduced by the appearance and discourse of those coxcombs in livery, when they make their summer excursions. They desert their dirt and drudgery, and swarm up to London, in hopes of getting into service, where they can live luxuriously, and wear fine clothes, without being obliged to work. . . .

There are many causes that contribute to the daily increase of this enormous mass; but they may be all resolved into the grand source of luxury and corruption. About five and twenty years ago, very few even of the most opulent citizens of London kept any equipage, or even any servants in livery. . . . At present, every trader in any degree of credit, every broker and attorney, maintains a couple of footmen, a coachman and postillion. . . . Every clerk, apprentice, and even waiter of a tavern or coffee-house, maintains a gelding by himself, or in partnership, and assumes the air and apparel of a *petit maître*. The gayest places of public entertainment are filled with fashionable figures, which, upon inquiry, will be found to be journeymen tailors, serving-men, and Abigails, disguised like their betters.

In short, there is no distinction or subordination left. The different departments of life are jumbled together—the hod-carrier, the low mechanic, the tapster, the publican, the shopkeeper, the pettifogger, the citizen, and courtier, all tread upon the kibes of one another, actuated by the demons of profligacy and licentiousness, they are seen everywhere, rambling, riding, rolling, rushing, jostling, mixing, bouncing, cracking, and crashing in one vile ferment of stupidity and corruption—all is tumult and hurry. . . . The foot passengers run along as if they were pursued by bailiffs. The porters and chairmen trot with their burdens. People who keep their own equipages drive through the streets at full speed. . . . The hackney-coachmen make their horses smoke, and the pavement shakes under them; and I have actually seen a waggon pass through Piccadilly at the hand-gallop.

That eighteenth century of supposed grace and leisure had almost as many riots and executions as any before it. In the first half of the century there were the Mug House Riots and Calves' Head Club Riots. Then the execution of the rebels of 1715 and 1745, the Gin Riots of 1736, the Weavers' Riots in Spitalfields, the Wilkes-and-Liberty Riots, the execution of Dr. Dodd for forgery, and Earl Ferrers for murder, the Gordon Riots, and a whole string of victories to celebrate with bonfires, illuminations, and fireworks, together with the window-smashing of any house that was not illuminated.

The Mug Houses were tavern-clubs of Whigs. One of the principal of these was in Salisbury Court, and its members at one time became

so noisy in drinking their unpopular toasts that they brought a hostile crowd about them. The members shouted from the window a few choice insults, whereupon the crowd attacked the house, and threatened to pull it down. The landlord closed and barred his doors, and for a time the house was in a state of siege. A day or so later, the crowd gathered again, and the landlord now came to the window with a blunderbuss, and threatened, if they came any nearer, to fire. They continued to advance, whereupon he fired and instantly killed their leader, a young apprentice. The crowd then attacked the house in earnest, howling for the landlord's body. He managed somehow to escape by a back way, and the crowd contented itself with smashing all the furniture in the house and making a bonfire of it. The Mayor and sheriffs arrived, and ordered the crowd to go home. The crowd refused. The Riot Act was read. The crowd still refused. The Mayor then sent to Westminster for a troop of soldiers, and when these arrived they charged the crowd, dispersed them, and arrested, at random, the first five they could seize. The landlord was tried for murder, and found guilty only of manslaughter. The five members of the crowd, who had killed nobody, were with little justice sent to Tyburn and hanged.

The Calves' Head story has many variations, one of which speaks of a bleeding calf's head thrown from the window of the club on the anniversary of the execution of Charles I, to the toast of Damnation to the Stuarts. But there is an account by one who was present at the club, which makes the silly business much milder. Lord Middlesex was a member, and in a letter to Joseph Spence, of the *Anecdotes*, gives what has the air of being the true story. Eight of the members met at Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, on January 30th. They dined, and were very free with the bottle. One of them, unnamed, but more tight than the rest, happened to go to the window, and saw a small bonfire, made by some boys. The bright idea occurred to him, as it might after the fourth bottle, that things were a little dull; why shouldn't they also have a bonfire? So he rang for the waiter, and ordered Bonfire for eight. The waiter, regarding an order as an order, at once got some logs, and made a huge bonfire just outside the street door. By the time this had drawn a crowd, one or two of the company had sobered a little, and remembering what day it was, and that many Londoners, though loyal to the new house, still respected the Stuarts, suggested going on to the balcony and placating the crowd by drinking toasts. They accordingly drank the King, Queen, Royal Family, mentioning no names, and had got that far when a large stone was thrown. This was the beginning of a bombardment. All the windows were smashed, stones came hurtling through the open casements, and the sober two or three had to endure not only those stones, but the swords of the more drunken, who insisted on going out to fight the mob, and threatened to run through those who tried to restrain them. This went on

45 Temple Bar in the late Eighteenth Century

From a drawing by J. W. Archer

46 Near the Bank, 1781

From an aquatint by Thomas Malton

for over an hour, when at last a magistrate and constables arrived, and dispersed the crowd. That, says Lord Middlesex, is all that happened; there was no calf's head.

The Gin Riots arose from an Act restricting the sale of Blue Ruin. So unpopular was the measure that troops patrolled the streets, and detachments of the Guards were camped in Hyde Park and in Covent Garden. Riots broke out in all parts of the town. Windows of the houses of members of Parliament were smashed, fires were started, and bands of men and women marched through the streets with a battle-cry of No Gin, No King. But there was no loss of life; the presence of the military kept the crowds within bounds, and after a few days the agitation faded out. Then the gin-palaces came out with new, and equally potent synthetic drinks. Among these were some with fancy names that seem to have been forerunners of some of the cocktails of to-day—Towrow, Last Shift, Ladies' Delight, Cuckold's Comfort, Bung-Eye.

After the execution of the leading rebels of the '45 at Tower Hill, the heads of some of them were exposed on Temple Bar. Walpole has a ghastly-comic note on this. He passed that way one morning, and found hawkers moving among the staring crowd, hiring out spy-glasses at a halfpenny a look. Those executions were not only the last executions on Tower Hill, but the last beheadings in England. That of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, was the very last, and on that occasion he was not the only one to die. Special stands had been built, so that the quality could have a clear and comfortable view. One of these, holding a thousand people, collapsed into splinters, and twelve of the company were killed.

The Wilkes-and-Liberty Riots and the Gordon Riots are recorded in every school history-reader. The Spitalfields Silk Weavers Riots, which began as a wages dispute, are perhaps not so well known. Nor the disturbance that arose when the weavers, finding their product injured by the importation of cheap calicoes, made personal war on all girls and women wearing calicoes. They began by throwing acid on their clothes, and went on to tearing off their gowns in public. The police were unable to put them down, and after some days the military were brought from the Tower. Even then they were not subdued until the soldiers actually fired upon them and killed some half-dozen.

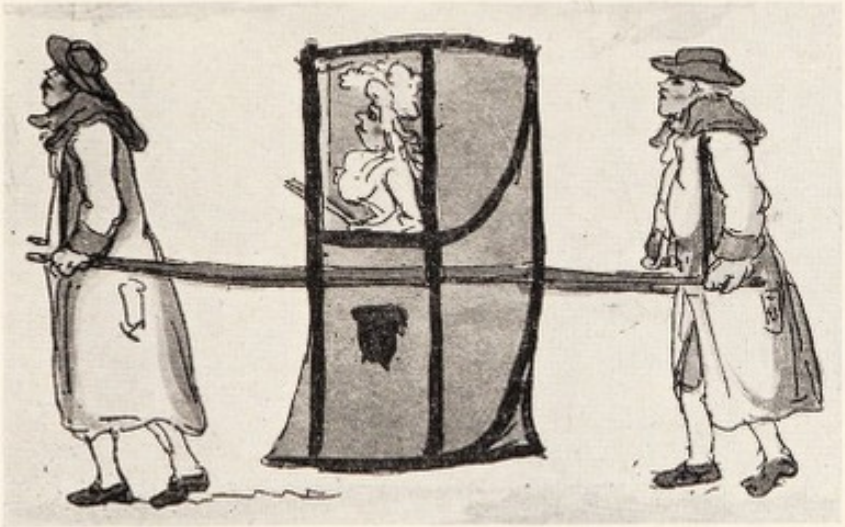
The Wages Riot, a more serious affair, began when one or two of the masters, having agreed to the standard rate, tried to cut it by a halfpenny here and a halfpenny there. The workers first marched to the premises of these masters and destroyed their looms. They then followed the usual method in those days of expressing contempt; they made effigies of the masters, and hanged them and burned them. They then instituted a sort of protection racket; they demanded that all owners of looms should contribute to a Weavers' Fund at the rate of

four shillings a loom. They went about collecting this tax, fully armed. Malcolm, in his *Anecdotes of Eighteenth-Century London*, quotes one of their demand-notes to a loom-master: "Mr. Hill—you are desired to send the full donation of all your looms to the Dolphin, in Cock Lane. This from the conquering and bold defiance, to be levied four shillings per loom." The atmosphere of the Dolphin seems to have got into the second sentence. Mr. Hill took this to the magistrates. The magistrates granted a search-warrant against the Dolphin premises, and a party of police and soldiers went in the evening to execute it. The men were assembled in strength in a back room, and a number of masters were there, handing over the sums demanded, in the hope of saving their looms.

Directly the searchers appeared at the door, before they had announced their purpose, or made any move, the racketeers drew their pistols and fired. One soldier was instantly killed, and one or two of the police were injured. The men then forced their way through them, got out by a back door, and escaped by a ladder over the roofs. But hue-and-cry had been raised, and during the night four of them were taken, and hanged.

When there was no other excitement to be had, there was always some foreigner to be baited. A Frenchman walking the streets was in danger not only of insult but sometimes of assault. One of these, in an account of his London visit, picks out as the most insulting the Chairmen, the Street Porters, and sailors. He complains that his French appearance brought him at every street corner a stream of abuse, in which the favourite terms were French Dog and French Bastard. He mentions that his servant, going to Tyburn to see an execution, narrowly escaped being himself strung up to the Tree. After the execution, two or three of the crowd set upon him, hustling him here and there, pulling his coat-tails and his peruke. The hangman, returning in his cart, joined in the sport with his whip. For a time he was surrounded and cornered, and only escaped when three other Frenchmen saw his plight, and attacked the crowd with cudgels and got him into a tavern. The narrator adds that a Frenchman, when attacked in this way, can always get the crowd with him if he singles out one of his assailants and fights him with his fists. The crowd will leave them alone to fight it out, and if the Frenchman floors his opponent he will then be chaired by the very crowd who were attacking him.

He speaks of passing through Seven Dials on a day when a Frenchman, one of a French colony in that quarter, was condemned, for some offence, to stand in the pillory. The pillory was there, and the crowd was there, with ammunition suitable to the occasion. But the authorities had postponed, or respited, the punishment, and the foreign offender did not appear. This, of course, angered the crowd, so that they used



47, 48 Late Eighteenth-century Street Scenes
From Rowlandson's "Outlines"

49 A Blind Musician in a London Square

50 Traffic at the Elephant and Castle, *ca.* 1800

From a drawing by Thomas Rowlandson

their ammunition on all who passed that way, whether on foot or in coaches; "and threw at them dirt, rotten eggs, dead dogs, and all sorts of trash and ordure, which they had provided to pelt the unhappy wretch, according to custom. Their fury fell chiefly upon the hackney-coaches, the drivers of which they forced to salute them with their whips and their hats, and to cry *huzza*; which word is a signal for rallying in all public frays."

Other foreigners who were subject to insult and ragging—they were then regarded as foreigners—were the Scots. Smollett in *Roderick Random* has a little scene showing the Londoner's contempt for the Sawnies:

> At last, being almost in despair of finding me, he resolved to ask everybody he met in the street, if perchance anyone could give him information about me; and actually put his resolution in practice, in spite of the scoffs, curses, and reproaches with which he was answered; until a blacksmith's 'prentice, seeing him stop a porter with a burden on his back, and hearing his question, for which he received a hearty curse, called to him, and asked if the person he inquired after was not a Scotchman? Strap replied with great eagerness, "Yes, and had on a brown coat with long skirts." "The same," said the blacksmith, "I saw him pass by an hour ago." "Did you so?" cried Strap, rubbing his hands, "Odd! I am very glad of that—which way went he?" "Towards Tyburn in a cart," said he; "if you make good speed, you may get thither time enough to see him hanged." This piece of wit incensed my friend to such a degree, that he called the blacksmith scoundrel, and protested he would fight him for half a farthing. "No, no," said the other, stripping, "I'll have none of your money—you Scotchmen seldom carry any about with you—but I'll fight you for love." There was a ring immediately formed by the mob; and Strap finding he could not get off honourably without fighting, at the same time burning with resentment against his adversary, quitted his clothes to the care of the multitude, and the battle began with great violence on the side of Strap, who in a few minutes exhausted his breath and spirits on his patient antagonist, who sustained the assault with great coolness, till, finding the barber quite spent, he returned the blows he had lent him with such interest that Strap, after having received three falls on the hard stones, gave out, and allowed the blacksmith to be the better man.
>
> The victory being thus decided, it was proposed to adjourn to a cellar hard by, and drink friends. But when my friend began to gather up his clothes, he perceived that some honest person or other had made free with his shirt, neckcloth, hat, and wig, which were carried off; and probably his coat and waistcoat would have met with the same fate, had they been worth stealing. It was in vain for him to make a noise, which only yielded mirth to the spectators; he was fain to get off in this manner, which he accomplished with much difficulty, and appeared before me all besmeared with blood and dirt.

The end of the century brought various small changes in the life of the streets. After 1783, there were no more executions at Tyburn, and no more processions up Holborn Hill. Executions took place, still in

public, on scaffolds outside Newgate and one or two other London prisons. Hackney-coaches multiplied, and chairs went out of fashion. London continued to grow, eastward, northward, westward, and south; villas and "country-boxes" dotted the fields of Holloway and Highgate, Stockwell, Dalston, and Fulham. Under its own impetus, the Industrial Age was going ahead. Fashionable life took on a new tone, set by the Prince of Wales and his circle. There had been, a few years earlier, a new type of beau, who strutted in the streets and the parks in exaggerated clothes and with Italianate attitudes and mannerisms. This type was another of those social dilettantes that had been, and continued to be, a part of the London scene, beginning with the Gallant, and going on to the Coxcomb, the Fop, the Pretty Fellow, the Spark, the Blood, and this new type which was lampooned as the Macaroni. It did not last long; it was displaced by the figure that appeared with the Prince of Wales—the Dandy. He, too, was to have successors, and the nineteenth century was to see the Swell, the Masher, and the Johnny, and the twentieth century was to see what may be the last manifestation of that spirit—the Nut.

Of all these the Dandy was the most serious; he held the scene for the longest period, and made the greatest impression. He had a philosophy of clothes and manners unknown to Chesterfield and his school, who merely dressed to conform with custom; or to the Coxcomb or Fop, who was finicky rather than fastidious, and had no reasons for his over-dressing. The Dandy was not, like the Macaroni, a figure of fun. There was sense in his cult, and during the latter years of the old century and up to almost the middle of the nineteenth, he added some dignity to the London streets.

But the London streets at this time saw something more original than the Dandy. They saw a portent of things to come; something that marked not only the end of the eighteenth century, but the end of an age; a monstrous thing that was the herald of a revolution in the way of living. A few alert people had seen it coming. One of them was Erasmus Darwin:

> Soon shall thy arm, unconquered steam, afar
> Drag the slow barge, or urge the rapid car.

And then it came. At the end of the century a clumsy, snorting miracle—imperfect, impracticable, but revealing the idea—this miracle came to astonish London eyes and perhaps affright London minds—the carriage moving without horses.

51 "The Hall of Infamy, *alias* the Oyster Saloon in Bridges Street, or New Covent Garden Hell"

An illustration by Robert Cruickshank to "The English Spy" (1825)

PART FOUR

Corinthian and Victorian

THE OPENING of a new century shows little change in manners and customs, or in the everyday life of a city's streets. A century is an arbitrary measurement of time. The march of events does not take its pace and its turns from the calendar; man does not live by dates. Epochs and ages are the true measure of his affairs, and the events and changes that make and mark an epoch and an age seldom arrive at that time when man, without reason, is filled with hope of new good things because a new counting of one hundred years is beginning.

So the street life of London in the first ten years of the nineteenth century was little different from the street life of the preceding decade. Its familiar features were still what they had been—hackney-coaches, private carriages, calashes, phaetons, barouches, post-chaises, brilliant stage-coaches and smart, but austere, mail-coaches. The steam-coach was to wait twenty-seven years before it was seriously workable. The familiar figures, in much the same dress, were still the hawker, the ballad-singer, the postman (now a Twopenny Postman, with bell), the lamplighter, and the night-watchman.

A closely observed description of the London scene at about that time is given by Wordsworth in *The Prelude*. He describes the main streets and their din, their lordly shops, their display of dazzling wares, and their cosmopolitan crowds:

> . . . The mighty concourse I surveyed
> With no unthinking mind, well pleased to note
> Among the crowd all specimens of man,
> Through all the colours which the sun bestows,
> And every character of form and face:
> The Swede, the Russian; from the genial south,
> The Frenchman, and the Spaniard; from remote
> America, the Hunter-Indian; Moors,
> Malays, Lascars, the Tartar, the Chinese,
> And Negro ladies in white muslin gowns. . . .

He then turns to the quieter side-streets:

> . . . A raree-show is here,
> With children gathered round; another street
> Presents a company of dancing dogs,
> Or dromedary, with an antic pair

Of monkeys on his back; a minstrel band
Of Savoyards; or, single and alone,
An English ballad-singer. Private courts,
Gloomy as coffins, and unsightly lanes
Thrilled by some female vendor's scream, belike
The very shrillest of all London cries,
May then entangle our impatient steps. . . .
Here files of ballads dangle from dead walls;
Advertisements, of giant size, from high
Press forward, in all colours, on the sight . . .
As on the broadening causeway we advance,
Behold, turned upwards, a face hard and strong
In lineaments, and red with over-toil.
'Tis one encountered here and everywhere;
A travelling cripple, by the trunk cut short,
And stumping on his arms. In sailor's garb
Another lies at length, beside a range
Of well-formed characters, with chalk inscribed
Upon the smooth flat stones. . . .

Now homeward through the thickening hubbub where
See, among less distinguishable shapes,
The begging scavenger, with hat in hand;
The Italian, as he thrids his way with care,
Steadying, far-seen, a frame of images
Upon his head; with basket at his breast
The Jew; the stately and slow-moving Turk,
With freight of slipper piled beneath his arm.

A street-sight peculiar to the first quarter of the century was the saloop-stall. This was to be found at odd corners all over the town. It was a small kitchen-table on wheels, with cupboards, and fitted with an urn for the making of the saloop—an infusion of sassafras, sugar and milk, sold at three-halfpence a bowl. Its price made it a popular drink with many workers. Tea and coffee were too expensive for them; and it was not everybody who liked the stronger breakfast of Early Purl or Dog's Nose. Lamb speaks of it as a specially favourite drink with the little chimney-sweep boys, who would hover round the stalls and, when they could not buy it, would sniff its fumes. There was a shop by Fleet Bridge where it was sold, but mostly it was taken in the open air at all hours of day and night:

> Now albeit Mr. Read boasteth, not without reason, that his is the Only Salopian House; yet be it known to thee, reader—if thou art one who keepest what are called good hours, thou art haply ignorant of the fact—he hath a race of industrious imitators, who from stalls, and under open sky, dispense the same savoury mess to humbler customers, at that dead time of the dawn, when (as extremes meet) the rake, reeling home from his midnight cups, and

the hard-handed artisan leaving his bed to resume the premature labours of the day, jostle, not unfrequently to the manifest disconcerting of the former,

A Legless Jewish Mendicant of Petticoat Lane. By J. T. Smith (1817)

for the honours of the pavement. . . . The rake, who wisheth to dissipate his o'ernight vapours in more grateful coffee, curses the ungenial fume, as he passeth; but the artisan stops to taste, and blesses the fragrant breakfast.

This is *saloop*, the precocious herb-woman's darling—the delight of the

early gardener, who transports his smoking cabbages by break of day from Hammersmith to Covent Garden's famed piazzas—the delight, and oh! I fear, too often the envy, of the unpennied sweep.

Another street-corner feature of the poorer quarters was the Early Breakfast stall, which again was merely a kitchen-table. The coffee-stall that we know had not then arrived, and when it did arrive it did not model itself on the Early Breakfast stall. It went back five hundred years, and took for its design the earliest form of shop.

One of the Prime Bits of Gig of the all-night Bucks, successors to the Mohocks, was to overturn these stalls and wreck the owner's livelihood. These louts, most of them members of the aristocracy, and many of them without the excuse of youth for their behaviour, took their manners from the least respectable of the lower orders—boxers, gin-shop keepers, cadgers, horse-copers. Pierce Egan fixed the type some years later in his Corinthian Tom and Jerry Hawthorn and Bob Logic. The behaviour of the lower orders generally was as bad as that of the Bucks; also, infected perhaps by events in France, they were showing signs of getting uppish towards their betters. A writer of the period presents a picture of the workers of the lowest class out for the day:

Their progress through the streets is marked by impetuosity and a constant exertion of strength, making the peaceable citizen with his wife and children retire to the entrance of a house, or cross the kennel, in order to avoid being overturned. Their conversation consists of violent disputes and execrations, peculiar to this branch of the great human tree, accompanied by occasional observations on the Females who unfortunately pass them.

Behaviour of that sort, which replaced the fighting and bloodshed of earlier times, was the mark of that type throughout the century. Persiflage, repartee, and crude gestures were the regular accompaniment of the evening promenade in the more popular streets. Crude gestures, indeed, have always been a part of the London scene. In Tudor times the invitation to quarrel or combat was giving by a biting of the thumb; in the middle eighteenth century, by cocking the hat; later, by a jerk of the thumb over the left shoulder, implying illegitimate birth; in the early nineteenth century, by the thumb to the nose, and within living memory by two fingers jerked upwards.

In the first few years of the century, the tea-gardens, which earlier had been welcomed as placid diversions for the common people, were found by the pious to be sinks of immorality. The writer quoted above is emphatic on the wickedness which they countenanced and bred, though his evidences hardly bear him out:

A few miserable bushes tortured into arbours veil in some degree the hateful exhibitions at these places, the licensed receptacles for mental degradation,

> receptacles for young men and young women, who are seated on benches before tables covered with *liquor and tobacco pipes*! What can be expected from these assemblages but the inevitable consequences, drunkenness and debauchery? Their effects are observable whenever any public occurrence assembles the people of London; the whole Civil Power of which cannot restrain many enormities committed on those occasions. Under an idea of whim and pleasantry they perpetrate many scandalous actions, amusing themselves by throwing some filthy thing into the thickest part of a crowd, or driving forward till they half suffocate those before them. Whenever an illumination takes place, their turbulence becomes seriously mischievous by the firing of pistols and throwing of squibs and crackers.

But whenever the moralist saw the lower orders behaving with the license of their boisterous betters, he always raised shocked hands which were not raised to similar behaviour in the nobility.

Much of the talk in the streets at this time centred on the fear of Napoleon which, first aroused by his actions in 1797, was carried into the new century. The windows of bookshops, of print-sellers, and of taverns were filled with cartoons and caricatures of "Nap" and "Boney," showing what Britannia was going to do to him when she got him. It is curious to note how dictators and tyrants run to pattern. The world's case against the Kaiser in 1915, and against Hitler in 1939, is almost identical with the indictment of Napoleon in a contemporary broadsheet. This charges Napoleon with having destroyed the faith of Christendom; with having murdered women and children; with ignoring the laws of civilised warfare; with murdering his own comrades; with destroying the Representative System; with betraying the Polish Legion; with attacking the British Freedom of the Press and Freedom of Speech by almost ordering the British Government to proceed against those British newspapers which were attacking him and his doings.

But with all the John Bullishness of the caricatures and the lampoons, they had a touch of shouting defiance which did not match the pretended contempt for this bogy. If he and his Froggies were really so contemptible; if one Englishman could really account for five Frenchmen, one wonders why troops and volunteers and pressed-men should be called out in such numbers that 1,500 were encamped in St. George's Fields; 1,000 at Blackfriars; 1,000 in St. Paul's Churchyard; 1,000 at the Royal Exchange; 1,000 at Tower Hill; 1,200 at the Foundling Hospital; and 2,700 in Hyde Park. The Government was rather more realist than the cartoonists.

The occasion anyway electrified the town. It gave the people something to look at, and the newspapers of the time ran long accounts of the crowds that flocked to the parks to see the troops. Each district had its volunteers—the Bloomsbury Volunteers, the Chelsea Volunteers, the Clerkenwell Volunteers, and so on—who performed exercises and manœuvres in the fields around their districts. It is said that the targets

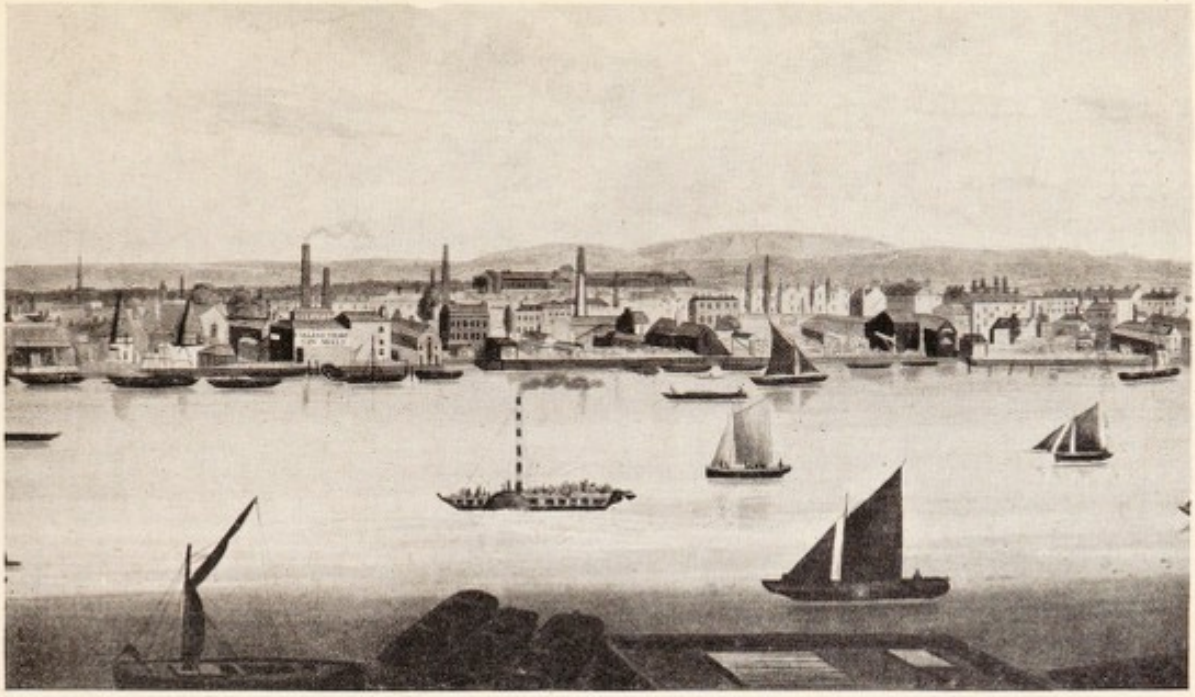
for their shooting practice were wooden figures of "Boney," and that in this practice they used seven tons of powder a week. Larwood, in his *Story of the London Parks*, says that the newspapers gave far more space to the drilling and manœuvres of the volunteers, their review by the King, and their sham-fights, than they gave to the dispatches reporting the movements of the actual army against the French.

The same year gave the crowd something else to look at—an isolated event that passed within a few minutes, and was probably regarded as of little significance, though it was to mean much to later ages in both the saving and the taking of life. A step towards the conquest of the air had been made with the balloon, but it was at that time a machine in which only foolhardy acrobats risked their lives. The dangers surrounding a balloon trip were many. It was at the mercy of every wind. A rent in the fabric could capsize it. In a real storm it was as good as lost. Many a balloon, caught by an unexpected storm, had disappeared, and its crew had been no more heard of. But in that year a Frenchman in London took a long chance with his own life, and demonstrated that one danger of ballooning could be conquered. He went up in his balloon to a height of 8,000 feet, left his balloon, and descended upon St. Pancras by a new-fangled contraption called a parachute.

We have had much talk in our own time about invasion by air, and it has been discussed as a modern development. But it is not so new —at least the idea of it—as people think. They have forgotten, or may not have heard, that in 1803 the English were facing that very possibility. The story spread that Napoleon, tired of waiting at Boulogne for a favourable chance of slipping past the English Navy, had conceived a plan of transporting an army to the outskirts of London by a thousand balloons.

One of the sights of the London of that time that always drew a crowd of loungers was the setting-out of the night-mails from Lombard Street and Piccadilly. De Quincey speaks of this as a spectacle of beauty:

> The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriages and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity —but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses—were what might first have fixed the attention. Every carriage, on every morning of the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination—wheels, axles, linchpins, pole, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned, every horse had been groomed, with as much rigour as if they belonged to a private gentleman; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. . . . Every moment you hear the thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses! can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir!—what sea-like ferment!—what a thundering of wheels!—what a trampling of hoofs!—what



52 The Age of Steam: part of a Panorama of the Thames in 1820
by Samuel Leigh

53 An Exhibition of Steam Traction by Trevithick's "Catch-me-who-can"
on the Site of Euston Square, 1809
From a drawing by Thomas Rowlandson

54 "Exterior of Fishmongers' Hall: a Regular Breakdown"

55 Coaches leaving White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly

56 "The Great Actor, or Mr. Punch in all his Glory"
(Leicester Square)

Cruikshank plates from "Life in London" and "The English Spy"

a sounding of trumpets!—what farewell cheers—what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulation. . . .

On the King's birthday, all the coaches used for the Royal Mail made a grand procession to St. James's Palace or to Carlton House, with the Twopenny Postmen on ponies bringing up the rear. They assembled at noon, at Millbank, each coach polished to dazzling perfection, each guard and coachman in brilliant new scarlet coats, and the horses in new harness. The procession usually went first to pay its respects to the Postmaster-General of the day. It then went on to the royal palace, when the King made an appearance and took the salute. Barrels of beer were provided by His Majesty, and each coachman and guard received a pint pot. The senior coachman then stood up, took off his hat, raised his pot to the King, and gave the royal toast, which was honoured with three times three by his colleagues. The pots were then refilled, so long as the barrels held out; and the procession toured the town, passed the General Post Office, and returned to its starting-point.

About 1810 the town was made a little brighter by the new gas-light. Experiments had been made some years earlier with coal-gas for indoor lighting, at shops in Piccadilly and the Strand; and just before 1810 it was used for street lighting in parts of Pall Mall and Whitecross Street. From then onward it became the general light for all main streets and made the streets much safer for the public. It must also have brought something like a shock to people accustomed to feel their way under the weak oil-lamps, which were always being blown out. In 1803 an "improved" oil-lamp was introduced, with reflectors, and even this made an illumination which startled a writer in the *Times*, quoted by John Ashton, the social historian: "notwithstanding the wetness of the evening, and other unfavourable circumstances, we were both pleased and surprised to find that part of the street illuminated with at least twice the quantity of light usually seen, and that light uniformly spread, not merely on the footways, but even to the middle of the street, so that the faces of persons walking, the carriages passing, etc., *could be distinctly seen*; while the lamps and reflectors themselves presented no disagreeable glare to the eye."

With gas came some big fire spectacles for the London crowd; but they were coincidences only, and were not due to the use of gas. Within six months of 1808–9, Covent Garden Theatre and Drury Lane Theatre went up in flames and collapsed in ashes. The burning of Drury Lane made so fierce a blaze that it lit up the windows of the House, where Sheridan, its owner, was taking part in a debate. The burning of Covent Garden produced, as a sequel, a series of riots in and around the rebuilt theatre, which lasted some three months, and became known as the O.P. Riots. When the new theatre was about to open, Kemble, the manager, announced that owing to the loss caused by the fire, and the

cost of rebuilding, prices of the seats would have to be increased. The public would not have it. They did not stay away from the theatre. They seemed to regard the theatre as theirs, and Kemble as one who must respect their wishes and their pockets. They packed every performance in the new theatre and created uproar in their demand for Old Prices, and for No Kembles and No Napoleons. They went to Kemble's house and broke his windows. They demanded the dismissal of the box-office keeper and assaulted him in the street. And at last, though Kemble held out as long as he could, they got what they wanted. The box-office keeper was dismissed, and Kemble agreed to their demands, and returned to the old prices.

During the Regency period, the Thames, for the last time in its story, was frozen over, and the last Frost Fair was held. This time the watermen refused to suffer from a suspension of their business. They claimed the river, fluid or frost-bound, as their province, and since people could not use it in its normal state without hiring a boat, the watermen held that they should not use it in frost without some payment to themselves. So when the Frost Fair began, they erected gateways at the water-stairs and water-gates, and charged an Ice Toll, by which they received, without work, far more than they received in a normal good day's work.

At this Fair, as at that of 1684, all sorts of booths were set up, and all sorts of games were played. As before, a sheep was roasted, and sold under the name of Lapland Mutton. Londoners paid sixpence to see the sheep being roasted, and a shilling for a slice of the mutton. All the local shopkeepers had stalls, decorated with flags and bunting, and the tavern-keepers set up temporary ale-houses. The stretch from Blackfriars Bridge to London Bridge was named City Road. Printing-presses appeared, and ballads commemorating the frost were printed, as well as the Lord's Prayer. There were swings, skittle-alleys, music and dancing, donkey-rides, and for a payment of a few pence, you could fry your own sausages in the middle of the Thames, and take them home all hot.

But the frost was not so solid as the frost of the seventeenth century. On the fifth day, signs of a thaw appeared, and the printing-presses, catching the spirit of the moment, and considering the thaw a catty interference with their profit-making, made a last effort with a ballad to "Madame Tabitha Thaw." Then, before the crowd really expected it, the break-up came. A plumber, who seems to have had a suicidal impulse, tried to cross the ice with a barrow-load of lead. The ice cracked in his path; the crack widened; he slipped in, and never rose. Cracks and fissures appeared here and there, and within a few minutes a number of ice-floes, carrying booths and sightseers, detached themselves from the shore, and went floating down-stream towards that dread of river-navigators, the London Bridge arches. Hundreds were

thrown into the water, but almost all of them recovered the value of their Ice Toll from the watermen, who fished them out with their boat-hooks. But there were many deaths. Two young men, caught on one of the floes, were whirled out to mid-stream. As the floe went speeding towards the arches, their cries for help were heard by people on the bank and on the bridge. Somebody, perhaps a waterman, called to them to lie down. Anyway, they did lie down, but without taking care. They did not lie down in the middle of the floe, but on the edge. The result was that the floe turned turtle, they were pitched off, carried under the ice, and seen no more.

A vivid description of that perilous minute of the waterman's day, the shooting of the London Bridge arches, is given by Borrow in *Lavengro*:

> The tide, which was fast ebbing, obstructed by the immense piers of the old bridge, poured beneath the arches with a fall of several feet, forming in the river below as many whirlpools as there were arches. Truly tremendous was the roar of the descending waters, and the bellow of the tremendous gulfs, which swallowed them for a time, and then cast them forth, foaming and frothing from their horrid wombs. Slowly advancing along the bridge, I came to the highest point, and there stood still, close beside one of the stone bowers, in which, beside a fruit-stall, sat an old woman, with a pan of charcoal at her feet, and a book in her hand, in which she appeared to be reading intently. There I stood, just above the principal arch, looking through the balustrade at the scene that presented itself—and such a scene! . . .
>
> Stretching before me, the troubled breast of the mighty river, and, immediately below, the main whirlpool of the Thames—the Maëlstrom of the bulwarks of the middle arch—a grisly pool, which, with its superabundance of horror, fascinated me. Who knows but that I should have leapt into its depths?—I have heard of such things—but for a rather startling occurrence which broke the spell.
>
> As I stood upon the bridge, gazing into the jaws of the pool, a small boat shot suddenly through the arch beneath my feet. There were three persons in it; an oarsman in the middle, whilst a man and woman sat at the stern. I shall never forget the thrill of horror which went through me at this sudden apparition. What!—a boat—a small boat—passing beneath that arch into yonder roaring gulf! Yes, yes, down through that awful water-way, with more than the swiftness of an arrow, shot the boat, or skiff, right into the jaws of the pool. A monstrous breaker curls over the prow—there is no hope; the boat is swamped, and all drowned in that strangling vortex. No! the boat, which appeared to have the buoyancy of a feather, skipped over the threatening horror, and the next moment was out of danger, the boatman—a true boatman of Cockaigne that—elevating one of his sculls in sign of triumph, the man hallooing, and the woman, a true Englishwoman that—of a certain class—waving her shawl.

Drowning, in that frost year, happened not only on the river. In the autumn, eight people were drowned on land. They were drowned

at St. Giles. Middle-aged people of to-day may remember Meux's Brewery, which, up to 1918, stood at the end of Tottenham Court Road. It was there one hundred years earlier, and was the cause of the drownings. One of its vats, which held over three thousand gallons of beer, burst without warning, and, in bursting, split the hoops of a number of other vats. Nearly ten thousand gallons of beer poured out of the brewery with the pace of a storm tide. Nothing was strong enough to stop it. It washed away carts, horses, and the walls of near-by houses. It poured into areas and basements, and in a few seconds rose to the ceilings of the lower rooms. Some prompt rescues were made here and there, but when it subsided eight bodies were found in the sodden cellars of the Rookery.

About this time, the street-beggars, who had been a constant feature of the London scene through all the centuries, were made the object of a Moving On order. All vagrants were to be taken up by the constables, and lodged either in prison or in some parish institution. A little later this brought from Lamb his well-known plea for the London beggars:

> The Mendicants of this great city were so many of her sights, her lions. I can no more spare them than I could the Cries of London. No corner of a street is complete without them. They are as indispensable as the Ballad Singer; and in their picturesque attire as ornamental as the signs of old London. They were the standing morals, emblems, mementos, dial-mottos, the spital sermons, the books for children, the salutary checks and pauses to the high and rushing tide of greasy citizenry. . . . Above all, those old blind Tobits that used to line the wall of Lincoln's Inn Garden, before modern fastidiousness had expelled them, casting up their ruined orbs to catch a ray of pity, and (if possible) of light, with their faithful Dog Guide at their feet—whither are they fled? or into what corners, blind as themselves, have they been driven, out of the wholesome air and sun-warmth? immersed between four walls, in what withering poor-house do they endure the penalty of double darkness, where the chink of the dropt halfpenny no more consoles their forlorn bereavment, far from the sound of the cheerful and hope-stirring tread of the passenger? Where hang their useless staves? and who will farm their dogs? Have the overseers of St. L—— caused them to be shot? or were they tied up in sacks and dropt into the Thames, at the suggestion of B——, the mild rector of ——?

The order, of course, had little effect. The Holy Land of Seven Dials and St. Giles (mainly Irish) continued to send out its companies of the maimed and the blind, of women with sick, barefoot children (hired for the day) and of old soldiers and sailors with bogus wounds. And in the evening they still held, at a tavern in Dyot Street, the Cadgers' Ordinary, where they drank away the takings of the day. Robert Cruikshank and George each did a spirited picture of this nightly scene: Robert for Westmacott's *English Spy* and George for

Egan's *Life in London*. St. Giles at that time was the sink of London. It was not a stews; it was just a camp of the lowest kind of vagrant, the petty thief, and the wretch, male or female, who had sunk too low to be fit for ordinary loose company. They filled the old houses from garret to cellar, six or seven in a room. The streets, into which the sun could scarcely penetrate, reeked and fumed. All those streets twisted

By J. T. Smith (1817)

and turned, and broke into little alleys, which again curled into each other in not one but a series of labyrinths. Strangers seldom ventured into them. Without knowledge, one could not find a way out, and to ask a direction was only to be sent farther in, and perhaps in some locked courtyard to be seized by a group of hags or harridans and robbed. The backyards of the tall old houses were piled with litter, with stolen goods, and with all manner of offal. Sanitation existed only in the form of kennel and cesspool. All the shops—the old-clothes shops of Monmouth Street, the bird shops of Neal Street, and the food shops—were

open all day Sundays. At every corner was a gin-shop. In some of the short streets the gin-shops outnumbered other kinds of shop. Some of the houses held "schools" for the training of young prigs. Both girls and boys were taught the kinchin-lay, and cly-faking and wipe-snitching, and how to nim a ticker, and were sent out to work the crowds. Above

Monmouth Street, Soho. By George Cruikshank

the nightly racket of the Rookery could be heard the screams of those who had come home with nothing.

This crammed and steaming life in a few streets persisted until 1847. In that year, a new way was cut from High Holborn to Oxford Street. It was to be known as New Oxford Street, and it was driven clean through the centre of the Rookery, whose hovels, decayed mansions, and tenements were razed, and whose rats were dispersed to a hundred different new holes.

Seven Dials was then the headquarters for cheap stationery, cheap Horribles, chap-books, and the street-ballad and Last Dying Speech and Confession. The two chief presses for the latter were those of Pitts and of the more famous Catnach. Their flimsy productions, done in

chipped type, and decorated with crude woodcuts or defaced Bewick blocks, now fetch a high price from collectors. The poets of those things usually received one shilling per ballad, and their names, or perhaps pseudonyms, have a ring that fits well with vagabond verse—Bat Corcoran, Tottenham Court Meg, Slender Ben. Some of them were done by John Mitford, author of *Johnny Newcome in the Navy*. Born of the famous Northumberland family of Mitfords, he died in St. Giles' Workhouse. Henry Mayhew, in his *London Labour and the London Poor*, reported an interview with one of these Newgate authors. Though his man belonged to a later part of the century, he was no doubt typical of the writers of the earlier days. He describes how he

The Debtors' Window (Cruikshank)

taught himself to read, and then, from being a ballad-seller, and reading the ballads of other men, how he set about writing them himself:

> I write most of the Newgate ballads now for the printers in the Dials, and indeed anything that turns up. I get a shilling for a Copy of Verses written by the Wretched Culprit the Night previous to his Execution. I wrote Courvoisier's sorrowful lamentation. I called it a Voice from the Gaol. I wrote a pathetic ballad on the respite of Annette Myers. I did the helegy, too, on Rush's execution; it was supposed, like the rest, to be written by the culprit himself, and was particularly penitent. I didn't write that to order; I knew they would want a copy of verses from the culprit. . . . Besides these, I have written the lament of Calcraft, the hangman, on the decline of his trade, and many political songs.

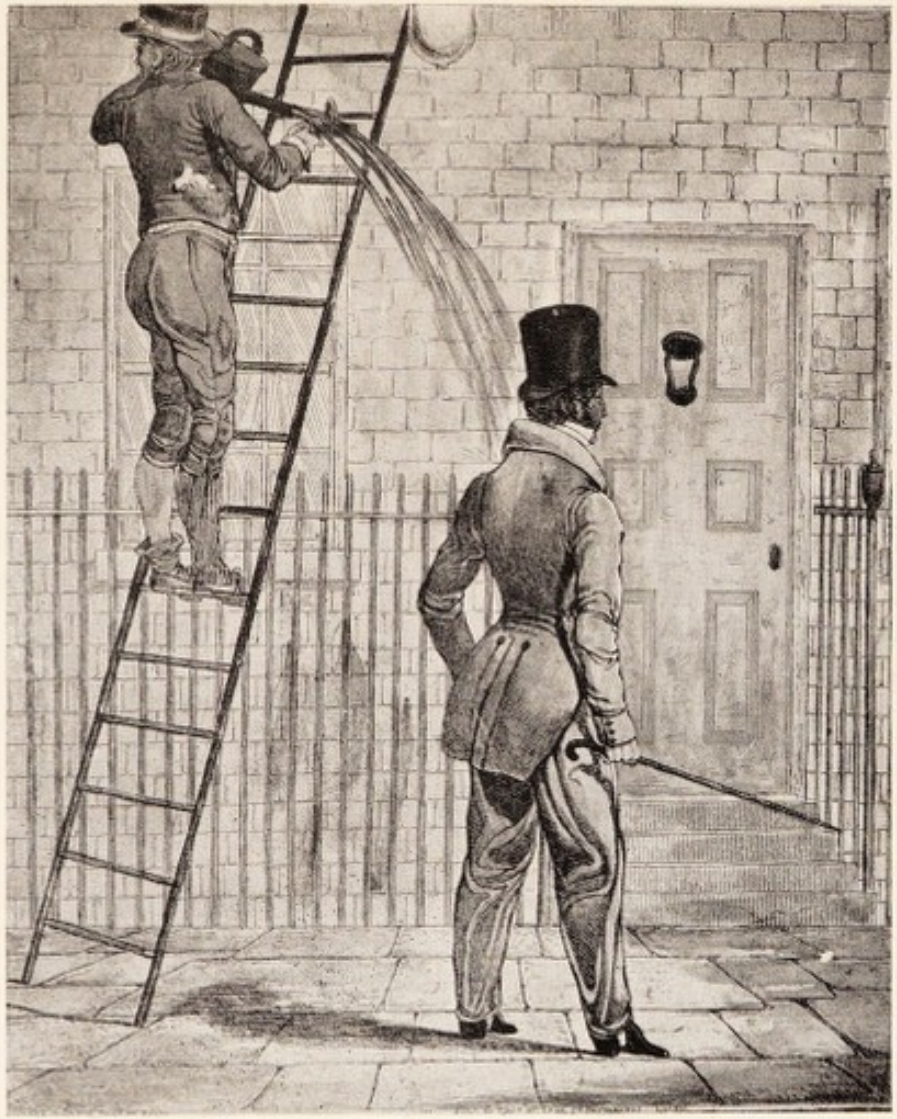
Anybody could buy a quire of Catnach ballads, and sell them at street-corners or at public gatherings. A topical murder-ballad would often keep the press (a hand-press) working day and night for a week. A ballad on a really gory murder would reach the quarter-million. But offering the ballads was not enough. The real salesman was the ballad-*singer*; and it was he, going from point to point of town, and singing the ballads with real feeling, who "made" a ballad. Song-plugging, like so many other modern ideas, is nothing new; and since the popular-song

publishers of the Charing Cross Road of to-day are within one minute's walk of Seven Dials, the methods they use, with dance-bands and singers, for making their songs known, must have been left in the air, or in the soil, by Jimmy Catnach.

But the ballad-singers and other solo musicians were beginning to meet rivals with more skill and something of what was then called refinement. Challenging the hurdy-gurdy and the pan-pipes and the scraping violinist, came the small band of men who could really play their instruments, and who gave selections from Italian opera. There were also trios and quartettes of singers who, instead of singing Newgate ballads, sang glees, catches, and madrigals. There were other attractions in the form of mechanical inventions and developments of animal performances. There was the Frenchman with his performing hare, which played the kettle-drum, danced, and bowed to the onlookers; the German with his canaries who went through military exercises; the automaton trumpet-player, and the automaton chess-player.

A prominent character of the streets about the time of Waterloo was the Flying Pieman. He sold, not pies, but puddings, which he carried about the town on a hot tray. He got his name from the speed at which he moved, and from his being seen, within an hour, at such distant points as Clerkenwell, Piccadilly, Tower Hill, and Blackfriars. He dressed in white, without coat or hat, and wore a powdered wig. His method was to dash through the streets with his tray, bawling "Hot, hot, hot—pudding hot!" pausing only to serve a customer, and dashing on again. He was never seen to stand still, even when serving, or when exchanging repartee with customers and others. He had a shop in Smithfield, but instead of waiting for customers to come to him, he preferred to go out and chase them. His sale was so large that his tray was emptied many times a day; and as he took all London for his territory, he arranged a means of quickly refilling his tray wherever he might be. He and his wife made a stock of puddings in the very early morning, and as soon as the town was awake, he took parcels of these by cart to public-houses in different quarters. There they were kept hot and could be collected during his day's round. It was an early form of Stop Me and Buy One, though by all reports he went much faster than the ice-tricycles.

The seventeenth-century custom of subjecting refractory neighbours to a Charivari took a new form at this time among certain fraternities. It was called The Burning Shame, and was rather more good-humoured than the Charivari. Pierce Egan describes the process as worked upon a Drury Lane dustman, who had been found in bed with another dustman's wife. The culprit was put on trial in a local tavern, and sentenced to Burning Shame. His hat was decorated with a crown of holly, and two large carrots. He was then mounted on the shoulders of four of the dustmen, and a procession was formed, with the chief



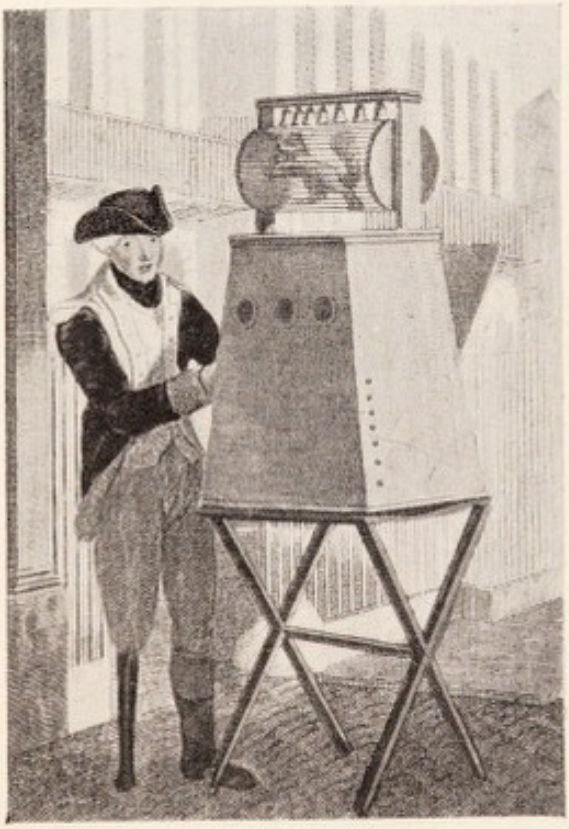
57 "One of the Advantages of Gas over Oil"

58 "One of the Advantages of Oil over Gas"

From prints by Robert Dighton

59 "Hair Brooms"
(Shoreditch Church)

60 "Slippers"
(Somerset House)



61 "A Showman"
(Hyde Park Corner)

62 "Buy a Bill of the Play"
(Drury Lane Theatre)

Itinerant Vendors: from "Modern London" (1805)

dustman leading it, and another, with a bell, announcing the crime. Then came the rest of the dustmen, wearing their fantail hats, decorated with holly and a lighted candle. Behind came the mounted culprit,

By J. T. Smith (1817)

considerately provided with a pot of beer and a pipe; and the rear of the procession was made by the dustmen's wives and daughters. All the streets of the Drury Lane and Clare Market district were visited, and two dustmen, one on either side of the street, carried money-boxes and made a collection among the crowd. On returning to their starting-point, the culprit was set down, the collecting boxes were opened, and

the whole company, including the culprit and the offended husband, settled down to an all-night carouse.

Throughout the Regency and the actual reign of George IV the behaviour of the Bucks became more and more intolerable. A typical night, beginning at midnight, with these rowdies is described by one of their number. The reference to "old 77" is to a gaming-house of that number in St. James's Street:

> We now sallied forth like a pack in full cry, with all the loud expression of mirth and riot, and proceeded to old 77, which, being shut up, we swore like troopers, and broke the parlour windows in a rage. We next cut the traces of a hackney coach, and led the horses into a mews, where we tied them up; coachee being asleep inside the whole time. We then proceeded to old Ham-a-dry-ed, the bacon's man, called out Fire, and got the old man down to the door in his shirt, when Lavender ran away with his night-cap, and threw it into the water in St. James's Square, whilst the Baronet put it in right and left at his sconce, and told him to hide his d——d ugly masard. This induced him to come out and call the Watch, during which time the buck Parson got into his house, and was very snug with the cook wench until the next evening. . . .
>
> After giving a view holloa we ran off, with the Charleys in full cry after us, when Sir G. W., who had purposely provided himself with a long cord, gave me one end, and ran to the opposite side of Jermyn Street with the other in his hand, holding it about two feet from the pavement. The old Scouts came up in droves, and we had 'em down in a moment, for every mother's son of the guardians were caught in the trap, and rolled over each other, slap into the kennel. Never was such a prime bit of gig! One old buck got his jaw-bone broken; another staved in two of his crazy timbers, that is to say, broke a couple of ribs; a third bled from the nose like a pig; a fourth squinted admirably from a pair of painted peepers. Their numbers however increasing, we divided our forces and marched in opposite directions; one party sallied along Bond Street, nailed up a snoosy Charley in his box, and bolted with his lantern; the others were not so fortunate, for A's deputy cushion-thumper and the Baronet's brother got safely lodged in St. James Watch House.

Their chief haunts were the "hells" of Jermyn Street and the neighbouring streets, and the taverns of Covent Garden frequented by the Flash Coves of the sporting world. Other rendezvous were the Royal Saloon in Piccadilly, the Lobby of Drury Lane Theatre, and the Round Room of Covent Garden Theatre. The Royal Saloon's busiest hours were between midnight and dawn. It was decorated somewhat in eastern style. There was a main room, and along either side of this were curtained recesses for private parties. The balcony, decorated with trellis-work and palms, also had a series of these semi-private boudoirs, and at the back were a billiard-room and card-rooms. The company, according to Charles Westmacott, was of the kind known as bad. He mentions two parsons who were regular frequenters, one of them combining holy orders with the owning of a gaming-room and a little crook

horse-dealing on the side. A large part of the peerage was present every night, taking lobster and bucellas, and inspecting the demireps and cyprians, who were given the free use of the Saloon; and the general features of the place were drunkenness, indecent caressing, card-sharping, dicing, and rooking of all kinds by the sharks and the women.

The Brydges Street Saloon in Covent Garden was a similar kind of place, but without the fine clothes and the glamour of fashion, and with a lower depth to the iniquities practised in its private rooms. When the most blunt writers on the London scenes of those Corinthian days hold their pens, and refuse to describe the things that went on at certain places, one can only—remembering the things they *have* described—relapse into fearful imaginings. Ex-convicts were apparently among its "regulars," and fights were frequent. It served elaborate suppers and fine wines, at excessive prices, and had private rooms for all purposes and tastes. It was run by an elderly Madame with the assistance of one or two bullies, and was variously called The Hall of Infamy and Old Mother Damnable's. It took its note from the district. The streets around Covent Garden, and all the side-streets of Drury Lane, were nests of brothels. According to one chronicler, in Catherine Street, Brydges Street, and Vinegar Yard, one could see every night, at the doors of these places, not only women, but girls of thirteen and fourteen, wearing scarcely anything but a cotton frock, openly soliciting.

Other haunts of the time were the Cider Cellars; the Castle, in Holborn, kept by Belcher, the boxer; Tom Cribb's Saloon, in Panton Street; and the Finish, in James Street, Covent Garden—all places of resort for the Bucks and the Lads of the Fancy.

But a lighter touch was being brought to the town by one or two innovations. In 1814 appeared the hackney-chariot, a light, smart vehicle which was a welcome substitute for the old lumbering hackney-coach; and in 1820 appeared the even lighter cabriolet. Another amenity was offered by the shops known as pastry-cooks—places that served such light refreshments as jellies, soups, lemonades, tarts, Neapolitan ices, wines, and made a needed link between the heavier chop-houses and the more drunken taverns. The Café Royal opened its doors in Nash's new Regent Street, and made something of a sensation. It is described in *Real Life in London*:

> By this time they had reached the Café Royal, and upon entrance were ushered by a man in blue livery, with gold-laced trimmings, into an apartment far exceeding in splendour anything that their previous conversation had led them to expect. The walls, formed of looking glass and rich tapestry, and ornamented in a fanciful manner, reflected their persons as they passed along at every point; while the choicest flowers and shrubs, with which they were surrounded, sent forth a delightful fragrance, and gave some distant idea of eastern luxuries.

Hotels were appearing and catching the custom of the rather dark and dingy coaching inns. The most fashionable were Long's, in Bond Street; Stevens', also in Bond Street; the St. Petersburgh, in Dover Street; Brunet's and the Sablonière, in Leicester Square; and Limmer's, in Conduit Street. Part of the Sablonière may be seen in Leicester Square to-day. It is that house at the south-east corner which, some seventy years before it was made part of the Sablonière, was the home of Hogarth. One of the many anecdotes of Long's connects with Byron. It says that after a certain incident the management barred him. Considering the riot and racket that any fashionable hotel of that time had to accept, the incident must have been something more than

A Carriage in Difficulties (Cruikshank)

drink or quarrelsome behaviour. It was. On a certain wet and windy night, Byron, after five or six tots of his favourite drink, white brandy, found that natural functions were demanding attention. The proper place for this was an uncovered yard at the back. In the state of the weather, Byron decided that the entrance-hall was both nearer and more comfortable, and so . . .

Several of these new hotels were kept by Frenchmen, and Soho then, as now and as earlier, was distinctly a French quarter. In the late seventeenth century, when the revocation of the Edict of Nantes brought 80,000 French to England, Soho had two French churches, and one or two taverns of the time were kept and frequented by Frenchmen. Other quarters that we know to-day as foreign quarters were adopted long before modern times. Clerkenwell had an Italian colony in the late eighteenth century, perhaps because the little hills of Clerkenwell gave it something of the air of a northern Italian town, but more likely because it was then an amusement quarter, and the first Italians came over with music. The Jews, after living in the Jewries of the City from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries—the street, Old Jewry, is the site of one of them—settled in Whitechapel, and built a synagogue there, in the time of Charles II. They have been there ever since. The Chinese, too, are still living in the part of London

63 "Peep o' Day Boys: a Street Row"

64 "Getting the Best of a Charley"

65 "Courtiers Carousing in a Cadgers' Ken"

Cruikshank plates from "Life in London" and "The English Spy"

66 London Market—Fruit
By Dubourg after James Pollard

67 "Cruickshank's Exhibition of Bloomers in Hyde Park, 1852"

where the pioneers of their race settled—those who came over when serious trade was opened between the two countries in the middle eighteenth century.

The shops of London kept abreast of the new and elegant hotels. Their windows were still divided into small panes, such as those that survive to-day at Freibourg and Treyer's, in Haymarket, and Lock's, in St. James's Street; but they began to go in for display of their goods, and to decorate their shop-fronts with fascias and gilt announcements, and to break out in mahogany counters and glass doors. In that London of the 1820's, which has been preserved for us in the drawings of Hosmer Shepherd, the fashionable promenade was Bond Street, and it had become by then the expensive shopping street it is to-day. With the downfall of Napoleon, the once-hated French returned to favour with the English, and the shops were full of French trifles—confectionery, jewellery, cravats, books, perfumes, mezzotints, bric-à-brac—all of a lightness and elegance that made English things dark and ponderous. French coiffeurs, and French bootmakers and milliners, became the fashion; and the English went in such droves to Paris that they saw more of each other than of the French. The Bond Street of that time is rather floridly described by Pierce Egan:

> Bond Street is not one of the most elegant streets, but is the resort of the most fashionable people, and from about two o'clock till five, it is all bustle—all life—every species of fashionable vehicle is to be seen dashing along in gay and gallant pride. . . . The throng is already increasing; the variety, richness, and gaiety of the shops in this street will always be attractive and make it a popular rendezvous of both sexes. It will shortly be as crowded as Rag Fair or the Royal Exchange; and the magic splendour has very peculiar properties.
>
> It makes the tradesman forget—while he is cheating a lovely and smiling Duchess—that in all probability her ladyship is endeavouring to cheat him. It makes the gay and airy, the furbelowed and painted lady of the town, forget that she must pay a visit to her uncle in order to raise the wind before she can make her appearance at the theatre at half-price. It makes the dashing prisoner forget that while he is sporting his figure in the bang-up style of appearance, he is only taking his ride on a day-rule from the King's Bench. It makes the Lord who drives four-in-hand forget his losses of the night before at some of the fashionable gaming-houses. It makes one adventurer forget that the clothes in which he expects to obtain respect and attention are more than likely to be paid for in Newgate; another for a time forgets that John Doe and Richard Roe have expelled him from his lodgings; and a third that all his worldly possessions are not equal to the purchase of a dinner. It is an *ignis fatuus*—a sort of magic-lantern replete with delusive appearances—of momentary duration—an escape to the regions of noise, tumult, vanity, and frivolity, where the realities of life, the circumstances and the situation of the observer, are not suffered to intrude. . . .
>
> Here mimicry without money assumes the consequential air of independence; while modest merit creeps along unheeded through the glittering crowd. Here all the senses are tantalised with profusion, and the eye is dazzled

with temptation, for no other reason than because it is the constant business of a fashionable life, not to live in, but out of self, to imitate the luxuries of the affluent without a tithe of their income, and to sacrifice morality at the altar of notoriety.

Two innovations of this period had a great effect on London transport. One was the surfacing of the roadways by the process of that Scotsman whose name gave us the word "macadamise"; the other was the public omnibus. The first omnibus, Shillibeer's, was a three-horse van, with windows at the side, and a windowed door at the back. The service began in the summer of 1829, and ran four times a day between Edgware Road and the Bank; the western terminus being the "York-

The Runaway Bus

shire Stingo" tavern in Marylebone Road. The fare for the full journey was a shilling; for the half-journey—to or from Islington—sixpence. Properly working steam-coaches were then serving London and country roads, but they never became popular; they were regarded as contraptions that might blow up at any minute. The owner of one of them actually named his vehicle, with grim humour or in contempt of scoffers, The Autopsy. But the horse omnibus was instantly popular, and Shillibeer's experiment was imitated by the opening of services in all parts of the town, which eventually took his trade and made all the money that the pioneer should have made. Instead of becoming the biggest bus proprietor of London, he finished in the funeral-coach trade.

A few years later, another vehicle appeared on the streets; a vehicle whose jingling bells were to be one of the voices of London until they were silenced by the horn of the taxi. In 1836 Mr. Joseph Hansom's new cab began to ply for hire.

Another event of 1829 which had a lasting effect upon London life was the formation, under Sir Robert Peel, of the Metropolitan Police. The force did not arrive before it was wanted. Until then, London had

had no real police, no day-time surveillance; and remembering this, the wonder is, not that there were so much disorder, so many street-robberies, so many popular outbreaks, but that there were so few. Before 1829 London had only the night-watchmen, and the constables of the police offices, who merely took informations. Those familiar figures, the Bow Street Runners, with their scarlet waistcoats—Robin Redbreasts, as they were called—were not, in the ordinary sense, police. They were more of a detective force; executing warrants, raiding gaming-houses, putting down riots, pursuing and arresting highwaymen and footpads, and tracking other "wanted" men. They were armed with staves and pistols, and were free to use them in self-defence or in preventing a wanted man's escape. The head of them, much written

A Street Gang at Work
(Cruikshank)

of in the first quarter of the century, was John Townshend; two others, who made many important arrests, were Bishop and Ruthven. It was Ruthven who led the dangerous job of arresting the Cato Street conspirators in a loft off Edgware Road; and it was he who took, one at a time, Probert, Hunt, and Thurtell for the murder of William Weare at Elstree.

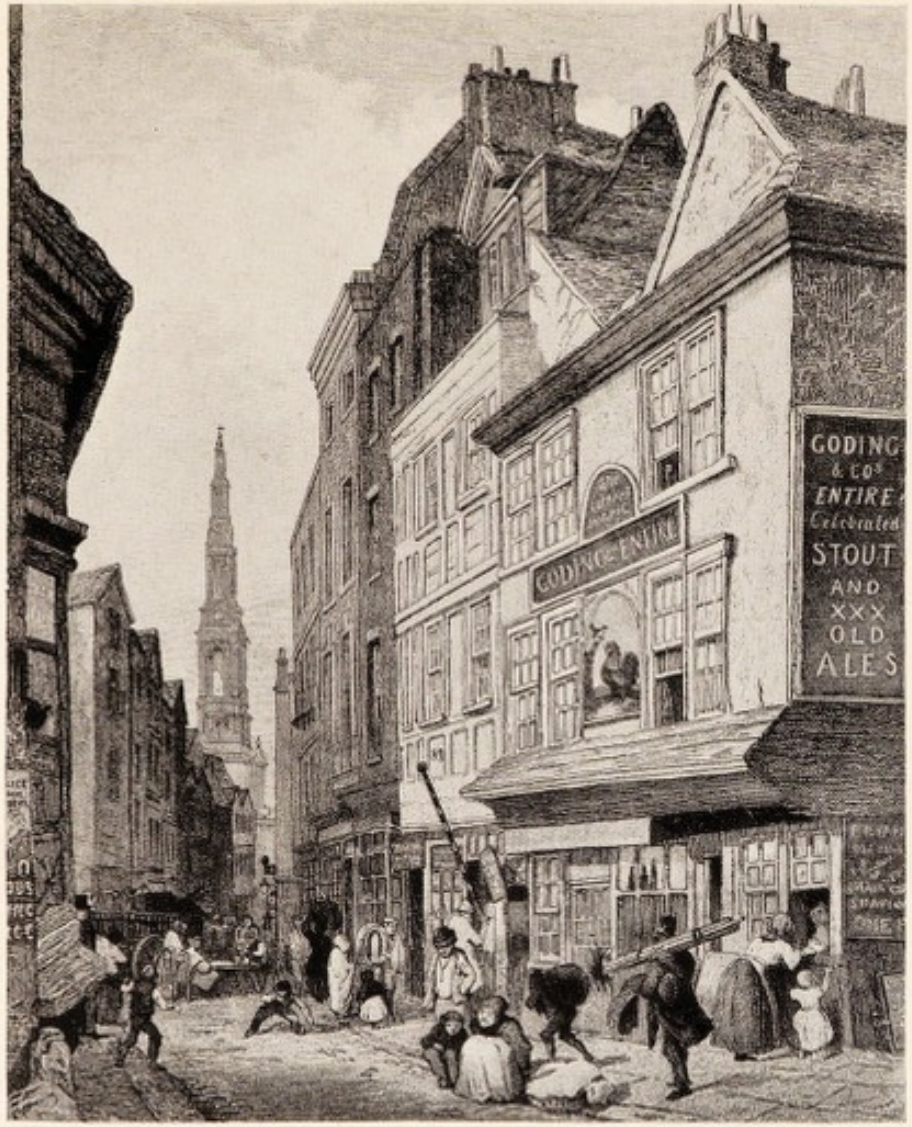
The new force, at its start, consisted of over 3,000 men who worked in five divisions of London; each division having eight sections, and each section having eight "beats." Every street within those divisions was patrolled at least once every twelve hours. The men wore top hats, blue tail-coats with leather belt, and white trousers. They carried a rattle and a truncheon. At first they were anything but popular, and in some quarters were in considerable danger. They were regarded as a military organisation, and were called "Peel's Bloody Gang." But within a year they had lived down this hostility and proved themselves useful public servants.

With the coming of Victoria, came the railway, as, with her passing, came the motor-car. Before her accession, London had but one little

railway—from London Bridge to Deptford, and when, in 1838, the long-distance line, London to Birmingham, was opened at Euston, it was felt that a new age had begun. It was some time before London was fully served with railways; the North and Midlands had started earlier in linking their towns by cross-country lines; but the opening of the London and Birmingham, and the laying down of other lines to London, brought the coaches near to their end. One by one they dropped away, until the last of them went off the road in 1848. With their passing, something of dash and colour went from the London streets, which was mourned by their contemporaries for the rest of the century. All the coaching literature, which then began, and by 1900 had become a small library, is pitched in a repining key. The discomforts and extortionate charges, and the slow progress at twelve miles an hour, were forgotten.

A great London festival marked Victoria's coronation. This was the four days' Fair in Hyde Park. It was under the control of Richardson, the famous showman of Bartholomew Fair and all other Fairs, and "all London" flocked to it. The park was covered by the booths usual to a Fair, and the largest, naturally, was Richardson's Theatre. The booths were specially decorated inside and out, and fluttered with the flags of all nations. There were bands and enclosures for dancing; boating on the Serpentine; and, in the evening, marvellous displays of fireworks. Among the refreshment booths were two that attracted special attention —one supplying à-la-mode boiled beef, and the other what was called "the refined luxury" of ices. (Up to the beginning of the present century, the City quarter had many à-la-mode beef restaurants; to-day only one or two.) All the rougher elements of a Fair were excluded from the park. There were the usual giants and dwarfs, the wild animals, the performing animals, the acrobats; but no gaming-booths, no thimble-riggers, no three-card gentry; and the conduct of the crowd, according to one report, was exemplary. The people who thronged the park, not only the poor, but even the rich, were, the writer says, untouched by debauchery and unseduced by the gross pleasures of the appetite; though a little later he says that "necessarily some slight acts of intemperance were visible." He goes on to offer a reason for this remarkable conduct: "all appeared to remember that this was the day of the coronation of a Queen so youthful, so beautiful, so pure. . . ."

One of the first Acts passed in her reign was for the abolition of the pillory. This robbed the people of one occasion for making holiday, though they still had executions outside Newgate and other prisons, occasional public floggings and the ducking of pickpockets. Another Act passed in her first year abolished the death-penalty for stealing, forgery, rioting, inciting to mutiny, armed smuggling, and aiding the escape of criminals. The abolition of the death-penalty for stealing reduced the number of executions by almost two-thirds; and London



68 Drury Lane in 1850, showing the Cock and Magpie Tavern

From an etching by J. W. Archer

69 Winchester Street, London Wall, in 1815

From an etching by J. T. Smith

70 Regent Street, looking towards the Quadrant, 1842

From the lithograph by Thomas Shotter Boys

streets never again witnessed the frightful spectacle—which, up to a year or so before her accession, seems to have disturbed nobody—of the hanging of young people for such light offences as stealing more than five pounds. None of this humane reconsideration of the laws was influenced by Victoria; she was too young to be practically concerned with affairs. It was due to the long agitation, thirty years earlier, of that enlightened reformer, Sir Samuel Romilly.

In the 'forties, a new type of young man lent the streets a little comedy, and was rather cruelly caricatured and satirised in the prints and journals of the period. He was not a brute, like the Buck; nor an exquisite, like the Dandy; though it was the Dandy that he tried to be. He did not belong to the social class of those types. He was a member of that new class which was then arising, and is to-day the largest class in all countries—the *petit bourgeois* or lower-middle-class. He was The Gent. He was usually a shop-assistant (counter-skipper) or clerk, who appeared in the park or on the Bayswater Race Course, and made a pathetic, and not wholly contemptible effort at cutting a figure with cheap finery—fancy waistcoat, high cravat, imitation-gold cravat-pin, high hat, check trousers, flashy rings and fob, wispy moustachios, and cheroot. His pinchbeck Bond Street air and his foolish swagger harmed nobody; but because he wanted to appear a little better than he was—a trait common to youth of all classes—*Punch*, in its early issues, went for him almost venomously. Leech pilloried him in many drawings, and Albert Smith published a *Natural History of The Gent.* Samuel Warren, with more understanding, fixed him kindly in his quaint figure of Tittlebat Titmouse (*Ten Thousand a Year*).

The London street-scene of the 'forties was aptly caught in the detailed lithographs of Thomas Shotter Boys and the character-drawings of Gavarni, and in the casual journalism of Albert Smith, notably in his various Social Zoologies. In one of these, presenting the hard-up lounger, Smith introduces the features of his London and the ephemeral sights of the streets in the most effective way—as asides to his main theme. He mentions Regent Street as the chief promenade of the hard-up, and the eating of ices and bon-bons at Verrey's as one of the pastimes. Shop-window shopping was done by the lounger of that time as suburban women do it to-day in Oxford Street. The lounger spends ten minutes at a time gaping at the windows of the print-shops—Ackermann, Fores, and Delaporte. Artificial flowers were apparently a craze of the time; he pauses at all the artificial-flower shops; admires the model heads in the windows of Rowlands' Macassar Oil establishment; and stops very long at the hairdresser's window, where two living beauties sit all day, combing their tresses which reach almost to the floor.

If he pauses at the kerb, he is at once hailed by the conductors of all

the passing omnibuses. These have a few seats outside, on the driver's box, but as yet no "knifeboard." The conductor stands on a step at the back, outside the closed door, calling the stages of his route, and his fares. The buses are red, green, blue, yellow, chocolate, and white, with multi-coloured wheels. They cross and block each other without scruple. Two Bayswater buses will crowd an Oxford Street bus from the pavement; the St. John's Wood bus will get in front of the Marylebone bus, and grab all his fares. The drivers stamp on their boxes; they use their whips on a driver trying to cross them; they run their poles into the back of impeding buses, so that the horses' heads are right on the conductor of the offending bus. They shout insults at each other. The passengers complain. The conductors leave their buses and almost fight each other for fares. If the lounger shows any sign of wanting a bus, he will be grabbed by the arm, and pushed into one of them, whether he wants to go that way or not.

Another favourite resort of the lounger was the eighteenth-century assembly-room in Oxford Street, the Pantheon, which by the eighteen-forties had become a bazaar, with a thoroughfare to Marlborough Street. The stalls were mainly those of milliners, perfumers, florists, drapers, stationers, etc. In the gallery were lines of similar stalls, and at one end was a sort of conservatory, used mainly by the florists, which offered the attraction of a small Zoo—monkeys, parrots, tortoises, lizards. Like most bazaars, it was more a place for killing time than for actual shopping, but it survived as a bazaar for another twenty years, before it was taken over by the wine-merchants with whose name it has ever since been associated.

Exhibitions of all kinds were popular at this time, preparing the way for the Great Exhibition under glass that was to come in 1851. The Polytechnic Institution was one of many. At the Polytechnic you could go under water in the Diving Bell; you could study models of all sorts of machines worked by steam-power; you could see Magic Lantern pictures of microbes and of views in the Holy Land; and you could see the processes of glass-making, silk-weaving, printing, and a dozen other industries. In other parts of the town were Dioramas, Cosmoramas, Panoramas, Cycloramas, presenting animated scenes of London, Venice, Germany, China, Egypt, and the rest of the globe. Smith's lounger of course dropped in to look at these. The panorama was a show in which the picture moved past the spectator—sometimes a mile and a half of picture. In the others, the spectator moved, but without any fatigue. He sat in a comfortable chair, and the floor of the room moved round the picture. Other shows were the Walhalla, in Leicester Square, presenting Lady Godiva; and the Centrifugal Railway, where you paid a shilling to be whirled up and down a spiral.

The lounger watches road-making with the new process of wooden blocks. He watches, as his fellows do to-day, the opening of a water-main

or a gas-main. He spends long minutes at the windows of shops showing "working" things, such as the coffee-grinder at the shop in Rathbone Place—there is to-day a shop in Rathbone Place concerned solely with coffee—or the shops which display their goods on revolving tables, or the shops in whose windows craftsmen are at work, such as cork-cutters, boot-menders, gold-beaters, and makers of wire toasting-forks. He is attracted by a man in the gutter who offers—to settle a wager with a friend—real sovereigns at a penny each, with a bodkin, a ballad, a puzzle, and a wedding-ring thrown in. By the hawker selling little glass bottles of water holding models of Napoleon, who bobs up and down when the top of the bottle is pressed. And by the hawker of French prints of a "questionable" kind.

He stops at the Sugar Plum shop, and inspects the lollipops, the saccharine bacon, the Albert rock, the sugar calves'-heads and the brandy-balls. He moves on and stops at the Lilliputian Warehouse (for babies) where, by some new device, little socks, shoes, and gloves, attached by threads to the inside of the glass, fly about the window. He lounges on the river-piers, where the fourpenny steamboats call; in the Lowther Arcade, where he examines the clockwork toys, the ophicleides and accordions, the rocking-horses, and the animated Dutch Villages. When there is nothing else to do, he goes, like his ancestors of the seventeenth century, to Bedlam Asylum.

The London presented with such obvious appreciation by Thomas Shotter Boys did not lack critics. Disraeli, for one, was contemptuous of its public and domestic architecture. Looking at it, he suggested that since the navy was more successful after an admiral had been shot, it might be a good thing to hang an architect; terror, as well as competition, is an inspiration. He found the lines of London monotonous:

> All those new districts that have sprung up within the last half-century, the creatures of our commercial and colonial wealth, it is impossible to conceive anything more tame, more insipid, more uniform. Pancras is like Marylebone, Marylebone is like Paddington; all the streets resemble each other; you must read the names of the squares before you venture to knock at a door. . . . Marylebone alone ought to have produced a revolution in our domestic architecture. It did nothing. It was built by Act of Parliament. Parliament prescribed even a façade. It is Parliament to whom we are indebted for our Gloucester Places, and Baker Streets, and Harley Streets, and Wimpole Streets, and all those flat, dull, spiritless streets, resembling each other like a large family of plain children, with Portland Place and Portman Square for their respectable parents. . . . In our own days we have witnessed the rapid creation of a new metropolitan quarter, built solely for the aristocracy by an aristocrat. The Belgrave district is as monotonous as Marylebone, and is so contrived as to be at the same time insipid and tawdry.
>
> Where London becomes more interesting is Charing Cross. Looking to Northumberland House, and turning your back upon Trafalgar Square, the Strand is perhaps the finest street in Europe, blending the architecture of

> many periods; and its river ways are a peculiar feature and rich with associations. Fleet Street, with its Temple, is not unworthy of being contiguous to the Strand. The Fire of London has deprived us of the delight of a real old quarter of the city; but some bits remain, and everywhere there is a stirring multitude, and a great crush and crash of carts and wains. The Inns of Court, and the quarters in the vicinity of the port, Thames Street, Tower Hill, Billingsgate, Wapping, Rotherhithe, are the best parts of London; they are full of character; the buildings bear a nearer relation to what the people are doing than in the more polished quarters.

Another writer, John Ashton, already quoted, makes complaint of this sameness, and of the utilitarian appearance of the streets. He speaks of the long rows of houses, with oblong holes for windows, all of the same pattern, varied only by the height of the rooms and the number of stories. He refers with scorn to the claim that was made for Baker Street—"the handsomest street in London"—and asks: could condemnation go further? (My copy of his book is a second-hand copy, and his gibe at Baker Street seems to have annoyed a previous owner. Against it, in the margin, is scribbled "bloody fool.") The richest and liveliest parts of the town seem to have been the stall-markets, especially at night. All writers have a good word for them. De Quincey haunted them when he was in London as a youth, at the beginning of the century; and Mayhew gave a vivid picture of them as they appeared in the forties:

> The scene in these parts has more the character of a fair than a market. There are hundreds of stalls, and every stall has its one or two lights; either it is illuminated by the intense white light of the new self-generating gas-lamp, or else it is brightened up by the red smoky flame of the old-fashioned grease-lamps. One man shows off his yellow haddock with a candle stuck in a bundle of wood; his neighbour makes his candle-stick of a huge turnip, and the tallow gutters over its sides; while the boy shouting "E-eight a penny, pears!" has rolled his dip in a thick coat of brown paper, that flares away with the candle. Some stalls are crimson with a fire shining through the holes beneath the baked-chestnut stove; others have handsome octohedral lamps; while a few have a candle shining through a sieve. These, with the sparkling ground-glass globes of the tea-dealers' shops, and the butchers' gas-lights streaming and fluttering in the wind like flags of flame, pour forth such a flood of light that, at a distance, the atmosphere immediately above the spot is as lurid as if the street was on fire.

Life in the "respectable" streets of the near suburbs—Holloway, Highbury, Stockwell, etc.—seems to have been simmering all day with hawkers and entertainers, most of them of a kind no more seen in London. A good account of them, and of the daily day of one of those streets in the 'forties, is given by a minor writer of the time, Charles Manby Smith.

The morning opened with the departure of the men for the City, and it appears that in those easygoing days the buses were obliging enough

71 London at 5 o'clock in the afternoon

From an engraving by Eugène Lami, ca. 1850

72 Scene at Charing Cross

From a water colour by Eugène Lami (1850)

73 Scene in Belgrave Square, *ca.* 1850

From a water colour by Eugène Lami

to turn off their routes and tool into side-roads to pick up regular passengers; and even wait at the door if the "reg'lar" was not ready. The first hawker was the cat's-meat man. Then came a young girl in a pink-ribboned bonnet, carrying a large basket of flowers made by herself out of tissue-paper. These, by a rather tasteless custom of the time, were used for decorating the empty fireplaces of summer. Next came the cane-chair mender, who collected damaged chairs, and sat on the kerb and repaired them, at ninepence a chair. Then the hawker with pot-flowers—"All a-blowing and a-growing!" Then the man with the gravel-cart—"Gravel your garden-path!" Then the journeyman glazier, looking about for broken panes. Then the clothes-line and clothes-prop woman. Then, in quick succession, the journeyman tinker, the umbrella-mender, the "chamois-leather woman" (going from door to door cleaning plated articles) and the man collecting rabbit-skins and hare-skins. An advertising trick that is used to-day in a slightly different way—by means of the loud-speaker van—was being used then. A daily arrival was the gaily coloured van with a band of musicians who, having attracted attention, threw out handbills advertising this or that commodity. Then there was the German Band, which had lately come in, and remained a feature of the streets until the early years of the twentieth century. Then, as a sequel to the success of the new entertainment at the Hanover Square Rooms—the Ethiopian Serenaders: minstrels with tambourines and "bones"—came a band of blacked-up Cockney entertainers with the same sort of show, rolling the whites of their eyes over "Uncle Ned" or "Ole Dan Tucker." In the afternoon came the "water-creases" man. Then the lucifer-man. At five o'clock, the muffin-man, with bell. The last arrival came at seven—the beer-boy ("Beer-ho!"), carrying long double-deck trays fitted with cans of beer. Any interludes in these visitations were filled in that particular street by a character who seems to have broken out of the Dickens inkpot. This was the man who kept a nondescript shop at the corner of the street—Berlin wool, musical instruments, toys, and stationery. Having no aptitude for business, and no customers, he played all day on the accordion the one tune he could play—"We're a-nodding, we're a-nodding."

The evening scene in town was presented by many writers. One picture of the Strand is interesting as showing the late hours worked by shop-assistants:

> The time is between nine and ten o'clock at night, and the streets are thronged. Clerks returning homeward; 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 smoking 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; whining beggars, male and female; dirty, shoeless boys, with brooms, with which they make a 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.

The medical student of that time was still, so far as public behaviour went, in the Bob Sawyer stage. The writer of the preceding note describes him as delighting to stroll four-abreast along the pavements, smoking the strongest of cigars, and peering under the bonnets of all young "females," and giggling with delight if he could frighten some little dressmaker's apprentice. He crowded all the bars, drinking pint after pint. After midnight, he and his friends would reel about the streets, crying "Lullaliety!"—apparently an attempt at a yodel. He would ring the night-bells of doctors, and run away. He would wrench knockers from doors, and unscrew brass-plates from shop-fronts. He would climb lamp-posts and blow out the light. He would paint out street-names. But there was no harm in him. He never assaulted anybody. He was just full of cloddish fun.

Covent Garden and Drury Lane were still noted as stews, and the association was stressed by the kind of literature being sold in Holywell Street. A sort of equivalent of the snack-bar of to-day, to which young people went after the theatre, was the Oyster Room. The Strand and its side-streets had numbers of these, and their note, since they belonged to Victorian London, was a good deal stronger than the note even of one of our underground night-clubs. They were regularly filled with the girls from Drury Lane, dressed out in the silks and feathers of the establishment to which they belonged, and made up with what was called "slap," which it seems was ochre and bismuth. The most notorious of these places was Jessop's, in Catherine Street. In his book, *Old London Taverns*, Edmund Callow, who was a man of the world and not unduly squeamish, mentions that he once visited the place in 1845. He went there sober, but he says that had he been drunk his first sight of the room would at once have sobered him. He says no more of it save that as soon as he could he got out of the most disgraceful and iniquitous night-saloon in all London. It seems to have been a sort of successor to the Hall of Infamy.

The second half of the century saw many striking changes in the general features and life of the streets. The bicycle appeared, developing from the bone-shaker, the velocipede, the first safety (two large parallel wheels, with the seat between them) and the penny-farthing. The horse-tram appeared, the first lines being laid down Bayswater Road,

and the first service from Marble Arch to Notting Hill. Towards the end of the century, the cable-car appeared, and with it the first spluttering, grinding motor-car, preceded by a red flag. At the very end of the century—in 1900—appeared the first petrol motor-bus.

A Public House Interior. By John Leech

The opening of the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, on May Day 1851, brought all Europe to London. It also brought great profit to the bus companies and to cab-drivers, until the public revolted. To carry to and from the park the many thousands who crowded every day to the Palace, the bus companies not only increased the number of their vehicles, but made the bold move of placing seats on the roofs—for

men only, of course; no "lady" could mount the iron ladder with the crinoline billowing her skirts out to the world. The next move, naturally, was to increase the fares. As one dirty bit of business-man trickery breeds another, a further move was to take passengers for "The Exhibition" at a fare of sixpence from Charing Cross, and turn them out at Knightsbridge, leaving them to walk the rest. Another trick was used at the end of the day, when people were tired and anxious to get home from the park. They found then that all buses in which there was room were asking a shilling for the return journey.

The success of the Exhibition reacted a little harshly on the polite streets of Kensington. As Leigh Hunt says, there was a dust and a kick-up about the once quiet approach to Kensington; there was a turmoil of crowds, and omnibuses, and cabs, of hot faces and loud voices, of stalls, dogs, penny trumpets, policemen, and extempore public-houses. Multitudes, he says, became too multitudinous. European brotherhood itself (the ideal at which the Exhibition aimed) now and then felt its toes trodden upon a little too sharply. The most generous emulations were in danger of relapsing into antagonisms. He objected further to the Exhibition's name that it was neither crystal nor a palace. It was a large conservatory adapted to the purposes of a bazaar. But it was a real Exhibition, modern in its comprehensiveness and in its elegance, and it is not surprising that four years after its appearance Bartholomew Fair ceased for ever.

Among the striking figures that appeared in the streets at that time, and in the Exhibition itself, were some advanced and daring women wearing the new "sensible" costume invented by the American Amelia Bloomer. Mistakes are constantly being made in the modern press about this costume. One often sees a reference to women cyclists of the eighteen-nineties wearing Bloomers. They never did wear Bloomers. What those cycling women wore was Rational Costume—Norfolk jacket, knickers fitting to the knee with elastic, woollen stockings, and a "Trilby" hat. The Bloomer costume of the 1850's was quite different, and it is odd that there should be any confusion between it and the 'nineties cycling costume, since contemporary artists did scores of pictures of it. The Bloomer costume was linen trousers, or Turkish pantaloons, fastened at the ankles; a skirt to the knees; a man's waisted jacket; and a wide straw hat.

During the nineteenth century, French artists were much attracted by the London scene. Gavarni came in the 'forties; Lami did some delightful water-colours, and Constantin Guys some drawings, of the London of the 'fifties; and in the late 'sixties Doré came over and carried his sketch-book into the high quarters and the very lowest. He was most successful with the lowest; his dark, nightmare style was just suited to the dark streets and the wraiths and goblins and menacing voices that shuffled about them in the Ratcliff Tiger Bay and the Shoreditch Nile

of that time. His drawing of the Ratcliff Highway opium-room holds more of the diabolism of such places than any real opium-room could hold; and his drawing of the sixpenny gambling-house in the same street presents such a group of sinister faces, male and female, young and old, that it points all the morals that have ever been drawn from the gaming habit. Night-wanderings in that London afforded him good material. The lighting, even at that time, was effective only in the main streets. In the side-streets of the central parts, lamps were few; in the side-streets of the poorer quarters, there were none. And at that time, fogs were frequent, fogs of yellow and ebony cloud, which demoralised the streets and made them a primeval chaos. The famous fog of *Bleak House* was typical of all fogs of that time:

> Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill-temper, and losing their foothold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke) adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest. Fog everywhere. Fog up the river . . . fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. . . . Chance people on the bridges, peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds.
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> Gas looming through the fog in divers places in the streets, much as the sun may, from the spongy fields, be seen to loom by husbandman and plough-boy. Most of the shops lighted two hours before their times—as the gas seems to know, for it has a haggard and unwilling look.

With those fogs, and that poor lighting, the petty criminal had great opportunities, and took them. Rank and occupation were still marked by costume. The dustman had his shovel-hat. The butcher his blue apron and straw hat. The bus-driver his glazed bowler. The street-orderly his blue blouse and peaked cap. The poet his bush of hair and his brigand's hat. The old-clothes dealer his three top hats, worn one above the other. And even the criminal, so far from disguising, almost announced himself. If, on one of those nights of fog, the wayfarer was stopped by a man in a moleskin cap with ear-flaps, a velveteen jacket,

and leggings, he knew that the man was not a workman about to ask the way. He knew that he was confronted by Chokee Bill.

Doré caught admirably the atmosphere of that grievous, rainy London, and the sense of threat that loomed about the mouth of court and alley; as admirably as Lami had earlier caught the elegance and frou-frou of Belgravia. Doré could have made some apt illustrations to the writings of that careful guide to the street-criminals of the middle of the century, Henry Mayhew. The very terms current among them at that time, with their touch of gutter-poetry, would have inspired him. Each racket had its own description. The house-breaker was a Cracksman; the footpad a Rampsman; the street thug, a Bludger. The Bug Hunter's lay was hanging around public-houses and cleaning the pockets of the drunks. The pickpocket was a Buzzer. The man who booked a room at a hotel, and went round the rooms of other guests, was a Snoozer. The man who called at kitchen doors of big houses, on the chance of finding them open and picking up something, was an Area Sneak. Women who enticed children into their houses, and stripped them of their clothes, were Skinners. Counterfeit coiners were Shoful Men; those who passed the coins were Smashers. Gamblers with cogged dice were Charley-Pitchers. Men who robbed by putting the knock-out drop into the victim's drink were Drummers. The women of all these ranks and dignities of the crime-world were Jollies or Bonnets. The man who knew his London could recognise each type by his dress and his manner. Only a novice could confuse the Area Sneak with the Charley-Pitcher, or the Mobsman with the Cracksman. To-day, you cannot distinguish the smash-and-grab man from the bank clerk, or the burglar from the man-about-town.

The opening scene of Tom Taylor's melodrama, *The Ticket-of-Leave Man*, gives us piquant glimpses of one or two phases of life in the middle nineteenth century. It shows us a tea-garden of the period, and it introduces a number of those flash gentry. The scene is the Bellevue Tea Gardens, Lambeth, with ornamental veranda, shrubs, statues, concert-room, and the usual arbours. The arbours are filled with guests, among them two detectives, waiting for their chief, the great Hawkshaw. Also present are the Tiger and the Melter. The proprietor, Maltby, is moving about, spurring on his waiters:

1ST PARTY: Three hots, with.

WAITER (*at another table*): Yes, sir. . . . Brandy and soda for you, sir.

2ND PARTY: Tea for four—shrimps and a muffin.

WAITER: Coming. . . . Pot of half-and-half for you, sir. . . . Two sherry negus, two shillings.

MALTBY: Now, James, three teas and a muffin in 15. Jackson, money in 6. (*To* GUEST): Uncommon thirsty weather, sir—uncommon. . . . If I might recommend a cobbler for the lady, sir, delicious refreshment for July. Now, James, look after them brandies in 3.

(*Enter* HAWKSHAW. *Strolls to detectives' table, without looking at them.*)

HAWKSHAW: Report.

1ST DETECTIVE (*without looking at* HAWKSHAW): All right.

HAWKSHAW: Here's old Moss. Keep an eye on him. . . .

Moss (*sipping his brandy and peppermint*): Warm and comfortable. Tiger ought to be here before this. . . . (*Takes up spoon, weighs it in his fingers.*)

DALTON (*sitting at* Moss's *table*): Nor worth flimping, eh?

Moss (*staring, not recognising him*): Did you speak to me, sir?

DALTON: What? Don't twig me? Then it's a good get-up.

Moss (*recognising him*): What, Tiger?

DALTON: Stow that. There's no tigers here. My name's Downy—you mind that. John Downy, from Rotherham, jobber and general dealer. . . . I've taken a serious turn, always do when it's low tide here (*pointing to pocket*).

Moss: Down on your luck, eh?

DALTON: The crushers are getting to know too much; then there's the Nailer been after me.

Moss: What, Hawkshaw—the cutest detective in the force?

DALTON: He's taken his oath on the Bow Street Office testament to be square with me for that Peckham job——

Moss: Ah!

DALTON: When I spoiled his mate. . . .

Moss: And so you're keeping dark, eh?

DALTON: Yes, pottering about on the sneak, flimping or smashing a little when I get the chance; but the Nailer's too hard on me. There's no picking up a gentlemanly livelihood. Hang me if I haven't often thought of turning respectable.

Moss: No, no; it ain't so bad as that yet. Now, I have the beautifullest lot of Bank of England flimsies that ever came out of Birmingham. It's the safest paper to work, and you should have it dirt cheap, and credit till you've planted it.

DALTON: And how about lagging? If I'm nailed it's a lifer.

Moss: Bless you, I wouldn't have you chance it; but in the high society you keep, you could surely pick up a flat to put off the paper.

DALTON: I've the very man. I gave him an appointment here, for this evening.

Moss: Did you, though? How pat things come about! Who is he?

DALTON: A Lancashire lad; an only son, he tells me. The old folks spoiled him as long as they lived, left him a few hundreds, and now he's got the collar over his head, and is kicking 'em down, seeing life. And life in London ain't to be seen without paying at the doors, eh, Melter?

Moss: Ha, ha! And you're selling him the bill of the play.

DALTON: I'm putting him up to a thing or two—cards, skittles, billiards, sporting houses, sparring houses, night houses, casinos—every short cut to the devil and the bottom of a flat's purse. He's as green as a leek, and as soft as new cheese, no vice, steady to ride or drive, and runs in a snaffle. . . . If I can work him to plant a lot of these flimsies of yours, I don't mind; remember, though, I won't go higher than fifteen bob for a fiver.

Perhaps because these people were all about the London streets (especially the Bludgers and the Buzzers), women of the fashionable

quarters, when walking, were still followed, as in past centuries, by footman or page. Sometimes he carried umbrella or sunshade, in case it was wanted; sometimes he carried home the shopping. Always he carried a stout staff, and was at hand if the Buzzer started work, or if some audacious philanderer tried to peep under her bonnet. But partly, the footman or page was there to advertise wealth. The notion of earlier times, that position could only be supported by troops of servants, was followed by most of the rich almost up to the end of the century. Carriages of that time seldom went out without two footmen standing

"Belgravia Out-of-Doors." By Richard Doyle

on the rear platform. Even the trap had a liveried and cockaded page-boy sitting at the back with stiffly folded arms. On Sundays, page or footman attended the family to church, walking behind with the prayer-books and Bibles. Footmen wore the costume of the middle eighteenth century—plush breeches, white stockings, buckled shoes, tail coat and powdered wig. Often they were kept by people with incomes which to-day would scarcely pay the rent of a Grosvenor Square flat. But servants of all kinds were cheap. Housemaids got £10 a year; parlour-maids £12 to £14; kitchen-maids £8. The page-boy got pocket-money, and the footman not much more. The most expensive were the butler and the cook, and even these seldom got more than £25 or £30. Coach-men got about the same, and the grooms about £15. With quite a moderate income, therefore, one could make a considerable show when moving about the streets.

During the 'sixties, a few long-needed improvements were introduced. Holborn Hill was smoothed down and bridged by Holborn Viaduct.

The block to traffic caused by the buildings astride of Holborn, known as Middle Row, which stood at the end of Gray's Inn Lane, was removed by the pulling down of those buildings. Holborn Bars, which marked

"Christmas Day on the Pavement." By John Leech

the limits of the City of London, were also taken down. Wren's Temple Bar, which had stood since 1670, continued to hamper traffic for a few more years; it was removed in 1879. The Victoria and the Albert Embankments were constructed. The new Houses of Parliament, replacing the burnt-out Westminster Palace, were at last completed.

A new Westminster Bridge and a new Blackfriars Bridge were constructed; the Metropolitan Railway, from Bishop's Road to Farringdon Street, was opened; and those primitive creatures who found a thrill in seeing men hanged had their last chance of a thrill in May 1868. The last man publicly hanged was one of the Fenians who blew up Clerkenwell Sessions House.

Constant figures of the streets of that time who would cause people of to-day more astonishment than any others were the ragged, bare-

The Crossing Sweeper

footed, unkempt children. Neither before nor later were the children of the poor living in such wretched conditions or so wretchedly clothed. The Industrial Age at its peak showed what money-grubbing by a few brutes meant to the many. In earlier centuries, when many of the poor were attached in some way to some great London house, clothes for the children could be got, either from the house, as cast-offs, or out of earnings. They were often misfits, but at least the children were clothed. The rich of those days shared their surplus. The Industrial Age, the factory system, and the increase of population created by these, put an end to that. The poor could get wages only, and very meagre wages; there were no pickings, no oddments, no more Lady Bountifuls, and prices were high. The Industrial rich held on to their surplus. And so the streets were swarming with barefooted children, and with

boys and girls wearing hideous and tattered garments that were no protection against rain and wind. Boys as well as girls wore long hair —to save the cost of hair-cuts. The hair could sometimes be cut at home, in a crude way, but only when the home possessed a pair of scissors. Very often it didn't. There was in that time of England's swollen prosperity a poverty of a kind our slump time has never seen.

A common street-scene of the last fifty years has been the children's group-games. They were not seen at that time. The children who

The Shoeblack. By Charles Keene

were not selling things in the streets, half starved and ragged, were roped into factories, where, despite the Acts of the early years of the century, and Mrs. Browning's *Cry* of 1844, they were equally half starved and worse treated than those who were shivering in the street. Almost as soon as they could look after themselves, before they had had any childhood, an infamous system put them to work. Many of the first Labour M.P.s were working in factories before their tenth year. Business Men who talked Christianity worked them ten and twelve hours a day; paid them three or four shillings a week; and when, by hunger or exhaustion, they slackened in their work, there were brutal overseers to force them back to work. Only a few people were disturbed by this, and they were shrugged off with a term meant to be contemptuous—Sentimentalists. It seemed to almost everybody quite right that the children of the poor, when they were eight or nine, should be put to Work. What else were they *for*? The country (and the manufacturers) needed their labour. Besides, it was Good for the

children. It was better for them to be at Work than running about the streets, or filling their heads at parish schools with a lot of stuff that was no Use to them; or, worse still, becoming a charge on the parish—that is, on the money of the Business Men. Putting them to Work fixed in them habits of industry and obedience to their betters. And weren't their parents glad of the weekly shillings? That was the attitude of money-grubbing Business, and that attitude is not yet as dead as it should be. When, some time ago, it was proposed to raise the school-leaving age of the Council School children, Business Men fought the proposal with all the interest of their pockets. They trotted out the old fables their grandfathers had used—that it was better that working-class children should be at Work; that poor families needed the earnings of their young. It was all very well for the children of the well-to-do to play until they were twenty-one or twenty-two, but as the children of the poor could not be supported through their teens by their families, it was better that they should be self-supporting. Only one man was indiscreet enough to let out what was really in their minds—that business profits could not be kept up without cheap labour in the lower grades.

Children's street-games therefore belong to a period after the 'sixties. With their long hours of labour, either in the factory, or as street-hawkers, making them old before their time, they could have had little energy or spirit for play. But in the 'seventies a change was made. Compulsory Education was introduced. At first this was hotly opposed by Business Men and the Established. But when it was found that the motive was a concern for privilege and property, it passed. Some of the enlightened among the privileged had seen that vast mass of ignorant people, and had had a sudden and terrible vision of what might happen if an unlettered and almost animal mob broke through its fetters. They could not, for the safety of their own skins and their own property, afford to have an ignorant and growling mob at their doors. So came Popular Education, with much stress on religion, history (especially battles and Useful things).

But if the education was chiefly propaganda for the Established, it did at least one thing. It rescued the common children from the grip of those men who had piled up enough money from child-labour to be able to buy titles. And it gave them freedom to play those folk-games of the London streets, instinct with rude poetry and goblin charm, which most of us have seen.

Ever since the first anniversary of Gunpowder Plot, children had kept a custom of carrying Guys round the streets, and collecting half-pence. But it is not until the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century that one hears of the custom of setting a group of bricks and stones against a wall, with a few flowers and a lighted candle, in honour of St. James of Compostella. Where it began, I cannot say; but in the

74 Piccadilly and St. James's Church, *ca.* 1860

75 The Lowther Arcade in the 'Sixties

From an unknown painter

76 The Return from the Derby, *ca.* 1850

77 "The Cab Fiend of London" (1874)

'eighties and 'nineties, every July, these rude shrines were set up in the poorer streets, and passers-by would be accosted by children holding out a scallop-shell with "Please remember the Grotto!" Hop-scotch and tip-cat are fairly old, and came, I believe, from the North. The singing games, too, based on early pagan rites and tribal ceremonies, all have an air of having come to London via a village green. But the other games, peculiar to Board School districts, though also adapted from earlier games and ceremonies, do seem to have sprung, in their new form, from the conditions imposed by narrow streets and the absence

The Chimney-sweeps' Annual Holiday
From Cruikshank's "Comic Annual"

of fields or gardens. Egg-Cap, Jump the Knacker, Statues, Several Men Come to Work, Golden Puddings, Spider's Web, Here We Come From Botany Bay, Wallflowers, Foot-it, Gully, Hi-spy-hi, are games that can be played on the pavement outside the houses of any street. And there are a hundred more, all adapted for the street, which you will find described in that queer book of Norman Douglas (queer for the author of *Old Calabria* and *They Went*)—*London Street Games.*

The London of the 'eighties was a settled, easygoing London. People of course complained of rush and bustle, just as they did in the Regency London, and in Addison's London, and Dekker's, and Skelton's. But for the well-to-do it was a very comfortable London. Progress and order moved in double harness. The Jubilee of 1887 impressed the age with a feeling of permanence, and though there was much poverty in the obscure streets, and the word Unemployed was being heard, and bands of men were singing a song about wanting work, one did not

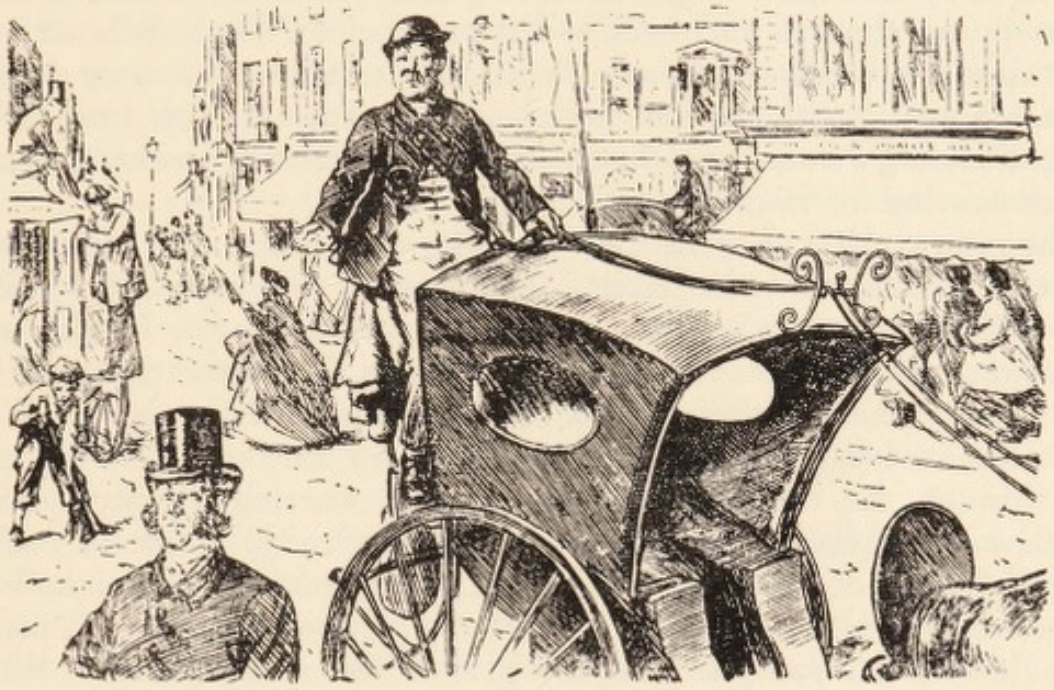
have to notice these things. The Empire was a mighty fact, and London was its capital. In harmony with this Empire, the city and its buildings grew larger and larger. The big hotel had arrived, and the big shop. The Langham Hotel had been one of the first of the mammoth hotels, though it was soon out-sized by the hotels of Northumberland Avenue —the Grand, the Metropole, the Victoria. The shops of Regent Street —Jay's, Peter Robinson's, Dickins & Jones—were not as large as they are to-day, but they were an astonishment to visitors from the country. The stores also, those in Tottenham Court Road, Westbourne Grove, and in Victoria Street, were growing larger and larger, and making it possible to do a day's shopping under one roof. The claim of one of them—that it would fill any order it might receive for anything in the world—gave Anstey his theme for *The Man from Blankley's*; the man being an extra dinner-guest ordered by a distracted hostess to prevent the disaster of thirteen at table.

Modern as the town was, it still kept many features of its past life. Milk was still taken round by strapping women, who carried two large cans suspended from a wooden yoke across the shoulders. These women were a regular feature of the London of my childhood. Under an old licence, cows were still kept in St. James's Park, near the Horse Guards Parade, and I was often given a penny glass of milk "fresh from the cow." Gas and electric lighting were in general use in streets, shops and the better-class houses; but the houses of the meaner streets were without either, and used lamp or candle. Thousands of them were without any cooking facilities other than the ordinary small fireplace; so a regular Sunday-morning sight in those streets was the carrying of the Sunday joint to the baker's, where it was cooked in the bakehouse oven at twopence a time. The one-man band was still a familiar figure in side-streets—a man who carried pan-pipes fixed under his mouth; a drum on his back, which he beat by a stick tied to his elbow; cymbals on top of the drum which he clashed by a string attached to his heel; and a triangle in his hands. Other regular entertainers were the Italian mechanical orchestra—a maddening contraption; the Italian woman with her cage of fortune-telling budgerigars or parakeets; and the street-acrobats with a clown on high stilts, covered in long striped trousers, who was tall enough to collect pennies at nursery windows.

The street-organ that we hear to-day—the piano-organ—had arrived on the streets some years earlier; but the old hurdy-gurdy on a long pole was still to be heard. It was so much of a feature of the Marylebone where I spent my earliest years, that to-day, whenever the thought of the London streets comes to me, it brings with it a vision of a twilight street, pale lamps dwindling to pin-points at its farther end, the clop of hoofs and jingle of bells, and somewhere unseen a hurdy-gurdy playing some air from *Traviata* or *Norma* or *Masaniello*.

It was the London of the Sherlock Holmes stories (the late 'eighties);

a London in which the criminal, by then more alert than his predecessors, had a good run. Telephones were not in general use; no more than Sherlock Holmes detectives. The quickest communication was by telegram, and there were no mobile police in fast vehicles. The criminal who used his brains had a more than sporting chance against the authorities; they could move no faster than he could, and if he did not make the mistake of dashing away by train (which allowed them to head him off by telegram) but remained in London, he could move about in the



The London Cabbie

knowledge that his feet or his hansom were as good as theirs. It took some time even for news of an affair to reach them, and arrests were seldom made on the day of a crime. It was usually many days later, and it was not the quiet affair it is now. Criminals were more desperate. There was in most cases a struggle, and the capture was seldom made single-handed. Handcuffs were more commonly used than they are to-day.

Business men at that time went to their offices by brougham or landau. Some (of the old school) continued to go by horseback. The speed of life is reflected in the fact that the chief danger of the streets was the "reckless" driving of hansom cabs and pirate omnibuses. Cartoons were published in the comic papers of these "thugs" and "murderers." They dashed along the streets at (sometimes) ten miles an hour, and people whose minds and nerves were still in the jog-trot days were not quick enough for them. Another, not so frequent danger, was the runaway horse. If this happened in some crowded street, the Strand or Regent Street, it really was a danger. Only those who saw some of

these affairs can know what can happen in a street when that most stupid and neurotic of animals, the horse, goes into hysterics.

After the hansom and the pirate omnibus, came another danger to the placid plodders. The bicycle came in, and with it came the "scorching" cyclist. He was a greater danger because he was not as large, and therefore not so readily seen, as the bus or the hansom. In his early years, he laid out quite a few. I know one woman of near my own age who to-day still has a horror of cyclists. She will cross Oxford Street and dart her way through a tangle of moving cars and motor-buses, but if a cycle appears she will dart back to the pavement. Why? Because one day, when she was fourteen, and on her way to school in a busy street, a "scorching" cyclist got her, and sent her endways with frock over head, disclosing a horror which, against all her pleas, her mother insisted on her wearing for warmth—pink flannel drawers.

The most reckless of cyclists was one who was reckless only of his own life, and no danger to the public. This was the evening-paper cyclist, who delivered the various editions to the street-stands. In the late afternoon, when the race results were through, his career through the streets was a phenomenon. On an ordinary bicycle of the period, with half a hundredweight of papers on his back, he shot into Fleet Street and through the traffic at scorching speed, weaving his way under horses' heads through any opening that offered. No tangle of traffic stopped him; he stopped for nothing but a policeman's arm; and he had hair's-breadth escapes every minute. If any pedestrian crossed his path, he could stop in a yard; he just planked both feet to the ground. With his curves and his angular dodging, and his shooting along an eighteen-inch space between moving buses, one always expected him to side-slip, and crash under the weight of his load. He never granted that moment. He was as much a trick-cyclist as any circus-performer.

No contemporary records of nineteenth-century London name the pioneer of a street-business that was at that time widely followed, and still has many workers. I cannot discover when a draughtsman first turned out with coloured chalks and exercised his talent upon the paving flags. The Pavement Artist could not have been known to the eighteenth century; there was then no flat, smooth pavement. In the early nineteenth century, as Wordsworth noted, beggars scrawled their appeals on the stones, but the artist, I think, came later. He was working some time in the 'fifties because Dickens has a sketch of him in one of his volumes of occasional papers. In later years he was to be seen everywhere, especially along the Embankment and near the parks. Once or twice one of these artists rose to better things, and got a picture into a serious exhibition. In the 'nineties the reverse happened. Simeon Solomon, a follower of the Pre-Raphaelites, a friend of Swinburne and Burne-Jones, whose early work, hung at the Royal Academy and other shows, had been widely applauded, went into a professional and moral

decline. He lived mainly in St. Giles's Workhouse, and played pavement-artist in Bayswater.

It was in the early 'nineties that the London night was first set blinking with electric advertisements. They had been in use for some time as fixed illuminations; then somebody set them moving. They had not the elaborate movement of the night-signs of Piccadilly Circus and Leicester Square of our own day; they simply spelled themselves out letter by letter. One of the earliest, I believe, was on the top of a building in Trafalgar Square, and it spelled out "Vinolia Soap." Others that I recall were of Mellin's Food, Nestlé's Milk, and Sapolio. Somebody then took the idea a little farther, and instead of running the sign across the tops of buildings, ran it up and down one of the tall chimneys on the south bank of the river. Very soon other chimneys joined in the spelling-bee, and almost all night advertisements took to movement.

The 'eighties brought yet another innovation, and it seems strange to us that Londoners could have managed so long without it, especially remembering that nearly every street and yard at that time bore the notice—Commit No Nuisance or Decency Forbids. In the roadway of Trafalgar Square, by King Charles's statue, was sunk the first of the town's proper public conveniences.

Tea-gardens and pleasure-gardens had gone out of fashion. Vauxhall had closed in the 'fifties, and Cremorne, a successor, in 1877. For a while there was nothing but the Crystal Palace, and that, apart from its Handel Festivals, was mainly frequented by children and the workers. Then, in the 'nineties, a new and more elaborate resort was opened—Earl's Court, with its lake and its Big Wheel, and its Welcome Club, and its Buffalo Bill Wild West show, its Indian Exhibition, and other attractions. It remained popular until 1908 when the White City of Shepherd's Bush was built.

A street sight that disappeared with the arrival of the petrol age was the horse fire-engine on its way to a fire. This provided much more of a spectacle than the motor engine. It expressed a sense of the urgency and alarm proper to the fact of fire which is not expressed by the swift-gliding engine of to-day. There was no brazen bell for clearing the way; that was done by the voices of the crew. With the glittering harness, the gleaming brass helmets, the two galloping greys going all out, the driver's arms working with them, and the crew delivering crescendo yells, it was a spectacle that brought every street to a standstill and set all eyes alight.

A spectacle, or carnival, that recurred each year from the 'fifties to the petrol age, one that was peculiar to South London, was the Return from the Derby. On that evening, during the years of the 'nineties, the roads from Epsom to Westminster were packed with a holiday crowd cheering or criticising the endless stream of decorated vehicles, from

the nattiest four-in-hands and victorias, to milkmen's floats and donkey-barrows. The crowd exchanged back-chat with the occupants, and small ragamuffins ran alongside the coaches, and turned cart-wheels and hand-springs, with a cry of "Throw out yer mouldy coppers!" Every vehicle carried music of some kind, if only a wheezy concertina or a rusty cornet playing popular tunes of the day. The drivers of the more democratic turn-outs usually wore paper hats and long paper noses, and even the ponies and donkeys were dressed in thrown-out oddments of clothing. On the pavements, boys and girls annoyed each other with water-squirts, or with yard-long feathers which the boys used for tickling the necks of girls at a distance; and hawkers did a great business with rattles and tin trumpets and things of the kind that the earliest Londoners had bought at Bartholomew Fair, as well as two new Fairings; one from America—pop-corn, and one from Europe—confetti.

A feature of London street-life that was peculiar to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the oafish custom of crying purposeless catch-phrases. The phrases had no special application, and were seldom used in any apposite sense. They were parrot-cries from one dull mind to another. One finds no record of them in earlier times; they seem to coincide with the coming of the music-hall. One of the earliest, current in the 'forties, was "Wal-*ker*!" intended to convey incredulity. Others of later date were "Whoa, Emma!" . . . "I'll Have Your Hat!" . . . "Now We Shan't Be Long!" . . . "Fancy Meeting You!" . . . "Does Your Mother Know You're Out?" . . . "Chase Me!" . . . "Have a Banana!" Their popularity among Cockney youth of both sexes, as the small change of conversation, and their origin and (if any) meaning, will provide a pretty puzzle for folk-lorists of the future. In the later years of the century they were chiefly used as introductions between boys and girls at those now vanished institutions, Monkeys' Parades—that is, suburban High Streets during the evening hours of winter, and the asphalt walks round the bandstands of the parks and commons in summer—where they walked up and down, up and down, playing the game called Clicking. This was a pleasant, if crude, pagan rite, with its roots in the walks of Babylon and the hills of Cythera. It had its forms and its rules, and a breach or an ignorance of these put the player out of consideration. There were the grass and the trees of the park, or the brilliant shops and lamps of the High Street; and the band or an organ playing the brave and shining marches of Sousa—*El Capitan*, *Washington Post*, *Down South*; and the scuffle of light feet and the swirl of frocks and the tossing of insolent curls, and the flicking back and forth of the current catch-phrase. And then the hesitant stop, and the confrontation, and the giggling and the banter, and at last the pairing-off.

In a grosser, rather Silenian vein, but also of the 'eighties and 'nineties, were those parading groups of young men in Inverness capes and Gibus

hats, who threw their sovereigns about, and were celebrated in such songs as *Leicester Square*, *The Rowdy-Dowdy Boys*, *Strolling Round the Town*. *Nineteen Jolly Good Boys*, *All Along the Rails*, *Hi-tiddley-hi-ti*.

Petticoat Lane, 1898. By Phil May

They were of no particular significance. They were not Mohocks. They were the last phase—a very mild phase—of that spirit. Getting drunk, sitting on the roofs of hansoms and singing choruses, staying out all night, or spending a night in the cells, gave them the feeling of being as devilish as the Monks of Medmenham. But they were not. They were only foolish youths—overgrown schoolboys—with no invention and less wit. The present century does not know the type. Ghosts of

it appeared in the very early years, about the time of Edward's Coronation, but it really died with Mafeking Night and Victoria.

Mafeking Night gave the century a suitably explosive end. It had begun in Corinthianism; it had continued in the swaggering prosperity of the mid-Victorian years; and it reached its peak in the processions, displays, and orgies of the Diamond Jubilee, the departure of troops for Africa, and Mafeking Night. Those who did not see Mafeking Night have seen nothing like it. Armistice Night of 1918 was comparatively sane. It brought a lot of jollification and horse-play, but it was a half-sobbing jollification of relief; not the swollen bull-doggism of Mafeking Night. I was out on Armistice Night, but I don't recall that publicans went right off their heads and refused all day to take money from anybody. I don't remember any young man screwing up five-pound notes and tossing them into the air for catch-who-can. I don't remember seeing money-grubbing City men going so mad as to shower sovereigns and handfuls of silver among the crowd. I don't remember seeing men take off their hats and jump on them. Certainly, on Armistice Night a few excited spirits made a bonfire in Trafalgar Square of Army huts; but I did not see or hear of any doings quite so loutish and lunatic as those of Mafeking Night. I did not see grey-headed and grey-bearded men carting round "guys" of the Kaiser, as, eighteen years before, similar men had carted round "guys" of Kruger. Tobacconists did not stand at their shop-doors, and rip open boxes of cigars, and distribute smokes to all passers; and if any restaurants gave free suppers, as numbers did on that May night of 1900, I was not lucky enough to find one.

It was the last extravagance of a bloated century; and if Victoria had rounded it off by dying a month earlier, her funeral procession would have given the London streets, in the last days of that century, the sobering impression of the end, not only of a century, but of a condition, of a run of luck, and of assured complacency.

78 The Barrel Organ: a Street Ball in 1872

79 The Nigger Minstrel: a popular Street Entertainer of the 'Seventies

80 The Canadian Arch erected for the Coronation of King Edward VII, 1902

81 Oxford Street on the night of the Coronation of King George VI, 1937

PART FIVE

Within Memory

WHATEVER may have been the historical and moral implications in the passing of Victoria at a time when the new century was drawing its first breaths, the London scene in the opening years was, like the scene at the opening of the nineteenth, very much as it had been in the preceding decade. It was still a London rumbling with horse-buses, tinkling with hansoms, and shrilling with cab-whistles. Here and there an electric brougham slid noiseless through the traffic, and a few motor-cars and a stray motor-bus honked and banged, encouraged by shouts of "Whip be'ind, guv'nor!" or, when they broke down, which they always did: "Sit on its 'ead, mate, and get the 'arness off!"

But they were isolated in the mass of horse-traffic. This traffic was growing thicker and thicker, and on wet days the roads were a morass of mud and horse-droppings, which hoofs and wheels churned and sparked all over the pavements and shop-windows. Street-orderlies (young boys with hand-shovel and brush) were busy all day, moving among the traffic and sweeping up the droppings; you may still see a few of them where horses are still seen—in the City quarter. Crossing the roads on days of rain, except where the crossing-sweeper had made a clean path, made an utter mess of bright boots, and boot-blacks were far more numerous and did far more business than in these days of motors and tarmac paving.

Carters, bus-drivers, tram-drivers, cab-drivers, and the few motor chauffeurs, had no protection in their vehicles against rain. They sat in the open, wearing oil-skin hats and capes, with the rain pouring off them. Outside passengers on the trams and buses were, of course, equally unprotected. They could cover their knees with leathern aprons fixed to the seats, and put up their umbrellas. But these only made one wet huddle, and while your own umbrella dripped down the neck of the man in front, your neck received drips from the umbrella behind. Some of the bus companies showed a little consideration for their drivers by fixing an umbrella over his seat—dark cloth in winter, for rain; white or red cloth in summer, for sun. The cover of the umbrella usually carried an advertisement in large type, either of its maker or of some widely used commodity—soap or cocoa.

The buses were of all colours, as they had been sixty years before—red, blue, yellow, white, green, purple, orange, chocolate. Most of them had names, in the tradition of the old coaches. There were The

Favourite, The Atlas, The Royal Blue, The Royal Oak, The Wellington. When the first motor-buses came to challenge them, they too stressed their individuality instead of sinking it in an insipid number. They came out as The Vanguard, The Arrow, The Pilot, The Rapide. The body of the very first motor-bus was the same as that of the horse-bus, and the driver was seated where the driver of the horse-bus sat—on the top, level with the outside passengers.

With the increase of population and of traffic, and with the coming of the American gospel of "the strenuous life," the people's own pageants came to an end. Perhaps the people became self-conscious; perhaps the spirit of democracy, which sometimes works that way, made them not too ready to identify themselves with a humble job of work. Whatever it was, it made an end of the sweeps' Jack-in-the-Green, of butchers' parades with marrow-bones, of scavengers' parades with music of brush-and-shovel, and of the full ceremony of Beating the Bounds and many other useless and delightful demonstrations. The Fifth of November saturnalia persisted, but as a children's affair; and on May Day, while a few carters decorated their horses with rosettes, the other observances, when made at all, were made by children, and then in a semi-private way, as in the crowning of a May Queen in school playgrounds. The adults, instead of capering and clashing Naxian cymbals, as in other times, did a few Marxian parades with Trade Union symbols to Trafalgar Square, which, in its stony bareness, seems made for the purpose of political demonstrations. Those parades hardly suggested a celebration of Floralia; they did them rather as though they were attending the obsequies of something or other. And of course, whether they knew it or not, they were indeed mourning something: the loss of a devout paganism for which the unsmiling worship of the God of Economics was a poor exchange.

The old Street Cries also died on the air. Hawkers still hawked, but they seemed angry about their goods, where their grandfathers and grandmothers had been pleased. Instead of using the laudatory and pleasant chants that had hitherto been used, they bawled and yelled. One chant only refused to die; a chant that may be heard even in these days towards the end of summer—the lavender-woman's. The notices in certain squares and streets—Organs and Street Cries Prohibited—may have had something to do with it, but the real reason, I fancy, was that the hawkers felt that there was No Time for making a song about selling. Life was Real—Life was Earnest. The thing was—to sell, and get it done with, and then sell some more. Hustle was putting its uneasy nose into everything, even street-trading, which had always, save for the Flying Pieman, been a matter of easy chaffering.

More in the tradition were the kerbside pedlars, and one of the sights of the Christmas weeks of those years was Ludgate Hill. All down the hill, a line of pedlars stood shoulder to shoulder, offering penny and

82 A Mass Arrest of Suffragettes, 1910

83 The Performing Bear, 1905

84 The General Strike, 1926: a disabled bus under tow is watched by a curious crowd

85 The Jubilee, 1935; Decorations in a London Byway

twopenny toys, which squeaked, rattled, chirped, clicked, popped, jingled, twanged, and buzzed. London and country shoppers came with their children particularly to see this street bazaar, and a humming trade was done. But in the course of a few years the affair, like many other harmless and delightful festivals of the people, was labelled a Nuisance, and the pedlars were moved on. Pedlars, indeed, are likely very soon to be moved right out of the London picture. An announcement was made some time ago that existing pedlars' licences would be renewed, during the owner's lifetime, but that no fresh licences would be issued.

The elderly look back to life in Edwardian days as smooth and leisurely, but to those who were living their working years at that time life was like life in every age—a matter of moments. The motor, which Henley had lately celebrated in his *Song of Speed* (after being taken for a ride by Alfred Harmsworth and brought back alive) offered a new pace. It was not, as I say, in general use, but its movement and its power had been seen and tested, and it was to set the tempo of the future until the aeroplane made it possible for a man to breakfast in London and dine in Cairo. That brief Edwardian age—nine years—was for London a transition age. Old and new jostled for place. Horse-buses and motor-buses were on the roads together. Hansoms and taxis met in hate and contempt. When Clare Market, Holywell Street, Wych Street, and Newcastle Street were torn down, and the new crescent and highway were cut through to Holborn, the highway was built up with great white buildings in the American style, and the crescent was made to look backward with the Saxon name of Aldwych. The Strand and Oxford Street were a jumble of past and present. The majority of business men went about in the old silk topper, but a few of the modern spirits welcomed the new age with the soft Stetson. Most women continued to wear trailing skirts which swept up the dust of the streets; only the advanced woman and the suffragette were sensible enough to wear a skirt that finished a couple of inches above the heel. The Victorian age took a long time in dying.

The rivalry between hansom and taxi was illustrated in a story that was running round at that time. Both types of vehicle stood on the same rank, but the taxi claimed almost all the notice. It was new and glittering, and the first taximen wore a uniform of brilliant blue coat, with silver buttons, and shining peaked cap. The story concerned a fare signalling from the pavement for a taxi. The taximan acknowledged the signal and prepared to move. He started up his engine with the old starting-handle. He unbuttoned his brilliant coat, and took out a gold cigarette-case. He selected a Turkish cigarette, put it into an ivory holder; put the case back into his pocket; buttoned his coat with its silver buttons, put on his yellow chamois gloves, seated himself, and glided proudly away to the kerb. One of the hansom cabbies, who had

had no fare all day, watched this ceremony with a sour face, and then called to a mate: "I say, George—you heard about God?" George called back: "Course I have. Why?" . . . "Oh, nothing. Only there goes his brother Charlie."

Those who are middle-aged to-day can hardly help feeling old fogies. They have lived under five sovereigns. They have seen the hansom trot away into the twilight of social history. They have seen the brougham and the victoria disappear before the family car. They have seen electric trams come—and go. They have seen an entertainment, which in their early days was shown in parish halls as Animated Photographs, become one of the world's industries. They have seen the huddled and grimy streets of the financial and commercial quarter bloom into magnificence with domes and towers of shining concrete. They have seen a London that lived behind closed doors, with curtains and blinds shrouding its windows from curious eyes, and they have seen a London that has come into the open. They were born into an Old English London, and they have lived into an American London. They have seen their main streets widened and re-faced, with glass taking much of the place of brick. And they have seen the motor-coach and the small car bring such crowds from the suburbs, the home counties, and the provinces, that the population of the streets in daytime is almost treble what it was in their youth.

The Coronation of Edward, fixed for June 1902, and postponed by his sudden illness to August, infected the streets and the people with such an excitement that the occasion might have been a Restoration. The last Coronation had happened sixty-five years ago. A few octogenarians had seen that procession—or said they had—but to the majority a Coronation was a novelty. The streets were dressed up even more lavishly than they had been for the Diamond Jubilee, and for some months all buildings on the announced route were shrouded in wooden stands with crimson seats. Prices were high, and the twisters were about, as they were at the Coronation of 1937. People who had booked and paid for seats for the Coronation of June 1902, learned that they had paid to see a procession on a fixed date of June. As that procession, by no fault of the sellers, had not happened, the sellers maintained that the purchasers were in the position of having backed a non-starter. If they wanted to see a Coronation procession in August, that would mean another transaction. Something of the kind, I was told, happened at the last Coronation, when people who had booked seats for the Coronation procession of Edward VIII, and assumed that this would cover the Coronation procession of his successor, were told that it did not; the first contract was for a specified procession of a specified monarch; seats for an entirely different procession—that of George VI—required a new contract.

One feature of the 1902 decorations was a great arch, in the style of Temple Bar, set astride Whitehall. This was sent by Canada, and the entire arch (it was called The Canadian Arch) was composed of straw and grain grown on Canadian farms. The decorations generally, and the illuminations at night, were lavish; and though some of the spirit had evaporated from the affair by its coming six weeks after the fixed date, it was a day of genial riot. It was not, of course, a Mafeking Night, but the London crowd was still easy in its sub-conscious joints, and could be, as it seldom can to-day, demonstrative and expressive. Also, it had then more license, and it could use all kinds of accompaniment to carnival that are now forbidden. It had whisks made of strips of red-white-and-blue paper. It had mouth-organs and concertinas. It smothered its coats and hats with red-white-and-blue rosettes. It saluted the monarch on his tour of his city with yells of "Good Old Teddy!" It danced in the street. It got comically drunk. A popular song, published about a year before the event, had expressed the feeling of the common streets. It was called *Coronation Day*, and it had nothing to say about the religious or political significance of the event. Its theme was carnival:

> There's a good time coming, boys,
> In the future—what a time of
> Ju-
> bi-
> la-
> tion,
> What a lovely spree. . . .

The streets had their spree, and Londoners did all those things, and used all that behaviour, which to-day they are too "nice" to think of. Those things are now done in London streets only when football supporters come down from the North of England and Scotland.

In the year following the Coronation, the new desire for speed was recognised by the electric tram. The first line was from the south side of Westminster Bridge to Clapham Common, and it was opened by the running of a decorated tram between those points, with the Prince and Princess of Wales (later George V and Queen Mary) as the passengers. They rode on the uncovered top, and the engineers seem to have had some doubts about the behaviour of the new Juggernaut: the tram was closely followed on its journey by a fully equipped fire-engine. It gave the firemen no occasion for doing their stuff; and the electric tram became a regular part of almost all the L.C.C. highways that had been served by horse-trams. But ten years were to pass before the last horse-tram disappeared from the streets. The persistent back-number was the horse-tram from Hampstead to Euston Road which did not retire until 1913. The horse-bus was another vehicle that refused to accept defeat until it was dead. The very last horse-bus was running during

the last war. This was the halfpenny bus across Waterloo Bridge, from Somerset House to Waterloo Station. It threw down its reins in 1916.

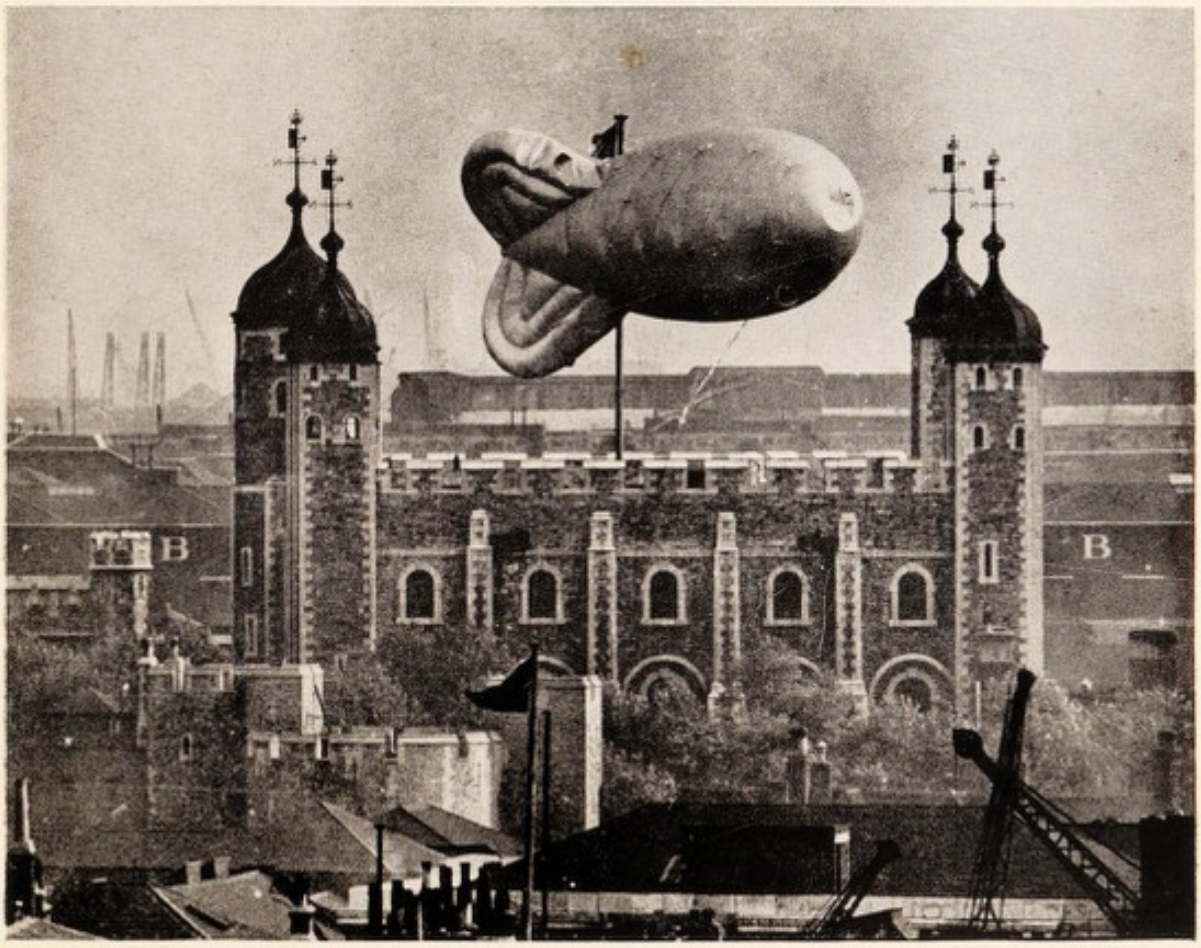
In the early years of the century, the foreign quarters of the town were more thickly peopled than they had ever been. Spitalfields was filled with Russians, especially after the abortive revolution of 1905, and they had their own cafés, their own newspaper and book-shops, their own vapour-baths, and their own welfare committee. Soho was filled with French, Swiss, and Germans, many of whom had come in during the upheavals of the 'sixties and 'seventies. Every house in Eyre Street Hill, Clerkenwell, was crowded with Italians. Whitechapel was largely occupied by Jews of all European countries. Limehouse and Poplar were thick with Chinese, Lascars, Indians, and Malays; and the Home for Asiatics, founded fifty years earlier, was always full. These foreign colonies, as I said earlier, had existed in London for many centuries, and for many years had had their own churches—Danish, Dutch, German, Flemish, Jewish, Moravian, Greek, Spanish, Italian, Swedish. The first Dutch Church in Austin Friars was founded in the sixteenth century. The Moravian Chapel, off Fetter Lane, is of the early seventeenth century. The Sardinian Chapel, which stood near Lincoln's Inn Fields, was built in 1648; the Spanish Chapel in 1797; the Danish Church in the late seventeenth century, and the Swedish Church in the early eighteenth.

London had been for long the common asylum for the persecuted and the exiled. They could come in without hindrance, and they did; and often in their neighbourhood they earned resentment by working at low prices and "taking the bread of Englishmen." Many of them came in destitute, or sick; and a number of them were of no very good character. Not until 1905 was any real restriction placed upon them. Then, and only after much agitation, the Aliens Immigration Bill was passed, giving the Government power to control, and, where necessary, forbid entrance to this country. Since that time, the foreign quarters have been more thinly populated, much less national in atmosphere, and less picturesque and attractive to the wanderer.

A demand for more effective restriction on the entry of aliens of doubtful character was evoked by an event of 1910–11—the last fire-arms battle the streets have (so far) seen, and the last real riot, if we except the Fascist and Communist clashes of the 1930's. Just as the earliest riots, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, were caused by the presence of foreigners, so was this affair. The siege of Sidney Street, which runs between Whitechapel Road and Commercial Road, was an affair between English police and Russian burglars, in which the police were reinforced by the military.

On the night of December 16, 1910, a policeman patrolling Houndsditch heard suspicious noises at the back of a jeweller's shop. He passed

86 The Demolition of Waterloo Bridge, 1938



87 A Barrage Balloon over the Tower, 1939

88 The Proclamation of War, August 4th, 1914: the Scene in Whitehall

89 The Proclamation of War, September 3rd, 1939

word of this to another officer, who passed it on, and a body of police was assembled, including three sergeants. They went to the side door of the building next to the jeweller's, and knocked loudly on the door. These side entrances were in Cutler Street, which turned off Houndsditch on the east side. The door was opened, and the sergeant in charge put his foot in the opening. Next moment a fire of revolver shots came from the dark doorway, and a man rushed out, firing as he went. The sergeant in charge, another sergeant, and a police-constable were instantly killed. Another sergeant and a police-constable were severely wounded, and the fifth man only escaped a bullet by dropping flat to the ground. In the general mix-up, the man who had rushed out got away, and by the time the unhurt constable had looked to his comrades and secured assistance, the rest of the gang, three in all, had found another way out. People in neighbouring houses spoke of seeing two men walking hurriedly along, leading a third, who appeared to be lame or injured. Inside the building at whose door the police had knocked, tools were found which were apparently being used for boring through the wall into the shop of the jeweller.

Next day, or rather a few hours later (3 a.m. of December 17), a local doctor was called by two women who were not English, to attend an injured man at a house in Grove Street, off Commercial Road. He found the man suffering from a bullet wound in the back. The man explained that he had been accidentally shot by a friend while examining a revolver. The doctor called again later in the day, and found the man dead. The house was empty, but as he went in he met two men of foreign appearance coming away. He reported to the police.

Six days later, December 22, various arrests were made, but nothing much came of them. The man most wanted was Peter Piatkow, known as Peter the Painter. Around this man many legends sprang up. They all say that he was not one of the men finally trapped in the Sidney Street house. One version says that he got to France, and some years later was shot dead in a provincial town during a similar burglary. Another says that he roamed about Europe, and was eventually seen, in 1919, in the new Russia of the Soviets. Yet another says that he was actually seen around Whitechapel long after the affair. The truth is hardly to be known, since the Sidney Street house yielded no secrets. Anyway, in the search for him during the last days of that December, all available police were employed, and detectives were at work as loafers, hawkers, and other street characters. At last, on January 2, seventeen days after the murder of the police, the detectives somehow learned that he and another man known as "Fritz" were in hiding at a house in Sidney Street.

Knowing that they were dealing with desperadoes, they made cautious preparations. They did not try to rush the house. At seven o'clock on the morning of the 3rd, an armed band, under Inspectors

Collison and Wensley, approached it, both back and front, and, keeping at a distance, they made known their presence at the front by throwing one or two stones at the front windows. They were answered at once by a volley of shots, and one sergeant was wounded. They then went under cover and whenever they saw a movement at the window, they fired. The house returned their fire.

The police then settled down to a siege, and the exchange of shots went on for some hours. Winston Churchill was then Home Secretary, and by his order a detachment of the Guards went from the Tower to support the police. They arrived soon after ten o'clock, and kept the house, back and front, covered with their rifles. At about noon Winston Churchill himself went down and examined the scene and the situation, and gave some directions for dealing with it. Firing from both sides continued, but from the house side it was merely futile defiance. For the two men in that house there was no escape. If ammunition and food ran short, they had no means of getting supplies. They could do no more killing, since police and soldiers had effective cover in doorways alongside the house, right and left, back and front. They were trapped. They could only walk out with hands up, or . . . They chose the alternative, and at about half-past twelve they sprang their surprise. The house was seen to be in flames.

The Fire Brigade was at once called, but it could do nothing. It could not get near the fire because, with the house burning over them, the men continued to shoot. For an hour and a half the house was burning without check. Not until two o'clock did the roof fall in, and the revolver-fire cease. And when, at last, the firemen were able to approach the smouldering wreckage and put out the last of the flames, they found little that was of any use in making a full story of the Houndsditch burglary and murder. The men in the house had used their last cartridges on themselves, and the remains found under the wreckage were so charred and scattered that nothing was left by which anybody could have made even a haphazard identification.

During those years the streets were enlivened by the parades and vagaries of the Suffragettes. They pestered Cabinet Ministers on their way to the House. They chained themselves to the railings of Parliament Square. They learnt ju-jitsu, and overthrew policemen. It was always a rule that visitors to the National Gallery and other galleries should give up umbrellas and walking-sticks on entering. At that time all women had to give up hand-bags as well, because one ardent Suffragette had gone into the National Gallery with a harmless-looking handbag, and had produced from it a hammer with which she smashed the glass of three pictures. Other tricks were padlocking themselves to the handle of the door of Ministers' private houses, and then ringing and ringing and knock-knock-knocking at the door; throwing ink

or paint on the doors of those houses; throwing acid into letter-boxes; breaking up public meetings by ringing muffin-bells; secreting themselves in the Westminster Clock Tower.

The London of that time supported twelve music-halls at its centre, and twenty-five in the suburbs. It supported thirty-three theatres at the centre, and twenty-two just outside. Shops continued to grow in number, and under the stimulus of Gordon Selfridge, who had brought to Oxford Street the ultimate note of exclamation, they grew in size. Tea-shops grew into Corner Houses and Maisons and Palaces. Stores that had plodded along with three floors took thought and increased their stature a hundred per cent. The motor-bus grew larger in size, and its sphere of service was increased. Londoners could then surprise themselves by riding from Seven Kings to Hampton Court; from Shoreditch to Farnborough, in Kent; from Ealing Broadway to Barking; from Wood Green to Sidcup, and from Victoria to Southgate. South London trams came to the centre of the town by way of the bridges and the Embankments.

Shops run by the owner and family kept open till nine or ten, and sometimes eleven. Public-houses were open from six or seven in the morning till half-past midnight. You could lunch well for five shillings, and in 1911 your wine-merchant could supply you with a Mouton Rothschild, 1879, bottled at the Chateau, at 50*s*. a dozen. He could sell you an everyday table Bordeaux (Medoc or Pichon Longueville) at quite laughable prices, though my own laugh is a little wry—16*s*. and 28*s*. a dozen, respectively. Port of 1887 was in 1911 75*s*. a dozen, and a drinkable Chambertin was 27*s*. a dozen. In the centre of town were cafés of a kind we do not see to-day—German bier-halles (Gambrinus) with Blue Hungarian bands. In the afternoons, the hotels were giving Tango *thés dansants*, and on this challenge, the waltz came back, and organs filled the streets with the mournful airs of *Destiny*, *Automne*, *Septembre*, or the lighter air of *Nights of Gladness*. Leicester Square and its cafés (in the basement rooms) were filled with painted dolls, and in the same quarter one saw young men of a type which had not been much seen since the great trial of 1895, but has been with us ever since.

It was a London that was going ahead. American ideas and ways of life had been infecting it for some time, and where it had been rich and fruity it was becoming slick and snappy. Through the centuries it had had many crazes for foreign manners. It had had its Spanish phase, two French phases, its Italian phase, and in the middle nineteenth century its German phase. In the early twentieth, therefore, it could only go American, while America went English. When the American Hammerstein built his London Opera House in Kingsway, and put on the less familiar Italian opera, it was not a smashing success. But in 1909 its stage attacked London with the first full American revue. It was called *Come Over Here*, and it went over. The movies, which were

just then making themselves seen, but not heard, carried on the work, and all phases of London life submitted to an American invasion. I was going to say that it was a peaceful invasion, but I remember that they brought rag-time; they brought their Fun Fairs; they brought chewing-gum, which is not as effective a silencer as rubber usually is; they brought their slang, and with it smothered the rich Cockney slang of seven hundred years' growth; and they brought their money which made more noise than their dance-bands after a course of Maruhana cigarettes. And they brought their architecture, and their ideas of Bigger and Bigger and Faster and Faster. They brought their Palaseums and their Picturedromes and their million-dollar prize-fights and their soda-fountains, and with them they made the London that you see to-day.

But with all that zest and pace, and delight in it, there was unease. Over all those years was the shadow of war. This could be perceived in the number of meetings, in London and elsewhere, of Peace Committees. The *Entente Cordiale* was arranged with France. There was war between Russia and Japan. There were international conferences at The Hague for the limitation of armaments. The Kaiser came to London. The French President came to London. King Edward went to Berlin. Austria grabbed two Balkan States. Italy and Turkey quarrelled over Tripoli. Turkey and Montenegro went to war. In 1913 King George went to Berlin, and the Kaiser showed him the German Army at manœuvres. And in 1914 war broke over all Europe.

During the next four years the streets of London were not themselves. They were filled with uniforms, English and foreign. Hoardings and public buildings were plastered with exhortations and appeals. Buses and trams were driven and conducted by women. Railway and tube trains were attended by women porters and ticket-collectors. Street lighting was not, as in our time, extinguished; the lamps were painted a dark blue. In the first year or two, before rationing, a familiar scene was the long queue of shoppers outside all provision shops, with mounted police in attendance. The golden sovereign and half-sovereign made their last ring on shop-counters—a rich ring that has never since been heard. Hotels became Government offices. Parks and squares became kitchen-gardens. Empty shops and houses became recruiting offices and medical-examination centres. Whitehall offices swarmed with small girl-messengers in brown uniforms. Buildings half finished remained in that state for the duration. Immigration laws were more or less suspended, and a flood of refugees from Belgium and Northern France poured into London. Belgian patisseries appeared in Soho, and the number of café-bars was trebled. In the later years, meatless days at restaurants were introduced (days when rationed meat was forbidden) and the restaurants then offered such delicacies as stewed goat, bullock's-heart and sheep's-head, with swedes instead of potatoes; and we took it and liked it.

For four years, through some shortage of food, a great deal of Spanish influenza, and intermittent air-raids, London carried on. At last came that morning of 1918 when, at eleven o'clock on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, all London poured into St. James's Park, and marched by the Mall and every other way to mass itself before Buckingham Palace, cheering, singing, weeping.

To all except those in their teens, the London of the succeeding years has been familiar. The streets have seen bus-strikes, tube-strikes, railway-strikes, a policeman's strike, and a General Strike. They have seen the widening of old thoroughfares, buildings still bigger and brighter, more and more traffic (until one-way streets and roundabouts were introduced to solve an insoluble problem), more and more cheap entertainment houses, more and more glare and glitter, and more and more of the paraphernalia for having that Good Time which seems to bore everybody as soon as they get it. They have seen the pageant of a Silver Jubilee and the pageant of a Coronation—in the middle of a bus-strike. They have seen themselves at night glowing to the sky in the glorification of flood-lighting; and, at the time of writing this, they were living after dark in the light of the stars.

After an armed truce of twenty-one years, we were back in the war years. The London streets were again distracted and disfigured. Boarded windows and sandbags were everywhere, and we crawled at night in a deeper gloom than that of 1918; as deep, as I said earlier, as that of the London of the Normans. Yet the streets of London survived. They were battered and scarred. Whole streets were blasted out of shape; whole sections engulfed; new palaces and old monuments fell. But something survived. The soul of a great city is not vulnerable to high explosives and bits of metal, or to flame and poisonous vapour; and in that knowledge, those who are left will rebuild the city of their fathers.

Meanwhile, the Londoner is still the Londoner. He changes his dress, his ways of living, his means of transport, the style of his house, but he is always the Londoner. In times of peace he enjoys his London, and under the filth and vulgarity of war he adapts both himself and his London to meet it. But under all his adaptations he remains the Londoner, recognisable by sight and hearing. The life of the streets presented in the earliest poems and pamphlets and plays, and the later novels, shows that in his truculence, in his good-humour, his strutting attitudes, and his salted vocabulary, he does not greatly change. His jests at any time are of the same vein and have a common flavour. The prentice of the past is the office-boy of to-day. Bardolph and Nym, Dame Ursula, Will Honeycomb, Beau Tibbs, the Branghton family, Sam Weller, the Artful Dodger, Mr. Guppy, Dick Swiveller, all honest Londoners, are, in different vocations, still to be seen about the streets.

And the streets themselves continue their traditional office in drawing young people from the villages and the fields, to See Life and seek fortune. The very phrase, The Streets of London, has for centuries served as a figure for splendour or misery. Sometimes the streets were presented as paved with gold:

> Strewn with gold and silver sheen,
> In Cockney streets no mould is seen;
> Pancakes be the shingles all
> Of church and cloister, bower and hall;
> Running rivers grete and fine
> Of hippocrass and ale and wine . . .

Sometimes they were highways to fortune and sometimes corridors to the Bridge of Sighs. To be turned out of home "into the streets" was one step this side of death, and to ride through the streets in a coach was the synonym of success. Tom Tiddler's Ground or Stony-Hearted Stepmothers, they have grown haphazard, drawing to themselves something from each of the generations that have lived among them. They have been, century by century, a constant fascination, and they remain as enigmatic, and perhaps as meaningless, as the Sphinx.

As soon as London's people became self-conscious in London pride, which they did very early, a literature in celebration of the streets sprang up, first in manuscript and, when printing came, in type. Year by year it has been increased by those who have tried to reflect the thousand aspects of the streets and to interpret them. To the social philosopher, the streets are matter for grievous speculation; to the alderman they are facts linked with the other facts of lighting, paving, rates, and sewers; to the man of fancy they are a treasury of delight and of mysteries innumerable. Dickens, when making one of his all-night rambles, called it—Giving oneself the Key of the Street. But not even he possessed, in the other sense, the key to London's streets. The master-mystery eluded him as it eluded all others. Philosophers, poets, romancers, painters—all have applied, and still apply, their eyes and minds and imaginations to the matter; and all of them have ended where they began: admitting the spell, and still wondering.

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(The numerals in heavy type denote the *figure numbers* of illustrations)