

course to perilous devices that— In short I see no chance of a successful defence.'

'You once loved me, Richard Penson,' said Judith Morton, in a low, agitated voice, 'or at least said you did.'

'Once loved you—said I did,' echoed Penson.

'I know not what to say,' continued Judith, as if unheeding his words, and with eyes bent on the ground; 'Harpur can never be, as I told you, more to me than he is now—I have reason, indeed, to believe that he has no wish to be, faithful, as yet, as he has proved to his promise not to betray me; and it may be, Richard—it may be I say,—that I begin to think will have slight weight with you—that—that gratitude might lead me to reward—to return the devotion to which I should be indebted for the preservation of my young life.'

Judith—Judith Morton! gasped Penson, 'do not drive me mad!'

'Make no rash promises Richard to incur peril for my sake,' said Judith Morton, rising from her chair; 'by to-morrow morning you will have thought the matter calmly over. I will call about ten o'clock, and you can then tell me if I can count or not upon effectual help from you. Good night.'

She was gone; but not till her purpose had been thoroughly accomplished. Richard Penson's resolution was taken, and before he threw himself upon his bed that night, his eager and practised brain had elaborated a plan—audacious, and full of peril to himself—whereby an acquittal might be, with almost certainty, insured. 'I do it,'—it was thus he glozed the scheme to his own conscience—'I do it to save her life—her young and innocent life, as she truly says—and I will take care that no harm shall ultimately befall Blundell. He will have abundant means of self vindication when—I and Judith are safe beyond the Atlantic.'

The clocks were chiming ten when Judith Morton entered the young attorney's office on the following morning. 'There is more than hops, there is triumph, safety in your look,' she said, unglowing her hand, and extending it to Penson.

'Yes, Judith,' he replied, 'I have determined upon running all risks to extricate you from this peril. And first the watch—a description of which I shall, as the prisoner's attorney, take care to advertise by-and-by—have you it with you?'

'Yes! here it is; but what is it you propose doing?'

'That, dear Judith, I must be excused for not disclosing. Success depends upon close secrecy. I will, however, see Harpur as his professional adviser, without delay, and assure him—for his continued silence is paramountly essential—that an acquittal is certain, but not of the means of procuring it—stone walls have ears, as they say,—and indiscretion being as fatal as treachery.'

'No evil will fall upon any innocent person,' asked the young woman.

'No permanent evil—of that be assured,' replied Penson. This was about all that passed between the confederates, and a few minutes afterwards, Judith Morton took leave and was soon on her way home.

Harpur's trial came on during the March Assize, at Appleby, and as the case had excited much interest in the County, the Crown Court was densely crowded. The witnesses for the prosecution were not asked a single question by the counsel instructed by Penson for the defence till it came to the turn of the last and only important one, James Blundell. The cross-examination of this man was from the first a menacing one, and the hush of the excited auditory deepened into painful intensity as it became evident from the stern questioning of the counsel, that the defence intended to be set up was, that the deceased had met his death at the hand of the witness, not of the prisoner. It was elicited from Blundell, though with much difficulty, that he was in embarrassed circumstances, considerably in debt to the deceased, with whom he had, in consequence, had words more than once, and that he knew Robert Masters had been heard to say he would sell him (Blundell) up before long. The witness was greatly agitated by this exposure of his affairs, and so fiercely was he pressed by the zealous counsel for nearly an hour of merciless cross-examination, that he could scarcely stand when told to leave the witness-box.

'I have to request, my Lord,' said the prisoner's counsel, 'that the last witness be not permitted to leave the court—for the present at least.' The judge nodded assent, and a couple of javelin-men placed themselves by the side of the nervous and terrified Blundell. The case for the Crown having closed, and no speech in those days being allowed to be made by a reputed felon's counsel, witnesses for the defence were at once called. 'Call Thomas Aldous,' said Richard Penson to the clerk of the Court, and presently Thomas Aldous, a middle-aged, gold-spectacled gentleman, of highly respectable aspect, presented himself in the witness-box.

'You are the proprietor, I believe, My Aldous,' said the prisoner's counsel, 'of an extensive pawnbroking establishment in London?'

'Well, Sir,' replied the witness, 'I cannot say mine is an extensive establishment, but it is, I am bold to say, a respectable one, and situated not in London proper but in the Blackfriars Road, Southwark.'

'No matter; you have been within the last few days in communication, with respect to an advertised gold watch, with the attorney for the prisoner, Mr Penson.'

'I have.'

'Do you produce the watch in question?'

'I do: here it is. It was pawned with me,' added the scrupulous witness, refreshing his memory by a glance at the duplicate, 'on the 18th of February last, for £10, and the address given, No. 8 Lambeth Walk, is, I have since ascertained, a fictitious one.'

'Will the brother of the deceased, who has already been sworn,' said the examining barrister, 'have the kindness to look at this watch?'

Mr James Masters did so, and identified it as belonging to his brother, and worn by him at the time of death.

'Should you be able, Mr Aldous,' continued counsel, 'to recognize the person who pawned the watch?'

'I shall have no difficulty in doing so,' said the pretended Aldous, 'although it was just between the lights when the man, a middle-aged, stoutish person, came to my shop; as he had not only had a peculiar cast in his eyes, but that once or twice when a handkerchief which he held to his face—I suppose in consequence of toothache—slipped aside, I noticed a large, bright red stain, either from scrofula or a natural mark across his lower jaw.'

As this audaciously-accurate description of Blundell left the witness's lips, every eye in court was turned upon that astounded individual; the javelin-men drew back with instinctive aversion from in front of him, and he, as if impelled by a sympathetic horror of himself, shrieked out, 'That's me! he means me! O God! That is the man,' promptly broke in the pawnbroker; 'I should know him amongst a million.' This was too much for Blundell; he strove to gasp out a fierce denial, but strong emotion choked his utterance, and he fell down in a fit, from which he did not recover for some hours, then to find himself in close custody upon suspicion of being the assassin of Robert Masters.

The proceedings in court need not be further detailed; the prosecution had, of course irretrievably broken down, and there was nothing for it but to formally acquit the prisoner, who was at once discharged, and the crowded court was immediately cleared of the excited auditory, numerous groups of whom remained for long afterwards in the streets, eagerly canvassing the strange issue of the trial. As Richard Penson left the court, a scrap of paper was slipped into his hand, upon which was scrawled in pencil, and in a disguised hand, 'Thanks—a thousand thanks but no harm must come to poor B——. You shall hear from me in a few days at Liverpool.—J——'

As soon as Blundell could collect his scattered thoughts and advise with a lawyer, there was found to be no difficulty in establishing an *alibi*, that on the day of the pretended pawning, he was in his own home at Bedstone, and he was conditionally liberated. Inquiries were next set on foot respecting Mr Aldous, and as no such person could be found the nature of the conspiracy by which justice had been defeated, gradually disclosed itself. An effort was also made to arrest Penson, the prisoner's attorney, but as he had previously disappeared from Liverpool and it was reported sailed for America with Judith Morton, the pursuit was abandoned. This information was completely erroneous; Judith Morton had indeed embarked for America, but it was with her husband, Charles Harpur to whom she had been privately married three weeks previous to the death of Robert Masters, the wedding having been intendedly kept secret for a time, partly on account of the recent death of the bride's father, who, by-the-bye, died in poor circumstances—and partly because of some family reason of Harpur's. This intelligence reached Penson at Liverpool, in a letter dated London, about a week subsequent to the trial, containing many apologies, another £50, and signed 'Judith Harpur.'

I will not detain the reader with any description of the wretched, vagabond life, led by Penson, from the moment of his departure from Liverpool till I met him in Holborn—till his death in fact—for he was utterly irreclaimable—which was not long delayed, and took place in the infirmary of a city workhouse. He, at all events, though not reached by the arm of the law, paid the full penalty of his offence. Whether the same might be said of Judith Morton, I know not, Penson never having heard either of her or Harpur since they left England for the States.

From Tait's Edinburgh Magazine.  
**THE REPORTERS' GALLERY.**

Perhaps, after all, in nothing is the astonishing improvement made in these latter times so conspicuous as in our system of parliamentary reporting. The House was in terror when reporters first found their way

into it. 'Why, sir,' said Mr Wennington, addressing the Speaker, 'you will have every word that is spoken here mis-represented by fellows who thrust themselves into our gallery. You will have the speeches of this House printed every day during your session, and we shall be looked upon as the most contemptible assembly on the face of the earth.' In consequence of such attacks as these, the reporters became frightened, and gave the debates with the speakers disguised under Roman names, though nothing could be more wearisome than the small type of the political club, where Publicola talked against turnpike-gates and Tullus Hostilius declaimed on the horrors of drinking gin. Nor is it to be wondered at that the House grew angry when such reports as the following professed to be a faithful account of its proceeding: 'Colonial Barré moved, that Jeremiah Weymouth, the d——n of this kingdom, is not a member of this House.' Even when the reporters triumphed, the public were little benefitted.—Nothing can be more tantalizing than such statements as these, which we meet with in old parliamentary reports: 'Mr Sheridan now rose, and, during the space of five hours and forty minutes, commanded the admiration and attention of the House by an oration of almost unexampled excellence, uniting the most convincing closeness and accuracy of argument with the most luminous prevision and perspicuity of language; and alternately giving force and energy to truth by solid and substantial reasoning, and enlightening the most extensive and involved subjects with the purest clearness of logic and the brightest splendor of rhetoric.' Sheridan's leader fared no better. 'Mr Fox,' we are told, 'was wonderfully pleasant on Lord Clive's joining the administration.' Equal injustice is done to Mr Burke. We read, 'Mr Burke turned, twisted, metamorphosed, and represented everything which the right honourable gentleman (Mr Pitt) had advanced, with so many ridiculous forms, that the House was kept in a continual roar of laughter.' Again, 'Mr Burke enforced these beautiful and affecting statements by a variety of splendid and affecting passages from the Latin classics.' It is no wonder, then, that a prejudice should have existed against the reporters. On a motion made by Lord Stanhope, that the shorthand writers employed on the trial of Hastings be summoned to the bar of the House to read their minutes, Lord Loughborough is reported, in Lord Campbell's life of him, to have said, 'God forbid that ever their lordships should call on the shorthand writers to publish their notes; for of all the people, shorthand writers were ever the furthest from correctness, and there were no man's word they ever had that they again returned. They were in general ignorant, as acting mechanically and not by considering the antecedents, and by catching the sound and not the sense they perverted the sense of the speaker, and made him appear as ignorant as themselves.' At a later period, the audacity and impudence of the reporters increased, and loud and numerous were the complaints made against them. Mr Wilberforce, who really deserved better treatment at their hands, read to the House, on one occasion, an extract from a newspaper, in which he was reported as having said, 'Potatoes make men healthy, vigorous, and active; but what is still more in their favour, they make men tall; more especially was he led to say so as being rather under the common size, and he must lament that his guardians had not fostered him upon that genial vegetable.' Mr Martin, of Galway, has immortalized himself by his complaint made about the same time, though based upon a less solid foundation than that of the great Abolitionist. The reporter having dashed his pen under some startling passages which had fallen from the Hibernian orator's lips—the printer was called to the bar. In defence he put in the report, containing the very words. 'That may be,' said Martin, 'but did I speak them in italics?' Of course the printer was nonplussed by such a question, and the house was convulsed with laughter. Happily, this state of things no longer exists, and, in the language of Mr Macaulay, it is now universally felt 'that the gallery in which the reporters sit, has become a fourth estate of the realm.' The publication of the debates, which seemed to the most liberal statesmen full of danger to the great safeguards of public liberty, is now regarded by many persons as a safeguard tantamount, and more than tantamount, to all the rest put together. 'Give me,' said Sheridan, whilst fighting the battle of the reporters on the floor of the house, 'Give me but the liberties of the press, and I will give to the minister a venal House of Peers—I will give him a corrupt and servile House of Commons—I will give him the whole host of ministerial influence—I will give him all the power that place can confer upon him to purchase up submission and overawe resistance—and yet, armed with the liberties of the press, I will go forth to meet him undismayed; I will attack the mighty fabric he has raised with that mightier engine. I will shake down from its height corruption and bury it beneath the ruins of the abuses it was meant to shelter.'

The reporters have now a comfortable gallery to themselves—they have cushions as soft to sit upon as M.P.'s—they have plenty of room to write in, and whilst they wait their turns they may indulge in criticism on high art or Chinese literature—or the divine melodies of Mario, or the merits of Mr Cobden—a very favorite topic with reporters—or go to sleep. Mr Jerdan, in his Memoirs, tells how different it was in his day; then the reporters had only access to the Strangers' Gallery, and could only make sure of getting in there by being the first in the crowd that generally was collected previous to its being opened.—But about the smart new gallery there are no associations on which memory cares to dwell. It was different under the late one; old Sam Johnson sat there with his shabby black and unwieldy bulk, taking care to remember just enough of the debate to convince the public that 'the Whig dogs,' to use his own expressive language, 'had the worst of it.'—We can fancy Cave, of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' with a friend in the gallery, stealthily, for fear they should be detected and turned out, taking a few brief notes of the debate, and then, at the tap-room of the nearest public-house, amidst the fumes of tobacco and beer, writing out as much as they could, which Guthrie then revised, and which afterwards appeared in the magazine under the head of 'Debates in Great Lilliput.'—Woodfall we see—the Woodfall of Junius—his pockets stuffed with cold, hard-boiled eggs—sitting out the live-long debate and then writing so much of it as his powerful memory retained—a task which often occupied him till noon the next day, but which gave the 'Diary' a good sale, till Perry, of the Morning Chronicle—Perry, the friend of Coleridge and of Moore—introduced the principle of the division of labour, and was thus enabled to get out the Chronicle long before Woodfall's report appeared.

We see rollicking roysterous reporters, full of wine and fun, committing all kinds of absurdity. For instance, one night the debate has been very heavy—at length a dead silence prevails, suddenly a voice is heard demanding a song from Mr Speaker. If an angel had fallen from heaven, it is questionable whether a greater sensation could have been created. The house is in a roar. Poor Addington, the Speaker, is overwhelmed with indignation and amazement. Pitt can hardly keep his seat for laughing. Up into the gallery rushes the Sergeant-at-arms to take the delinquent into custody. No one knows who he is—at any rate no one will tell. At length, as the officer gets impatient and angry, a hand is pointed to a fat plaid Quaker without guile, seated in the middle of the crowd. Much to his amazement, on his devoted yet innocent person straightway rushes the Sergeant-at-Arms; and protesting, but in vain, the wearer of square-collar and broad-brim is borne off to gaol. The real delinquent is Mark Supple, a big-boned, loud-voiced, rellicking Irish blade—just such a man as we fancy W., of the Daily News, to be. Mark has been dining. He is a devoted follower of Bacchus; and, at this time, happens to be extraordinarily well primed. Hence his remarkable contribution, if not to the business, at any rate to the amusement, of the evening. People call the present times fast; but men lived faster then. Sheridan drank brandy when he smoke. Pitt made one of his most brilliant speeches just after he had been vomiting from the quantity of port he had previously been drinking. Members, when they came into the house, not unfrequently saw two speakers where, in reality, there was but one; and the reporters were often in a state of similar bewilderment themselves; but they are gone, and the oratory they recorded has vanished from the senate. In the new gallery they can never hear what was heard in the old—the philosophy of Burke—the wit of Sheridan—the passionate attacks of Fox—or the cool replies of Pitt. The house has become less oratorical—less an imperial senate, more of a national 'vestry.' It discusses fewer principles, and more railway bills. The age of Pitt and Fox went with Pitt and Fox.—You cannot recall it, the age has altered.—You find Pitt and Fox now in the newspaper office, not in the senate. The old gallery has looked down on great men. It could tell of an heroic race and of heroic deeds. It had seen the angry Charles. It had heard Cromwell bid the mace begone. It had re-echoed the first indignant accents of the elder Pitt. It had outlived a successful revolution. It had witnessed the triumph of reform. Can the new one witness more?

So much for the Reporters' Gallery. We cannot take leave of the subject, without remarking what obligations members are under to it. No man can long attend parliamentary debates without being very strongly impressed with that one great fact. The orators who are addressing empty branches and inattentive audiences, are, in reality, speaking to the dozen reporters just before them. Little Sibthorpe, when he speaks, turns his face to them, in order that they may not miss a single word. You did not, the last time you were in the house, hear a single atom of Jones's speech; you could merely see Jones, with an unhappy expression of face, and to the ind-