

## LONDON COSTERS' WAYS.

PEOPLE WHO ARE THE ONLY TRUE COCKNEYS OF LONDON.

There is a Great Difference Between the Cockney and the Cad—Something of Albert Chevalier and His Work—A Man With a Big Income.

LONDON, June 5.—During the somewhat extended period in which I actually lived the daily life of a costermonger in London, I was soon convinced of the correctness of a curious series of surmises growing out of much previous observation and study of the habits, manners and speech of London folk in general; a conclusion which seems worthy of extended discussion by others more able to make exact and authoritative comparison. This was, in brief, that the generic things we call "cockneys," in speech and manners, really have their origin chiefly among London costermongers.

Thus I have heard in noted Paris salons the common jibes of the canaille and the boulevardiers, from lips quite unconscious of their origin; in American clubs and drawing-rooms, countless cant and patter expressions already long previously discarded in New York's Bowery slums, where they first took form; in the finest Edinburgh homes, the wise, curt and droll sayings of Newhaven fish-wives and the demizens of Cowgate and Grassmarket; and from London concert-halls, up through London clubs, past English castles and noblemen's city homes, to the floor of parliament itself, the latest epithet and newest catch-phrase of London costermongers, coined by my coster friends in moments of "four-ale" inspiration at free smoking-room concerts, at "penny-gaffs," or in valiant black-guarding battles with Covent Garden porters and the glib-tongued "mobbers" or fish-carriers of ancient and odorous Billingsgate.

As to "cockney" London folk high and low, clear and distinct lines may be drawn. The coster is the typical, indeed the genuine cockney. His vernacular which is so outlandish that one has to have long acquaintance with it to understand it all, is not slang, because it is his original and unaffected mode of expression. His swagger, his unctuous oaths, his terrible oobjurgations, his impulsive generosity, his reckless gambling, his fondness of pets, his roving ways within the great city, his grotesque apparel, his aversion to a fixed habitation, his suspicion of anything savoring of religion, his unconquerable Agnosticism, his self-reliance, his fatalism, his fondness for his kind and kin and yet his seeming brutality in all domestic relations, his hardness and his tenderness, and his almost stern and Spartan loyalty to his friends, his race and his traditions, are all inexplicable and tantalizing to one studying his character little or long; but they are absolutely and inviolably his own. There is not an iota of pretense, hypocrisy or affectation about him. Because of this, millions of London lowly next him in the social scale, have in from 400 to 500 years' time been unconscious imitators of much of his speech, some of his manners, a good deal of his swagger and bluster, and not a little of his hardness and brutality. All these latter folk are often generically regarded as "cockneys." But their cockneyism is assumed, copied, unreal. Consequently it is as offensive to the intelligent Englishman, who often errs in mistaking it for the genuine article exclusively possessed by the costermongers, as it is to the American, who knows nothing whatever about its origin.

There is another class of folk in London and throughout England immeasurably less in number and real importance but inexpressibly more omnipresent and offensive, who masquerade as "cockneys" and who, more than all others, bring the true coster cockney into permanent disrepute. They are a sort of chromo cockneys when the genuine Turnesque reds and solemn Millet grays of the true cockney coster are brought into analytic comparison. They comprise a mixed and murrained multitude of London men-about-town, answering somewhat to the dude Cholly Wobblers of America—young noblemen and other choice aristocrats who "go in" for a long and a strong pull, y' know. To these are added a few flash journalists, I am sorry to say, fellows who are on the outskirts of even the lowest of London Bohemians; not many actors, for London actors are almost invariably London gentlemen; some hangers-on of clubs; all pugilists, sprinters, horsemen, jockeys and professional sporting men generally; thousands of music-hall performers and the other thousands of "Tommy Rots" gulped out of the free smoking-room concerts of the public houses, who are found every Monday morning at their weekly "Poverty Junction" symposium at the corner of York and Waterloo Roads and tens of thousands more of London clerks and apprentices—vacuous and vainglorious "Simon Tap-peritts"—filled with fine frenzy and mock heroics that they may ever bear the, to them, true British stamp of the cock-sure cockneys and beery ruffians of the hour.

All of these chromo cockneys never open their mouths without effort to outdo their moral and mental superiors, the costermongers. They occasionally break loose from their London environment and travel in Ireland, in Scotland, on the continent and in America. Their oaths are "Strike me lucky!" "Gor bli me!" and other unprintable coster imprecations. Their ejaculations are "Gawd's truth!" and the like. Their qualifying and emphasizing adjectives are "blawsted," "bloomin'," and "bloody." A good man or thing is "a rum un." A shilling is "a bob," a sovereign is "a quid," a donkey is "a moke," a cab-horse is "cat's-meat;" to drink liquor is to "take a wet;" a glass of ale is a "tankard o' bit ter;" every one accosted is "guy-er-nor;"

and a woman is a "donah" or a "cow." This sort of thing may possess a certain sociological and literary interest when confined to the characterful class from which it emanates; but every one of these pretentious cockneys, whether met in London or on their ruffianly travels about the world, should be set down for precisely what they are. They are no more representative Englishmen than a New York dude, carrying the manner, epithets, and clothing of a Bowery boy about the world, would be a typical American. They are simply cads; a disgrace to intelligent English people and an insulting human parody upon the ignorant though sturdy and genuine costermongers they sadly mimic, possessing more than all their vices and totally lacking the least of their humble virtues.

The longer one studies these curious lowly folk of London, the greater is the wonder that they have not proven a more fruitful subject of the novelist, or at least for such masters of character painting as Thackeray, Reade and Dickens. They have always been utilized as the butt of quips and quorks by the penny-a-liner, the wits of Punch, the newspaper paragraphers, and, in a low sort of way, to raise the loudest guffaws at the myriad music halls of London. But not until quite recently has their character been seriously studied by a man of real genius, or their weaknesses, virtues and traits appealing to universal human recognition, been portrayed by a man of subtle perception and ardent sympathies.

That man is Albert Chevalier. Of French, Welsh and Irish extraction, he was destined by his parents for the priesthood. But instead he became a successful actor of the legitimate comedy under the Ban-crofts, the Kendals and later at the Court Theatre under manager Hare. In time he found himself a popular leading comedian without an engagement. Offers came to him for engagements in burlesque as second comedian. This was going backward; something a London actor cannot afford to do. Some of his work in comedy had brought him among the costermongers for character study; and he remembered that any song he had sung in his various characters bearing on these droll folk, had been received with peculiar favor. He suddenly resolved to turn music hall singer, a resolution which carried out in London, ordinarily means complete social ostracism. But from the time this determination was reached, Chevalier must be considered in the light of poet, composer and singer. He continued his coster studies with a positive genius, a splendid education and a successful actor's alert perception of what is necessary, as with the painter, to not only reveal by true realism, but to reveal in the subtle power of suggestion, behind them; and the result was that since his first singing of "The Coster's Serenade" at the London Pavilion, in February, 1891, he has held the extraordinary position of being the only performer upon any stage, so unique in his line of rendition and so masterful in his artistic skill as to prevent the slightest attempt at rivalry.

He is but thirty years of age, yet his income from his nightly performances at four leading London music halls and from royalties on his songs is from \$600 to \$1,000 per week—nearly equaling the salary of the President of the United States; and all this from merely discovering the costermongers of London and revealing them to the people of London. It has been done in a way to reach their hearts as well as their sense of humor lastingly, as is shown in the fact that his present engagements are permanent for a period of five years. He is a quiet, studious fellow, and while his incomparable success has opened to him the doors of the great and noble houses in London, where his genuine scholarship and refinement would render him a social acquisition without the glamour of success, he leads a modest life in his own pretty home alongside the Thames, almost under the shadow of Windsor Castle, where his books, his punt and fishing-rod are his chief companions.

This much regarding the man's personality. To convey to others who are unacquainted with costermongers themselves, the peculiar conditions of London life and society which make it possible for a man to derive a princely income from creating and interpreting—for Chevalier is more than a mere singer upon the stage—two or three coster songs each year, is a difficult task. London is almost a great world in itself. Its costers, distinctive in character, vacation, speech, traits, habits and customs, had a previously remained an almost unknown people to what may be regarded as intellectual London. If Charles Dickens were living and had written a great work of fiction in which coster life and love had been delineated so powerfully that all London stood amazed at its own ignorance of its own lowly, the coster man and woman could not have been more firmly set upon the pedestals of sentiment than has Chevalier placed them, through his strong flash-lights and bold, broad strokes of delineation in character representation and song. He has brought to almost universal attention the mirthful and serious sides of coster character. He has shown that there are coster comedy and tragedy like that possible to your life and mine. In one after another of his marvelous song impersonations like "The Coster's Serenade," "The Coster's Courtship," "The Future Mrs. 'Awkins," "Wot Cher," "The Nasty Way 'E Sez It," and "Our Little Nipper," he has brought the very heart throbbings of this uncouth class, often through pathetic tenderness, so close to those of his bearers, that the great London public, from prentice boy to prince, have awakened to the fact that costers are actually human creatures, possessing at least some of the common attributes of human-kind. EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

## A New Game.

A literature party is an invention of a woman tired of drive whist and progressive euchre. It is arranged in the same way as the latter, but the guests, who are carefully selected for the occasion, find at the table four sets of partially written quotations which they are required to fill out: at another, names of books whose authors are inquired for; another, pseudonyms to be assorted among the rightful people; the last three, respectively, for names of characters and places mentioned, and, at the head table, of selected queries of a miscellaneous character. The game is concluded when each one has visited every table and endeavored to answer every interrogation. The prizes were, on this occasion, finely bound books, and for the boobies, fools' caps of chamois for pen-wipers.

## PERFUME FOR THE MILLION.

Thousands of Dollars Worth of It Disposed of Every Week.

Thirty years ago a bottle of scented water rarely found except upon the dressing tables of the rich, says an English paper. To-day it is in the homes of the million. The chemists' shops are full of it. The big drapers and the various stores stock it by the gross. In some shape or form it finds its way into every house. It figures alike in the collapsible squirt with which 'Arriet affectionately syringes the too ardent 'Arry, and in the gold-stoppered bottle of the duchess.

It finds its way into our hair-oil, it permeates our soap. As a final triumph, it has taken possession of those mechanical nostrisities which are beginning to disfigure every place of public resort with the persistent and prosaic invitation to "put a penny in the slot." To such an extent has it entered into the economy of fashionable life, that certain well-known varieties, such as eau de Cologne and lavender-water, are regarded in the nature of indispensable necessities.

Some idea of the magnitude of the sales may be gathered when it is estimated that half a million pounds sterling per annum, or ten thousand pounds weekly, finds its way into the pockets of vendors of scented water. Taking the price of each half-pint to represent two shillings, these figures mean that, every seven days, a little river of six thousand gallons is discharged upon the nation's pocket-handkerchiefs.

Nor is the individual expenditure of wealthy society people less remarkable. Instances have been known where the bill for perfume alone has totalled up to two and even three hundred pounds per annum. It must not be forgotten that immense quantities of scented water are used for bathing purposes, and a morning tub with a dash of eau de Cologne is apt to constitute a somewhat expensive luxury.

A significant feature of the modern scent trade is the extent to which men have taken to this fascinating product. The up-to-date young man is prone in the gratification of his little weakness in this direction, and rarely ventures abroad without a small chemist's shop of essences and extracts carefully stowed away in those mysterious flasks and bottles which form such a prominent feature of the fashionable dressing-bag. He is not satisfied with a few drops on his handkerchief. Like the conscientious actor who blacked himself all over to play Othello, our golden youth scatters his "Jockey Club" in a similar way.

Prolific as recent years have been in the invention and introduction of novel perfumes, eau de Cologne is still far and away beyond all rivals in popularity, lavender-water being a good second.

Among the best customers of the scent purveyor must undoubtedly be classed actresses and singers. This is, perhaps, not a matter of surprise, for the impure and gas-laden atmosphere of a crowded theatre, to say nothing of the aroma of dingy and unventilated dressing-rooms, makes some sort of corrective an absolute necessity. Nervous exhaustion consequent on severe mental effort is also alleviated by the application of the famous water from the evil-smelling town on the banks of the Rhine.

Eastern monarchs are notorious lovers of scent. Quantities are shipped from this country for the delectation of the native princes of our Indian Empire. His Imperial Majesty the Shah is also a lavish patron of the perfume distiller. The passage of his suite reminds the bystanders of a procession of perambulating scent-bottles with the stoppers out.

Lavender is stated to be the favorite scent both of Her Majesty Queen Victoria and of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

## How Clay Pipes are Made.

There is more about an ordinary clay pipe than at first appears, and in all probability there are very few outside those engaged in the manufacture who are aware that this ideal pipe of the working man is made from a mixture of three clays, each one different from the others in color and peculiar properties.

"Oh, I don't know that there is any secret about it," said a man working in an English clay pipe factory. "The fact of it is, the pipes are so cheap, that very few persons trouble to inquire how they are made."

"First of all," he went on, "we have to mix the three clays in the pugmill. This is a peculiar process because the pipes will not be made if the mixing is not properly carried out. You see, one of the clays is very soft and nearly jet-black when it comes from the pit—this, owing to its fine grain, giving smoothness and finish to the pipe. Clay number two is a light brown, and stands the process of burning well, while the third is nearly white, and of the consistency of cream cheese; this latter furnishing tenacity to the mixture, for without it the others would crumble away before the kilning."

"After the three of them are mixed together the mass looks like black bread. The pipes are made in moulds, the two halves of which coming together shape the clay. A round knob is then pushed in the large end to form a bowl, and a wire inserted in the stem. Pipes are kept white-hot in the kiln for about twelve hours, and are then allowed to cool gradually. We generally burn about two hundred and fifty gross at one time."

## Why Clouds Float.

Clouds, as is well known, are made up of vapor, which, in reality, is an aggregation of minute particles of water.

Why these should hang suspended in space, and move about in obedience to air currents, independent of the attraction of gravity, is a question which scientists often have attempted to solve. The extreme lightness of the particles is the explanation most generally vouchsafed; but water, however light, must be subject to the laws of gravity in the same way as all other bodies.

Herr von Frank has submitted a new explanation, which he considers physically correct. Each floating particle of moisture, he tells us, is surrounded by a mute envelope of vapor.

This envelope is a bad conductor, and by this property guards the particles from evaporating or freezing. Heat expands the envelope surrounding these little spheres, on which they ascend; and cold contracts them, on which they descend, and hang low over the earth.

The greater the quantity of aqueous vapor in the air the larger the drops and the

lower clouds; the less the watery vapour or the smaller the drops and the higher the clouds; but in each instance the thickness of the envelope is the same under like conditions of temperature and pressure. This theory is largely confirmed by the experiments of Professor Boys with soap bubbles—the elastic film which encloses the bubble being in that case merely an envelope of vapor similar to that which Herr Frank refers to in his theory.

## A Crown Worth Wearing.

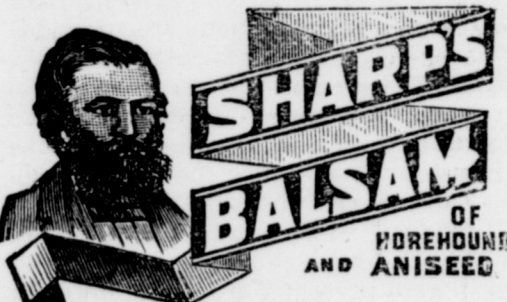
The most valuable crown in the world is owned by the King of Portugal. The jewels of this monarch's crown are said to be valued at £1,300,000. One of the costliest crowns in Europe is that worn by the Czar of Russia on State occasions. It is surmounted by a cross formed of five magnificent diamonds, resting upon an immense uncut but polished ruby. The coronet of the Empress contains the most beautiful mass of diamonds ever collected in one band. The crown of the Queen-Empress of Great Britain, valued at £300,000, contains one large ruby, one large sapphire, sixteen others, eight emeralds, four smaller rubies, 1,360 brilliant diamonds, 1,273 rose diamonds, four drop-shaped pearls, and 269 other pearls. In official dress the Sultan of Johore wears—including his crown—£2,000,000 worth of diamonds. His collar, pendants, belt cuffs, and orders blaze with diamonds. On his wrists are heavy gold bracelets, and his fingers are crammed with almost priceless rings. The handle and scabbard of his sword are a solid mass of precious stones. The most expensive Royal regalia in the world are those of the Maharajah of Baroda, India. First comes a gorgeous collar containing 500 diamonds, arranged in five rows, some as large as walnuts. Top and bottom rows of emeralds of equal size relieve the lustre of the diamonds.

## Who Bluebeard Was.

The story of "Bluebeard" was written during the reign of Louis XIV. by a Frenchman named Perrault, and is supposed to have been suggested by the deeds of Gilles de Laval, better known as Marshal de Retz. He was born in 1396, and subsequently served under the Duke of Bretagne and Charles VII. with distinction, and was one of the trusted captains of Joan de Arc. In 1432 he was reputed the richest man in France, but quickly squandered his fortune. It is said that soon after this event, through the influence of an alchemist, named Prelati, he pledged all but his soul to the devil in exchange for wealth equal to that which he had spent. His career from that time became that of a demon. Children and young women were inveigled into his house and killed. It is related that the children were dangled at ropes' ends, pricked with needles and otherwise tortured until dead, and their heads were afterward used as ornaments for his mantles and bed-posts. After he had carried on this career of crime for about eight years he was arrested, confessed and burned at the stake about Dec. 22, 1440.

The English alphabet contains 26 letters, the French 25, the German 26, the Russian 35, the Latin 23, the Greek 16 (until 403 B. C., the 24 Ionic characters were introduced), the Hebrew 22, the Arabic 28, the Persian 22, and the Turkish 28.

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