

## American Brains in London.

BY ROBERT BARR.

London is a huge magnet which attracts and always has attracted, authors from the four quarters of the English-speaking world. Metropo-and-moth relationship, were the smile not so trite and inadequate.

One summer evening I was dining on the upper balcony of a hotel facing the Moselle River in Germany. For many days I had dined thus out of doors, and the view over the placid river to the dark, castle-crowned heights opposite was pleasant. But this particular evening there came trouble in the shape of large, pure white moths, so numerous that the scene resembled a snow-storm. The moths tumbled into everything, and made life unbearable.

'It is all right,' said the hotel keeper soothingly; 'they will be all cleared away in a few hours.'

The villagers were piling up a huge heap of brushwood at the edge of the river, and in a short time fire was set to it soon to illuminate the hills and throw a red glare on the mirror of the river of the water.

The events that followed built a description. Down the valley and up the valley came two dense clouds of moths, meeting and dissolving in the flames. Out of the darkness, east and west, they poured in one continuous torrent, so innumerable in number that the beating of their wings sounded like the roar of railway train.

Before long the replenishers of the fire carrying brushwood, had to plow their way knee deep through quivering drifts of moths, and by midnight there was not a living moth in Moselle Valley for similar fires had been lighted all the way from Treves to Coblenz.

It seemed frightfully cruel, but it was perhaps necessary, although how Nature restored the balance thus thrown off its pivot by such wholesale destruction I must leave naturalists to determine. All next day the peasants were shoveling the moths into the river, and feasting fishes were leaping up into the air through the floating masses. This Morte Moth-borne seemed to me typical of London; but the great city consumes continually, and not for one night only.

I have often tried to discover the secret of the charm of London to the writer. Perhaps the moth doesn't know why it rushes into the bonfire, and perhaps the unknown author would be puzzled to give a sane reason for his incursion to the metropolis.

In any one point except mere size, London is hopelessly beaten by other capitals. Its Parliament buildings have nothing of the stately grandeur of the Capitol at Washington; Saint Paul's is overshadowed both in bulk and beauty by Saint Peter's at Rome; its courts of justice do not compare in site or structure with new buildings of a like nature in Brussels; no opera house possesses can touch those of Paris or Vienna; it has no city hall like that of Philadelphia; and Hyde Park is a croquet lawn beside the romantic beauty of Fairmount; it has no streets or palaces like Fifth Avenue, and no majestic vista like the Champs-Élysées.

Its streets are, as a rule, narrow, mean, dingy and muddy; its climate is occasionally detestable. An American speculator, it permitted, would put up one building with half a dozen elevators that would house every office at present bordering Fleet Street and the Strand; yet London is London, and its fascination is as real as the secret of it is elusive.

'Here lies Oliver Goldsmith,' says, in plain letters, an inscription on a plain stone slab in one of the quiet courts of the Temple, and here, to my mind, lies at least part of the secret of London's enchantment.

It is not the busy metropolis we go to see; it is the City of Gigantic Ghosts. In the possession of one house London is supreme,—the silent, narrow house of the grave. The ancient Abbey is the beautiful carved tombstone of many; the shrines of the patron saints of the successful. The equalled, three-story house in Brooke Street, on the other hand, may be taken as one of the numerous shrines of the patron saint of the defeat-d, for in its miserable attic Chatterton, not yet eighteen years of age, hurried starvation with arsenic. He was one of the sinned moths who, nevertheless, left an immortal record behind him.

'I still live' were the last words of Webster; and so, in effect, might all the great dead say. It is not the material London that casts its spell over us,—it is the London of the imagination; the London made vivid for us by Charles Dickens, so that when we come upon it in reality it is like visiting an old home, a place in which our spirit has walked before our actual footsteps echoed in its real pavements; the London of Charles Lamb; the London of Oliver Goldsmith; the London of Doctor Johnson. I never meet a fat man coming up Fleet Street but I think of burly Samuel Johnson, dictatorial, positive, browbeating, usually wrong, as he was about the American Revolution.

The gambler going from Nice to Monte Carlo, always takes a return ticket, no

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matter how much money he possesses, so that he may at least get home again; indeed on the train that Iaves Nice about noon the ticket-seller never thinks of supplying a single ticket, but will quite automatically throw you out a return as soon as you mention Monte Carlo.

If, then, the American has a return ticket over the ocean, I will tell him how cheaply it is possible to live in London. At the municipal boarding-houses he can get a room and bed, both as small as possible, but the latter with clean sheets, for eight cents a night. This includes the right to a hot or cold bath, the use of a large reading-room, and the privilege of cooking a rasher of bacon or herring on the municipal stove.

It is, in fact, a sort of club; the company may not be as select as at the Reform or the Carlton, but you will meet more characters out of Dickens' novels there at the West end institutions I have named. You may cook your own breakfast in the morning, but if you are proud and haughty wishing to go it and hang the expense, you can have a chunk of bread and a cup of coffee at Lockhart's for two cents which is filling and satisfying. The Lockhart coffee houses are all over London.

For a mid day meal there is nothing so succulent as a 'savoy' which is sausage and mashed potatoes. This can be bought anywhere for from four to six cents. As a heavy meal at night is not to be recommended, four hot baked potatoes, with a dash of salt thrown in, can be had for two cents. Thus you may live in London on eighteen cents a day. Of course it may be done cheaper than that, but I am taking it for granted that you want to live well.

The next step below the Municipal Lodging Establishment is the Salvation Army shelters, and the next again is the Doss House, where beds in a common room, mattresses on the floor, costs from two cents a night upward. Bad-rock is reached by sleeping under an archway, or on the Thames Embankment, or in the parks, but there you are apt to have broken rest on account of dodging the policemen who will rouse you up and make you move on.

A night or two on the Embankment has come to be looked upon as part of the education of a literary man in London,—The Hotel of the Beautiful Star, as David Christie Murray calls it,—and I deeply regret that it is impossible for me to give an account of its airy accommodation from personal experience. Murray spent four nights there, and went four days hungry. He tells about meeting four distinguished men of letters in the Savage Club, all of whom confessed to having been guests of the Beautiful Star.

I was dining one night with a literary coterie in London when the talk turned toward early hardships, and I felt quite out of the game, as nearly everyone present recounted incidents of crawling under bushes before the parks were closed at night, and huddling close to avoid pokes from sticks that the police thrusts through the thickets to discover any concealed tenants. I put down on a table before me a golden half sovereign and said:

'Gentlemen, I believe these thrilling recitals are largely brag; nevertheless, while we are here revelling in luxury there is no doubt that many poor wretches are now on the benches of the Embankment. I propose, therefore that each man change half sovereign into ten shillings; that we appoint a treasurer to whom the fund is to be delivered; and if there are one among us who can write he be chosen secretary; that we proceed now to the Embankment and give every person there a shilling on the sole condition that he tells his name to the secretary; that the secretary write these names down, and these names be placed in the archives of this club, and referred to at a similar dinner five years from to-night, to see if we have shillings a Shakespeare.'

'It was hilariously agreed to, gold was changed into silver by the waiters, and the bag handed to a celebrated novelist whom we named Judas pro tem, and we set out for the Embankment, beginning at Blackfriars Bridge and working our way to the Houses of Parliament, going west, like the Star of Empire.

I don't suppose we raked in one true name and that knocked in the heard my projects at the very outset. They are all Smiths or Joneses or Robinsons. Under protest, one man obligingly changed his first appellation from Thompson to Jackson, but this was too evidently a desire to please a crowd of generous persons who unexpected liberality he could not understand.

Our third victim,—John Smith,—a veteran, tried to escape with the shilling in his fist.

'Name, name,' demanded the secretary. 'What time is it?' cried the breathless man.

'About a quarter after midnight.' 'Then strike me blind,' he protested indignantly, 'why do you stand there asking foolish questions when you know the "pubs" will close in a quarter of an hour, and it will take me a good ten minutes to get to the nearest one? Well, my name's John Smith, if you will have it.'

And with this he broke through the ring and bolted for a dramshop, locally termed a 'pub,'—short for 'public-house.'

The sequel to this was rather remarkable, although we have never had the dinner we promised ourselves,—so remarkable indeed, that in a work of fiction the incident would be useless; no novelist except Dickens would dare use so striking a coincidence. There are things happening every day which the intelligent public would not stand in a

work of the imagination; as being too absurd for probability.

There was a young fellow from one of the interior towns of New York who drifted to London and began his race with starvation. I helped him out somewhat (I may explain that my connection with the Detroit Free Press, which for the past eighteen years has been printed and published in London sooner or later brought every starving American to my door, the name of the paper being so well known in both continents), but at last he disappeared and I often wondered if he had gone under. However, I got from him, at last, an invitation to lunch at an expensive restaurant, and I learned that he had gone north to Ealing, and there met with the success that had been denied him in London.

When we were talking over the trials of the past I said to him:

'And did you ever get so low down that you had to sleep on the Embankment?'

'Did I? Well, I should say I did! And I'll tell you a funny thing that happened to me there one night, that I have never got any one to believe, but I give you my word it's true. It's like a section out of Robert Louis Stevenson's New Arabian Nights. I got a soft spot on a bench near Westminster Bridge, but the police kept moving me on and on, until at last, working from seat to seat, I got over the line into the city, where I was left alone. Perhaps you are not aware that the city police are much easier on a penniless wayfarer than the metropolitan police.'

'This is a well known fact,' I replied. 'I have seen a procession of Socialists marching up the Embankment carefully escorted to the boundary by the city police, and the moment the procession with its banners crossed the line the metropolitan police fell on them and dispersed them like scraps of paper before a high wind. Go on.'

'Well, about midnight, when I had fallen into a dose, I was roused by a hand on my shoulder and thought I was in their clutches again. But it wasn't a bobby. 'Give me your name and I'll give you a shilling,' said the man. I looked up and saw a lot of fellows as drunk as lords.'

'No, no,' I protested; 'not drunk; just jolly.'

'You listen. I tell you they were not only drunk; they were crazy. You wait till you hear how I held 'em up.'

'Thanks I to myself, "This wasn't our crowd. We weren't held up."

'All right, go on,' I said aloud.

'Well, this fellow planks down a shilling in my palm; I thought at first it must be bogus, but it felt like good money. I slipped it into my pocket. "Your name, please," said the giver, pretending he could write. "Brown," says I; "Jimmy Brown." "Thanks," says he. Oh, they were as polite as pie; you've seen fellows in that condition. "Look here," I said, "ain't you going to give me the shilling you promised?" Then you ought to have heard the outcry. "Give up the silver, Judas," "Don't rook the man," "I knew Judas was going to try and make money out of this," and all that sort of thing. Judas apologized in abject fashion, and forked over another shilling, which made two.

'Congratulations myself on this bonanza. I was actually starving—my first instincts were to rush for something to eat, but the stranger's behaviour of these men made me pause in the middle of the street and look back at them. I saw that they were paying the next man, and all at once my commercial instincts showed me, hungry as I was, that here was a gang of Britishers with more money than they knew what to do with, who could be worked, and I resolved to mine the lode while it lasted.

'I cut round and got on the next bench. "Name and address," said the fellow a moment later. "Smith of Smithfield," says I. "Here's a shilling for you. God bless you." Off I goes round a semi circle again, on to the next bench. "Money or your life," says Judas. "No no, I mean your name, and I'll give you your life,—I beg pardon,—a shilling." "White of Whitechapel," says I and got my fourth shilling. Well I worked that racket on the boys till I accumulated sixteen shillings,—four dollars,—as I'm a sinner, and they never knew it.'

'Hold on, I said: "I don't believe that there are sixteen benches all along the Embankment."

'Oh, the moment I realized the kind of silver mine I had struck I didn't depend on the benches. I met 'em now and then between the seats, and began to moan about having no home to go to, which was true enough, and then it was name and a shilling. When the deputation got up to Westminster Bridge they embraced each other, some tried to sing "Rule Britannia," and one or two "The Star Spangled Banner," but the police stopped that and they scattered, howling for hansom.

'With all that money in my pocket I found every place closed and I couldn't get a bite, but I got a bed, and next day I was back north and got my first job at Nottingham. Now I suppose you don't believe that yarn?'

'Well, frankly, you know—'

'Of course, of course. Nobody does. But I tell you there's lots of things happening in London that you don't know anything about.'

Which was quite true.

By some strange power than winneth women's heart, And love, once given, can no more depart— But though the world may hold thee base and vile, I shall love thee and on thee will smile. Though scorned by all, for me thou'lt ever shine, And whilst I live I'm ever, ever thine.

A Chicago murderer, sentenced to death, received a letter every day from a young woman who declared her love in the most emphatic terms, adding large assortments of kisses by means of the good old method of crosses. A St. Louis burglar received during his trial a basket of flowers every day, a pretty girl giving them to him as he sat in the dock. These outbursts of morbid feeling are more likely to occur during a trial. When the prisoner is convicted and in the penitentiary he drops out of notice.

Mrs. Maybrick's case, of course, has been different. She has received hundreds of letters of sympathy since her conviction, and at the time of her trial she was deluged with offers of marriage. This seems another thing, though, from professions of love for an admitted criminal, who have written to Mrs. Maybrick undoubtedly believe her innocent. An English paper seems to take it for granted that criminals in this country are all showered with floral offerings, as the St. Louis burglar was, and with love letters, as was the Chicago murderer. Judging from the Sing Sing records, the English paper is mistaken.

Love By Telegraph.

'Do love-sick people make use of the telegraph? Well, occasionally we have sent messages at a half-penny a word,' said a post office clerk. 'There is a rather well known solicitor who often communicates with his lady love in this fashion, and he exhibits no meanness in cutting down words. Not long ago he sent off an effusion which cost nearly five shillings; his sweetheart

### LETTERS TO PRISONERS.

Few Epistles at Sing Sing, However it may be Elsewhere.

Sing Sing does not seem to be a sentiment-inspiring name. From other prisons come astonishing reports of tender romance of criminals who receive shoals of love letters from women they have never seen says N. Y. Sun. Warden Sage has been at Sing Sing between four and five years, but he says nothing of the kind has happened there during that time. At least, not to his knowledge.

One letter came to the penitentiary addressed to 'A Prisoner Who Receives No Letters.' It was from a young woman in a Western State, and was written because the girl had heard Mrs. Ballington Booth talk about the prison work and of the pleasure it is to the convicts to receive letters. The girl had written a long and rather effusive letter, which she signed with her name, preceded by 'Lovingly yours,' and her request for a reply.

Mr. Sage wrote a kindly but plain letter to the young woman, explaining to her that the average convict is not the sort of a man with whom girls should be corresponding even on the philanthropic plane. He reminded her that she would doubtless be embarrassed if the convict should present himself, as he probably would, at the end of his term to demand a continuation of her interest in him. He suggested that she ask her father and her mother for their consent before she wrote again. She did not write again.

One convict at Sing Sing has had his romance. He is in for a long sentence, one which is practically a life term. Yet he has been receiving regularly the most tender epistles from a girl who writes of what they will do when they are married. In this case, the romance began before Sing Sing appeared on the horizon. The two were engaged before the man committed the crime which landed him in the penitentiary.

Most of the letters sent to the prisoners are of a religious tenor, calling upon them to repent and flee from the wrath to come. As these exhortations are generally of an unmistakably crank variety they do not always find their way to the prisoners. A good many letters of this class came at the time of Mrs. Piac's imprisonment, along with a good many more protesting to the Warden against the 'crime' of capital punishment.

Vacher, the French murderer, who was guillotined recently, received love letters from women in all classes of society. Before his trial Vacher received a letter from a young milliner announcing her willingness to become his wife immediately if he was acquitted or to wait for him, no matter how long his sentence might be. She was said to be a young girl and a gentle, retiring creature. Several years ago a convict in an English prison received a beautiful and expensive valentine. He said he hadn't the remotest idea who his anonymous admirer could be.

A Bristol woman fell a victim to the charms of reputation of a notorious bigamist. These charms consisted in his having married a number of women, squandered their possessions, and then gone off in search of new victims. Somehow this just struck the fancy of the Bristol woman, who wrote a long and tender letter to the imprisoned bigamist, finally bursting into poetry as follows:

By some strange power than winneth women's heart, And love, once given, can no more depart— But though the world may hold thee base and vile, I shall love thee and on thee will smile. Though scorned by all, for me thou'lt ever shine, And whilst I live I'm ever, ever thine.

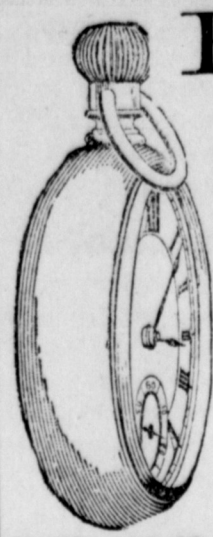
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replying at length within an hour of receiving it.

'When sentiment swells to telegraphic intensity, the love burdened one usually scribbles sweeteners on a form and intrusts it to a second person (preferably of tender age) for despatch. On two or three occasions a little boy presented a form filled with endearing words, and signed Tom. When questioned, he replied that Tom was his brother. Evidently prodigality was one of the hero's distinguishing traits, for his message generally cost him about one-and sixpence.

'Some messages appear simple and business like, but there is a world of meaning and love in their composition. A fellow clerk discovered that the short, blunt effusions of an artful communicator always concealed one or two words. These were hidden, puzzle fashion, the last part of one word and the beginning of the next forming the all important definition—Casell's Journal.

### Too Many Cooks.

Mrs. O'Hara—'O! hear Mrs. Kelly tell her husband because he nivr had an appetite.'

Mrs. O'Hara—'That's no reason!'

Mrs. O'Hara—'It is when your husband is a policeman, Mrs. O'Hara'—Puck.

## GOOD HEALTH MINE.

Most Valuable Discovery by a Prominent Halifax Traveler.

But Rockingham People Have Known it for Several Years—Dodd's Kidney Pills a Perfect Mine of Health—They Cure all Kidney Diseases.

ROCKINGHAM, N. S., May 1st.—(By telegraph.) The rich mine recently discovered by the oldest traveler in Nova Scotia, Mr. J. H. Ireland, of Halifax, is said to have been known to the citizens of this town five years ago. An old resident states that he drew a new lease of life from the mine at least four years ago. Others have made similar claims.

Mr. Ireland says he cares not how many people use the mine. He has named it the Good Health mine, and says that this is the most suitable title for it, as Good Health is enjoyed by all who use its output—Dodd's Kidney Pills.

There is no doubt about the genuineness of Mr. Ireland's cure. All his friends—and he has hundreds of them—have remarked the improvement, and congratulated him upon it. To each inquirer he has replied that Dodd's Kidney Pills cured him in a few days.

The reputation enjoyed by Dodd's Kidney Pills in this section of Nova Scotia, is indeed a proud one. It is safe to say they are used in every household. And in every case in which they have been tried a complete and lasting cure has followed. A large number of cures of Bright's disease, Diabetes and Dropsy have been cured by them here, and the cases of Rheumatism, Lumbago, Lamé back, Sciatica, Gravel, Stone in the Bladder, Blood Impurities, Diseases of Women and all Urinary Diseases, that have been cured by them are simply unaccountable.

Dodd's Kidney Pills are sold by all druggists, at fifty cents a box, six boxes \$2.50, or will be sent on receipt of price by The Dodd's Medicine Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.

