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**The Comic History  
Of England  
part (10)**

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**First Edition 2017**

**ISBN:978-1544974620**



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**The comic history of**

**England**

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# **The Comic History Of England**

**Gilbert Abbott A'Beckett**



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## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH. ELIZABETH.



HE death of Mary was concealed for some hours, since it is only bad news that will travel very fast; but when the truth did come to be generally known, the joy which burst out on all sides took the more decent form of exultation at the accession of the new sovereign. Elizabeth, Betsy, Bessy, or Bess as she has been indiscriminately called, was at Hatfield when her sister died, and she soon moved to London, escorted by one of those patriotic mobs which are always ready to hoot and halloo for any distance the last new sovereign. On the 15th of January, 1559, the queen was crowned at Westminster Abbey, but during the ceremony she was compelled to remain bare-headed for a considerable time, as on account of her suspected Protestant predilections, not one of the bishops would invest her with the diadem. In vain did she give appealing looks to the entire bench, until at last a decided ogle took effect on Oglethorpe, the Bishop of Carlisle, who, snatching up the bauble with a shout of "Here goes!" boldly bonneted the royal maiden. On the 25th of the same month a Parliament assembled, when Cecil

and Sir Nicholas Bacon made their débuts on the treasury benches. Cecil was chief secretary, or key of the Cabinet, while Bacon was great seal, with instructions to keep continually on the watch in the capacity of Keeper. The first act of the Parliament was to restore many of the laws of religion existing in Edward's reign, and an attempt was made to reinstate such clergymen as had been deprived on account of marriage; but Elizabeth, who began to show anti-matrimonial opinions at the very beginning of her reign, would not accede to such an arrangement. Early in the session the Parliament tried its hand at royal match-making by carrying up an address to the queen, recommending her to take a husband; but in a somewhat rudish tone she expressed at once her horror at "the fellows," and her determination to have nothing to do with them. Her sincerity was soon put to the test by a direct offer from Philip, her late sister's husband; but a playful "go along with you," and a coquettish "a-done, do!" were the utmost words of encouragement he could manage to extract from her.

Parliament broke up on the 8th of May, and on the 15th the bishops and other churchmen of note were summoned to take the oath of conformity to the new statutes. Much to the credit of their consistency they all refused, with the exception of one Kitchen, the bishop of Llandaff, a low fellow, whose name implies his origin.

This Kitchen had acquired the rotatory motion of the roasting-jack, as well as a fondness for sops in the pan, for he had been twirling round and having a finger in the ecclesiastical pie since the year 1545, from which time to that of Elizabeth he had, through all changes, stuck to his bishopric. The clergy, who had refused to conform to the Protestant religion, were on the whole gently dealt with, some being exported to Spain amid the luggage of the Spanish ambassador, and a few being quartered upon their successors in England. Most of the inferior clergy seemed to have been made of Kitchen-stuff, that is to say, they appeared to be composed of much the same material as the Bishop Kitchen we have named, and were at all events alive to the necessity of keeping the pot boiling, for out

of 9400 persons holding benefices, there were scarcely more than a hundred, exclusive of the fifteen bishops, who quitted their preferments rather than change their religion.

We must now look at Scotland, of which the celebrated Mary was queen when she was suddenly called to France to share the throne which had devolved upon her husband, Francis the Second, or rather upon which he had devolved by the death of his father, Henry. This somewhat elderly gentleman had been playing the fool in a tilting match, which was rather *infra dig.* at his time of life, and ended in his receiving a dig in the eye from a broken lance, which ultimately closed in death both the wounded and its companion optic. In the absence of Mary from Scotland, Elizabeth did her utmost to advance the Protestant cause in that country, and dealt out some heavy blows through the medium of the celebrated Knox against the Catholics. Mary's mamma, who had remained at home to keep house as it were in her daughter's absence, did not exactly like what was passing, particularly when she found that English emissaries were continually passing to and fro, for the purpose of bribing the Scotch, whose "itching palm" has always been a national characteristic that we decline accounting for.

The English were bent on getting the French out of Scotland, but the task was as difficult as expelling the fleas from a hay mattress in which they have once got embedded. After a good deal of desultory fighting, the Queen Regent was worried out of her life, and she was no sooner gone, than some of her most devoted adherents were off like shots to draw up a treaty with the enemy. Peace was proclaimed, and the French Governor of Leith gave the besiegers a dinner, at which salted horse was the only animal food, for there was not even a saddle of mutton to make the horse go off with effect at this truly horsepitabile banquet. By the treaty mutual indemnities were exchanged, oblivion of the past was determined upon at Leith, which on that occasion became a veritable Lethe. Elizabeth had two or three flags in Scotland surrendered to her, but religion, which was the ostensible cause of the whole dispute,

was permitted to stand over as an open question.

It was not to be expected that such a capital match as the Queen of England would fail to be the subject of several flames, and an old beau, in the person of Eric, now the king of Sweden, together with two or three other suitors, royal as well as noble, sent in the most tender tenders for the hand of Elizabeth. Like a true coquette, she gave encouragement to all, and even some seedy adventurers among her own subjects were induced to strike up to her.

Mary, who, as great-niece of Henry the Eighth, had in the first instance assumed the arms and title of Queen of England, a measure almost as futile as if Snooks of Surrey should assume the arms and title of Seringapatam, relinquished her nominal pretensions upon the death of her husband, which happened on the 5th of December, 1560. Mary had become so habituated to the splendid formalities of the French Court, that, on returning to Scotland, the substantial barrenness of that bleak country completely disgusted her. Tears, it is said, came into her eyes when she saw the wretched ponies that were about to convey herself and her ladies from the waterside to Holy-rood, while the saddles, made of wood, gave her such a series of bumpers at parting, that she declared the impression made by her reception would never be forgotten.

Mary, who had been born and bred a Catholic, was, of course, anxious for the privilege of following her own religion; but her Scotch subjects, who claimed liberty of conscience for themselves, practised upon their unfortunate sovereign the most brutal and intolerant tyranny. She was insulted on her way to mass, her indulgence in the most harmless amusements was savagely condemned, and she was continually exposed to the hardest raps from Knox, who undertook the task of converting her. This vulgar, but zealous, and no doubt sincere personage endeavoured to effect his purpose by coarse abuse, and always spoke of his queen from the pulpit as Jezebel. In vain did Mary endeavour to quiet her turbulent and libellous assailant by offering him private audiences, but, as if nothing short of mob popularity would answer his

purpose, he rudely declined her invitation, telling her it was her duty to come to him, and continued to make the pulpit the medium of the most malignant assaults on his sovereign. However honest and upright the intentions of Knox may have been, his brutal manner of telling his home truths deprived them of much of their influence; and Knox made very few effective hits in the course of his noisy and vituperative career as a Presbyterian reformer.

Elizabeth saw with unamiable pleasure that her rival, Mary, was having what, very figuratively speaking, may be termed a nice time of it. The English queen busily occupied herself in feathering her own nest in a variety of ways, and, among other measures, she called in all the debased coin; for, as she sometimes said, with a sneer at poor Mary, "I have a great objection to light sovereigns." She filled her arsenals with arms, and had quite a conservatory of grape at the Tower, while, by way of putting the country into a state of defence, she resorted to the very odd expedient of reviewing the militia.

She improved the arts of making gunpowder and casting cannon, so that, as she used to say, "every brave brick in my army may have a supply of mortar, with which, in the hour of battle, he may cement the interests of my empire."



The increase of the navy occupied her special care, and she laid the foundation of that glorious system which has given immortality to our naval hornpipes and made our enemies dance at the balls given by our British seamen. It was to Elizabeth we owe the origin of that enthusiasm which induces "honest Jack," as he facetiously calls himself, to spend all his wages in a week, and to conclude a rapid series of lighthearted freaks as the helplessly inebriated fare of a metropolitan cab or the equally inanimate inmate of a London station-house.

The interior of Elizabeth's Court was a scene of petty rivalries and jealousies, for she was surrounded with various suitors, and though she gave encouragement to nearly all, the valuable precept, "Ne sutor ultra crepidam," seems never to have escaped her memory. She would treat them with easy familiarity, such as thumping their backs and patting their cheeks; but if any of them ventured upon tiring to get on with her at the same slapping pace, she would administer a rap of the knuckles that at once discouraged them from trying their hands at a renewal of such familiarity. Though not blinded by the adulation of her courtiers, she was very nearly becoming so by the small-pox, against which,

however, a good constitution was happily pitted. On her recovery, the Parliament fearing the explosion that might have ensued had she popped off without a successor having been named, entreated her either to marry, or appoint some lady or gentleman to fill the throne in the event of there being a vacancy. With a good deal of that old traditional feeling imputed to the anonymous dog in the very indefinite manger, who was unwilling to relinquish to others what he was unable personally to enjoy, Elizabeth was very reluctant to say who should come after her as queen, but she held out a vague prospect that her marriage would not be impossible, in the event of any very eligible offer happening to present itself.

This indirect advertisement of her hand was at once answered by the Duke of Wurtemberg, a small German, whose pretensions were contemptuously pooh-pooh'd and indeed every post brought

letters from various single men of prepossessing appearance, gentlemanly manners, and amiable disposition, who were anxious to take this somewhat unusual method of placing their hands and hearts at the service of the Queen of England. In the very largest field there will generally be one or two favourites, and in Elizabeth's good books the names of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, stood so high, that there might have been even betting upon both, with a shade or two, perhaps, in the former's favour.

Mary of Scotland was less indifferent on the subject of marriage than the English queen, and, indeed, the former went so seriously into the matrimonial market, as to consult the latter on the subject of a judicious selection. Apparently with the intention of throwing the matter back, Elizabeth offered her own favourite, Dudley, Earl of Leicester, as a husband for Mary; but on the latter, after recovering from her surprise, exclaiming, "Well, I don't mind," the virgin Queen of England, mentally responding, "Oh! yes! I dare say," backed out of her proposition. The Earl of Leicester was one of those good-looking scamps who used, in the last century, to go by the name of "pretty fellows," but in our own more enlightened age, would obtain no gentler appellation than "pretty scoundrels." The virtuous Elizabeth liked to have him about her on account of his good looks, but if the homely proverb, that "handsome is as handsome does," had prevailed he would have been thought as little ornamental in person, as in mind he was deformed and hideous. Notwithstanding the pattern of propriety as which the virgin Queen of England has been, by some historians, extolled, she gave encouragement to Leicester, whom she knew to be a married man, until, by murdering his wife, he removed that slight barrier to the accomplishment of his ambitious wishes. He reported that his unfortunate lady had tumbled down stairs, but this was a daring flight of a guilty imagination, and there is little doubt that while staying in the house of her husband's servant, Foster, he forced her either over the balustrade, or got rid of her by some other means of equal violence.

Poor Mary, who was really in need of a protector, becoming impatient at the delay in choosing her a husband, at length selected one for herself, in the person of her cousin, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley. This young nobleman was a mere lad in age, but a perfect ladder in height, for he was very tall, and very thin, so that if he could offer Mary no substantial support, he was, at all events, a person she might look up to, as may be said, familiarly, "at a stretch, in cases of great emergency.



He was the son of Henry the Eighth's sister's daughter's second husband, and was accordingly the next heir but one to the English throne, if anyone could be called an heir at all in those days, when might overcame right in a manner somewhat unceremonious. Darnley, though showy in appearance, was in reality a fool, and it might be said that instead of having been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he was in himself the embodiment of that auspicious article.

Though exceedingly tall, he was tremendously shallow, and before he had been married two months, he acted with so much insolence, that Mary could scarcely get a servant to stay with her.

His own father, old Lennox, who had got a snug place in the household, packed up his box at a moment's notice, declaring he

would not stop, and the wretched royal spoon found in the glass the only pursuit with which his habits were congenial.

Though neglectful of his young and lovely wife, he claimed the bad husband's privilege of being jealous of the attentions of others, and Signor David Rizzio, the first and only tenor at the Scotch Court, soon furnished ground for Darnley's suspicions of Mary's fidelity. Rizzio had come over in the suite of the ambassador of Savoy, as a professor of the spinette, and a teacher of foreign languages. In his vocal capacity he attended evening parties, and having been introduced at Court, his airs soon wafted him into the favour of his sovereign.

His knowledge of the French language caused him to be promoted to the vacant post of French secretary to the queen, when an outcry was raised because a Scotchman was not appointed to the office, though not a soul among the natives had any pretensions to understanding the language in which the services of a secretary were required. Many of them maintained that their broken Scotch would have been an excellent substitute for Rizzio's unintelligible gibberish, and the nobles used to make faces at him, shoulder him, or taunt him as a base-born fiddler even in the presence of his sovereign.

The ill-used musician, who understood scarcely a word of the insulting language that was addressed to him, happening to catch the sound of the word fiddle, gallantly declared that he would be found toujours fidèle to the royal lady who had honoured him by her favour. There seems to be good reason for doubt whether the scandalous stories concerning Mary and her French secretary were true, and as in duty bound we give the benefit of the doubt to the accused parties. Poor Rizzio had, however, become such an object of hatred to the people about the Court, that one evening, as he sat at the side-table taking his supper, as he always did when the queen was present, a party of armed men, headed by Darnley himself, rushed into the chamber where the Duchess of Argyle and Erskine, the Governor of

Holyrood, were also present. Rizzio had probably been favouring the company with a song or songs, and was whetting his whistle, with a view perhaps to farther melody, when he was brutally desired to “come out of that” by the ruffian Ruthven, whose gout for murder was so excessive that he had left a sick bed to take a part in the sanguinary business. To make a long and painful story short, Rizzio was savagely butchered as he clung to the skirts of Mary’s dress in a vain hope to find shelter under petticoat influence. For having caused the death of Rizzio, Mary never forgave Darnley, who took to drink, in the hope of drowning care; but an evil conscience seems to be supplied with corks, which carry it up to the surface of the deepest bowl in which an attempt was ever made to get rid of it. On the 19th of June, 1566, there appeared, among the births of the day, the announcement of “Mary, Queen of Scots, of a son and heir, at Holyrood.” The infant was James the Sixth of Scotland, and subsequently the first of England, who was not a Jem remarkable for any particular brilliancy. It had previously been arranged that Elizabeth should stand godmother to the firstborn of Mary, and intelligence of the interesting event was therefore conveyed to the English queen by special express through that diligent overland male, the faithful Melville.

Elizabeth was having a romp after a supper at Greenwich when the news arrived, and was in the midst of a furious fandango, when Cecil whispered something in her ear which struck her all of a heap, and caused her to leave her fandango unfinished. Speedily, however, regaining her composure, she gave the ambassador something for himself, and charged him with the usual infantine presents for her royal godson.

The question of a successor to Elizabeth now turned up again with increased interest since the birth of little James; but Elizabeth, becoming irritable and ill-humoured, declared she was looking out for a husband, and intended to have an heir of her own, which would put an end to all the airs and graces which

other people were exhibiting, When the Commons grew more urgent on the point, she became angry in the extreme, for the subject must have been rather a delicate one with Elizabeth, who was growing every day a less eligible match, and might not perhaps have succeeded in finding a husband equal in point of station to an alliance with the Queen of England.

## CHAPTER THE NINTH. ELIZABETH (CONTINUED).

MARY and her husband were leading the life familiarly known as cat and dog; but the cat was in this instance getting rather the best of it. She would not allow him to be present at the christening party given in honour of their little son, and he was never permitted to hold the baby, or enjoy any of those privileges of paternity which are rather honorary than agreeable to the individual by whom they are exercised.

In ordering a dinner or forming a Cabinet his wishes were equally disregarded, and if he happened to have objected to a particular dish he was very likely to be told there was nothing else in the house; while Murray, Bothwell, and Huntley, whom he hated, were appointed to the ministry, It was at length determined to get him entirely out of the way; and, as he happened to have taken the small-pox, it was agreed that he should sleep out, on account of the baby, who, though very soon cowed in his alter life, had not undergone the process of vaccination, for the simple reason that Dr. Jenner had not invented it.

Darnley had consequently a bed at a lonely house called the Kirk-a-field, where he was taken in only that he might be the more effectually done for by his enemies.

An explosion was heard in the middle of the night, and on the next morning the house was found in ruins, with Darnley doubled up under a tree at some considerable distance. It was re-

ported that lightning had been the cause of the event; but it is not likely that lightning would have known how to conduct itself with such precision as to have carried Darnley out of a three-pair of stairs window, and lay him down at a considerable distance from the house, without breaking a bone, or inflicting a bruise of any description whatever.

There is every ground for suspicion that Bothwell and his colleagues were instrumental to Darnley's death; but in order to throw dust—or gold dust—in the public eye, they offered a reward of £2,000 for the murderers.

This liberality was cheap enough, for they knew they could not be called upon to pay any reward, they being themselves the parties for whom they advertised.

A paper war was nevertheless commenced upon the walls, in which the murderers were advertised for on one side, and pointed out by name upon the other, when fresh rewards were offered, and the bill-stickers warned to beware of the libel they were helping to disseminate.

At length, such a stir was created, that, on the 12th of April, 1567, Bothwell was put upon his trial, when by some wilful negligence the counsel for the prosecution had no brief, and was of course unable to offer any evidence.

The accused was accordingly acquitted, and the ends of Justice were defeated in a manner that sometimes prevails in our own day, by an omission to instruct counsel; which seems to be a failing that may at least claim the merit of antiquity.

Though Bothwell was not to be executed for his crime, he was destined to be married; which, next to the capital penalty, was perhaps the highest he could pay, particularly as Mary, who had already seen out a couple of husbands and a favourite, was the lady destined for his future partner. Bothwell had the audacity to give a supper at a tavern in Edinburgh, at the close of the session of Parliament—an entertainment somewhat similar to our ministerial whitebait arrangement at Blackwall—when he

drew from his pocket a recommendation of himself as a fitting husband for the Queen of Scotland.

Eight bishops, nine earls, and seven lords, most of whom were under the influence of toddy, which turned them into toadies of Bothwell, affixed their names to the document; and armed with this instrument, he, at the head of a thousand horse, effected the forcible abduction of Mary on her way from Stirling Castle. An elopement on such an extensive scale was something very unusual, even in those days of extravagance, and it has been doubted whether it was with Mary's own consent that Bothwell ran away with her.

It is, however, indisputable that after making him Duke of Orkney on the 12th of May, she married him on the 15th, and a number of fresh raps from Knox followed, as a matter of course, the imprudence she had been guilty of. Her subjects took so much offence at this proceeding, that they rose against her; and Bothwell, abandoning her to her fate by flying to Denmark, left her to settle the matter as she could with her own people. A defenceless woman, and a female in distress, was of course impotent against an army of raw Scotchmen—whose rawness is so excessive, that they can very seldom be done—and Mary was consigned as a prisoner to the island of Lochleven. It may be as well to dispose of Bothwell at once, before we proceed; and, having traced him to Denmark, we meet him picking up a scanty subsistence by doing what we are justified in terming pirates' work in general.

The badness of business or some other cause ultimately turned his head, and we find him subsequently an inmate of an asylum for lunatics, Here he took to writing confessions; but some of them were so vague, and all of them so contradictory, that, recollecting the horrid story-teller Bothwell was known to be, we are at a loss to decide how much credit may be attached to his statements. If, as a general rule, we may believe half what is said, we shall believe nothing that Bothwell

has told us; for he has himself contradicted one half of his own story, and the other moiety must be struck off in pursuance of the principle we have just been adverting to. The fact of his death, not having come from his own mouth, may, however, be safely relied upon.

While Mary was a prisoner at Lochleven, her subjects took advantage of her helplessness to make her sign her own abdication, and settle the crown on the head of her baby son, whose first caps had scarcely been laid aside when they had to be replaced by the royal diadem. Her half-brother, Murray, was appointed regent, and coming over to Scotland he was crowned at Stirling, where all who declared themselves sterling friends of poor Mary gave in their adherence to the new ruler.

There was staying with the governor of the prison a young hoble-dehoy of the name of George Douglas, who, being on a visit to his brother, was allowed the privilege of seeing the royal captive, Master George Douglas, in natural accordance with the sentimentality peculiar to seventeen, fell sheepishly in love with the handsome Mary.

She gave some encouragement to the gawky youth, but rather with the view of getting him to aid her in an escape, than out of any regard to the over sensitive stripling. Going to his brother's bedroom in the night, the boy took the keys from the basket in which they were deposited, and letting Mary out, he handed her to a skiff and took her for a row, without thinking of the row his conduct was leading to.

When she reached the shore she was joined by several friends, and marched, as the only lady among six thousand men, in the direction of Dumbarton. Murray, however, was instantly on the alert, and meeting her near Glasgow, he gave her such a routing, that she was glad to fly anywhere she could, to get out of the way of his rough treatment. After some little consideration she determined to make for England; and, throwing herself and retinue into a fishing-smack, she sailed smack



for Workington, whence she resolved on walking to Carlisle, against the advice of her followers.

Though Elizabeth had expressed some sympathy towards Mary in her struggles, the English queen determined that her Scottish sister was not a person that could be received at the Court of a virgin—and such a virgin—sovereign.

The unfortunate woman, who had come over for protection as a fugitive, was at once made a prisoner, first at Carlisle and then at Bolton, when she was virtually put upon her trial for the purpose of ascertaining whether she was good enough to be visited by that dragon of virtue, the chaste Elizabeth.

In order to inculcate the Queen of Scots, an old melodramatic incident, that then perhaps had the merit of novelty, was resorted to by Murray, who produced, towards the closing scene of the trial, a packet of letters, by which it was pretended that Mary had furnished proofs of her own share in the murder of her husband Darnley. It was not very likely that, if guilty, she would have taken the trouble to commit the fact to paper, or to leave the letters about; and it only wanted a dagger wrapped in rag smeared over with red ochre, to complete the melodramatic dénouement that Murray seemed anxious to arrive at.

These “properties,” if we may be allowed the expression, had an unfavourable effect upon Mary’s cause, and a delay having taken place in the proceedings, Murray took advantage of it to offer to wash out the red ochre from the retributive rag, and throw all the letters in the fire, on condition of his being left to do as he pleased with the Scotch regency.

To this proposition Mary refused to accede, and defied him to the proof of his charges, which were believed to be chiefly false; and she retaliated upon him by accusing him of having been accessory to the death of Darnley.

As Elizabeth candidly acknowledged that she believed neither, she at first thought of punishing both; but at length Murray was furnished with means to return home, while poor Mary was conveyed to Tutbury in the county of Stafford, where it does not appear that even the old woman of Tutbury was allowed to be sometimes the companion of her captivity.

The royal prisoner was now under the supervision of the Earl of Shrewsbury, and was permitted, at last, to see a few visitors, several of whom were smitten by the charms of one who, though become a little passé, was, from the gentleness of her manners, always sure to be popular. Norfolk was so much taken with her that he offered her his hand, and promised to employ it in handing her on to the throne of England. As there was still an obstacle to the marriage, outstanding in the name of Bothwell, Mary could only consent, subject to that person’s approval.

The piratical business in Denmark having become slack, he was glad to take a small bonus to agree to a divorce, and an alliance between Norfolk and Mary, Queen of Scots, was understood, in private circles, to be one of the marriages in high life, which the season would soon see solemnised. Unfortunately for the parties interested, Mary had to send a remittance, in the year 1571, to some friends in Scotland, and the post being either irregular or untrustworthy, she had despatched the communication by hand, through one Banister, a confidential servant of the Duke of Norfolk.

Banister, who was not in the secret, went gaping about with the letter in his hand, and, thinking there was something mysterious about it, took it to Lord Burleigh, whose significant shakes of the head have earned him a note of admiration (!) in the pages of history. Burleigh, taking the letter in his hand, and placing his fore-finger on the side of his nose, began to wag his head from side to side, like the pendulum of a clock, as if he would be up to the time of day, according to his usual fashion; when, deliberately holding the letter up to the light, he, in the most ungentlemanly manner, perused every word of it.



He ascertained that Norfolk and Mary were contriving to drive Elizabeth from the throne, and the duke was accordingly brought to trial. The stupidity of his servants completed his ruin, for his secretary, instead of destroying the evidences of his master's guilt, had merely stowed them away under the door mats, and stuffed them among the tiles, so that the house from top to toe bore testimony to the guilt of its owner.

He was beheaded in 1752, Elizabeth declaring, as she always did when it was too late, that she intended pardoning him, but that somehow or other her royal clemency was not forthcoming until it was too late to be of any use to its contemplated object. The queen was urged by many of her admirers to get rid of Mary at once; but, as a cat delights to play with a mouse, Eliz-

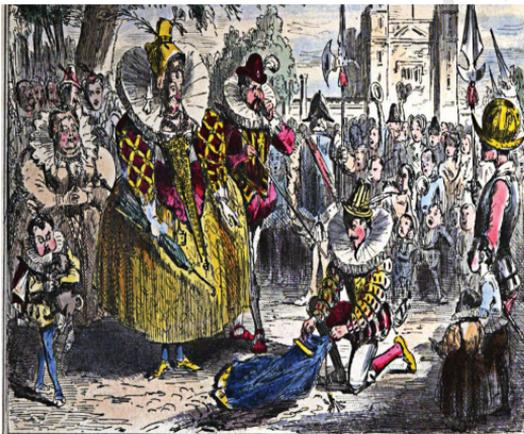
abeth seemed to take pleasure in exercising a feline influence over her unfortunate prisoner.

The Protestant cause had, about this time, been violently assailed in France, and Elizabeth encouraged the departure of English volunteers to aid the French Huguenots.

Among the British auxiliary legion that went forth on this expedition were, of course, a number of adventurers, but one of them in particular, was destined to cut a conspicuous figure in the history of his country.

This was Walter Raleigh, who had been in the habit of huzzaing at every royal progress, and keeping up a loyal shouting at the side of the carriage of the queen, whenever he met it in the public thoroughfares. In her visits to Greenwich, Raleigh was often found waiting at the stairs to see her land, and on one occasion the queen was about to set her foot in a puddle, when the adventurer, taking off his cloak, converted it into a temporary square of carpeting, to prevent Elizabeth from making a greater splash than she intended, on her arrival at Greenwich.

The cloak itself was of no particular value, and a little water was more likely to freshen it up than to detract from its already faded beauty; but the incident flattered the vanity of the queen, and it is said that she never forgot the delicate attention that Walter Raleigh had shown to her.



In the year 1571 a rumour got into circulation that a match was on the tapis between Mary and the Duke of Anjou, one of the brothers of the French king; and though the report was unfounded, Elizabeth was so jealous of anyone marrying anybody but herself, that she, for about the twentieth time, threw herself into the European market, as an eligible investment for any one who would venture upon a speculation of such a very awful character.

She sent over Walsingham as her ambassador, to see what could be done; but the Duke of Anjou, after sufficient negotiation to put an end to any match that might have been contemplated between Mary and himself, had the firmness to decline the honour of an alliance with Elizabeth.

The aged angler next baited a hook for the young Duke of Alençon, the boy brother of the Duke of Anjou, but the friends of the child stepped in to prevent the sacrifice.

It was not long after the events we have described, that a conspiracy to take Mary out of prison, and put Elizabeth out of the world, was by accident discovered.

One Babington, a man of ardent mind, was implicated in this disgraceful affair, which was discovered by the dangerous and irregular practice of thrusting letters through chinks in walls,—at a time, however, when the post-office arrangements were not so complete as to afford the comfort and convenience of a regular letterbox. Mary was undeniably implicated in the plot, which was so clumsily carried on that fourteen of the parties concerned were executed before she even knew that the scheme had been detected. She was taking an airing on a palfrey—one of those whose wretched trappings had made her think “comparisons are indeed odious,” as she thought of her riding excursions in her dear France—when a messenger from the queen turned her horse’s head towards Fotheringay Castle, in Northamptonshire. Commissioners were instantly sent down to try her for conspiracy, and on the 25th of October, 1586,

sentence was pronounced against her in the Star Chamber, When Elizabeth heard the decision, she affected the utmost reluctance to sign the warrant for Mary's execution; and, indeed, this reluctance seems to have been somewhat sincere, for she wished the death of her rival without any of the odium attaching to a share in an act of so much cruelty.

The English queen would have preferred that one of her subjects should have anticipated the effect of a death-warrant, by taking the life of Mary a little in advance; but no one was base or brutal enough to further the obvious wishes of the female tyrant. The signing of the warrant was performed amid sighs and tears, before Sir Robert Cary, Dame Gary, and the little Carys, when some of the children thought they recognised tears of sincerity falling from Elizabeth's eyes; but Mother Cary's chickens we must not depend upon. After some months of delay and duplicity, during which poor Mary was kept in a state of suspense more cruel than death itself, the warrant was signed; but Elizabeth endeavoured, as far as possible, to throw the blame on her ministers. This only aggravates her conduct, for her being ashamed of it, shows she was aware of its enormity, and that she did not consider herself to be merely performing an act of straightforward duty, though a painful one, in consigning to an ignominious death her sister sovereign. Mary was executed on the 7th of February, 1587, in the forty-fifth year of her age; and it is said that when the executioner held up her head by its auburn locks, they came off in his hand, and the grey stubble underneath proved too plainly that Mary had lived for many years a secret adherent to wig principles

## CHAPTER THE TENTH. ELIZABETH (CONCLUDED).

A few weeks had elapsed after the execution of poor Mary, when an ambassador, to palaver over the unfortunate queen's only son, James, was sent to Scotland by Elizabeth.

When the lad first heard the news he began to roar like a calf, and quiver like an arrow.

He vowed vengeance, in a voice of soprano shrillness, and the homely figure of a storm in a slop-basin was faithfully realised. The ambassador let him have his cry completely out, and then drawing himself up with an air of some dignity, observed, "When you have left off roaring, and can hear me speak, I will tell you the rights of it."

"Nobody has any right to murder my mamma," was the reply of the boy, who again opened the sluices of his grief, and allowed the tears to irrigate his face with a couple of meandering rivulets.

At length, silence being obtained, the ambassador declared that the amputation of Mary's head was accidental as far as Elizabeth was concerned; but, "axe-i-dental, you mean," was the bitter reply of her sobbing offspring. The messenger, nevertheless, persisted that the Queen of England meant nothing by signing the death-warrant; that, in fact, she had been "only in fun"; and as he wound up with the offer of an increased pension to James, the heartless brat dried his eyes, with the observation that "What's done can't be undone," and pocketed a quarter in advance of his enlarged income.

That Elizabeth had really been determined upon Mary's death, is a point upon which our sagacious readers will require no enlightenment; for to them the character of the royal catamountain—we use the Johnsonian word, in preference to the old, familiar term of catamaran—will be clear, from the

gallons of midnight oil which we have bestowed upon it. How to get rid of Mary was, in fact, a subject of frequent deliberation between the English queen and her creatures pretty creatures they were among whom Leicester and Walsingham stood prominent. Leicester had proposed poison, while Elizabeth suggested assassination; but the dagger and bowl, the emblems of legitimate tragedy, were both laid aside for the farce of a trial. When the sanguinary business was done, the chief actors in it threw the blame upon the subordinates, and poor Mr. Secretary Davison was declared by Elizabeth to have been the sole cause of the execution of the Scottish queen, because he had assisted in executing the deed that consigned her to the Scaffold. When Davison was accused of the act, he went about exclaiming, "I! Well, that is the coolest!—'Pon my word! What next?" But he soon found what was next, for he was committed to prison, and fined £10,000, merely to give colour to the accusation.

When confidentially apprised of the cause of his detention, he went into hysterics at the half-ridiculous, half-melancholy, idea of his being impounded to give colour to a charge which was altogether false; and "It only just cleans me out!—ruins me, by Jove!" was the touching remark he made as he paid the entire fine imposed upon him, and quitted the prison.

Philip of Spain was now becoming desirous of an attack upon England, without having any definite views, beyond a desire for mischief, which was inherent in his character.

He had got together a very formidable fleet, and Elizabeth taking alarm, tried all sorts of plans to check his warlike purpose. One of the expedients of her ministers—and it was not a bad one—was to throw discredit on a quantity of Philip's bills, in the hope of his finding a difficulty in getting them discounted.

Sir Francis Drake was despatched to Cadiz with a fleet of thirty sail, and Elizabeth having on his departure said to him, affectionately, "Go, and do your best, Drake—there's a duck,"

he dashed into Cadiz Bay, knocked down four castles, sunk a hundred ships—forecastles included—and going home by the Tagus, took a large man-of-war from under the very nose of the Marquis of Santa Cruz, and then made him a polite obeisance from the bow of the vessel.

Philip did not relax in his preparations for invading England, and he got together a very numerous fleet, by hiring vessels wherever he could, and sending his emissaries to engage a whole squadron at a time, like an individual, who, jumping into the first cab on a stand, desires the whole rank to follow him. The Armada—for such it was called—became, of course, rather numerous than select; but there is no doubt that if its quality was queer, its quantity was most respectable.

The naval service of England had been so shabbily provided for, that the British fleet did not exceed thirty-six sail of the line; though by-the-by, as the authorities have just told us that Drake took or demolished one hundred ships at Cadiz, there seems a slight error in figures, which will occasionally happen in the best regulated histories. As it was not known where the

enemy was to land, the High Admiral, Lord Howard of Effingham, was obliged to exclaim—”Now, gentlemen, spread yourselves, spread yourselves!” as he ordered Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher to the command of their various detachments.

The gallant Drake took up his station at Ushant, as if he would have said “You shan’t!” to any foe who might have come to that point to effect a landing.

Hawkins cruised near the Scilly Islands to look out, as he said, for the silly fellows who should come in his-way; and Lord Henry Seymour cruised along the Flanders coast, while other captains vigorously scoured the Chops of the Channel.

It was expected that the Spanish Armada would have come down the Thames, and perhaps amused themselves with an excursion to Rosherville, which was strongly fortified, as well as all the places on the river.

The Boshervillians threw themselves into the arms of their resident baron; and the peaceful inhabitants of Sheerness prepared to fight, out of sheer necessity. Catholics and Protestants vied with each other in eagerness to repel the invader from their shores; and the gallant fellows living near the Tower, declared in their blunt but expressive language, that “though the foe might pass a Gravesend, outlive a Blackwall, or go in safety through a Greenwich, he would most assuredly never survive a Wapping!” The queen herself, having driven down in her tilbury to Tilbury Fort, mounted a saddle-horse, and, flushed by her nautical enthusiasm, she looked a very horse-marine as she cantered about upon, her steed in the presence of her people.

The Earls of Essex and Leicester having held her rein, she majestically bridled up, and sent forth among the crowd a volley of clap-traps, declaring she had come among them, as the song says, To conquer, to conqu-e-e-er, To co-o-onquer, or to boldly die-i-i-i-e.” At length it was determined by Philip that the Spanish Armada should set out; and, as Strype pleasantly tells us, “a pretty set-out they made of it.” Poor Santa Cruz, the high admiral, made a most unlucky hit to begin with, by falling ill and dying, when his second in command, the Duke of Parma, followed his leader’s example, with most inconvenient rapidity.

The chief command was given to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, “who was a very good man, but a very bad sailor,” \* and knew so little of maritime affairs, that he is reported to have sent to a dealer in marine stores for an outfit. At length the Invincible Armada was ready to put to sea, and they succeeded in “shoving her off,” on the 20th of May, 1588, from the Tagus.

The seas, which evidently had no notion of being ruled by any but Britannia, turned turbulent under the Spanish usurpers, and a generalising of the waves made it a toss-up whether Medina Sidonia and his fleet would ride out the storm in safety. Four of the ships were actually lost, and nearly all the rest dispersed, and when the high admiral called upon his subordinate officers

to be "calm and collected," he found that the storm had not allowed them to be either the one or the other.

Having got his forces together again, as well as he could, the Spanish admiral made another start towards the English coast, and appeared off the Lizard Point, with his fleet drawn up in the form of a crescent, being seven miles from horn to horn, and presenting to the enemy the horns of a dilemma, The English were on shore at Plymouth, playing at bowls on the Hoe, and Drake, who was getting the better of the game, declared he would play it out, for there was no hurry, as he could beat his companions first, and the Spaniards afterwards. Having, at length, taken to their vessels, the British watched the foe as they came rolling in their heavy, lumbering ships up the channel.

Their guns were planted so high up that they shot entirely over the English vessels, and into one another, while their unwieldy size rendering them unmanageable, several of them being banged to bits by a series of frightful collisions. To add to the confusion, one of the vessels took fire, and was burnt, by an accident of the cook on board, who, it has been ingeniously suggested, was trying to fry some of the celebrated chops of the channel, "which," as Mrs. Markham says, in her very excellent Abridgment, "you know, my little dears, you have all heard talked about."

Vide George Cruikshank's renowned etching.

Another large vessel sprung her mast, another sprung a leak, a third burst her binnacle, a fourth shivered her timbers, a fifth lost all her fore part; and the crew were driven by stern necessity into the stem; while on all sides, there prevailed the utmost confusion. Medina Sidonia retired to the back yard of one of his ships, where he sat dejected and alone, and after a good deal of skirmishing, in which the Spaniards got the worst of it at all points of the compass, the duke made the best of his way home again.

He arrived at Santander about the end of September, 1588, with the mere skeleton of the force he had started with, and every sailor he brought back was in himself a complete wreck of what

he had been when he quitted his own country.

Thus ended the grand design of invading England by means of the Spanish Armada, which, to say the truth, did more mischief to itself than it sustained at the hands of the enemy. Had a public meeting been held at the time to celebrate the victory, we are sure that any English patriot might have proposed a vote of thanks to the Armada, for the "able and impartial manner in which it banged itself almost to pieces, with a total disregard of its own interests, and to the incalculable advantage of England."

On the 4th of September, 1588, Leicester, the queen's favourite, died on his way to Kenilworth; but Elizabeth never felt the loss, for she had already effected a transfer of her affections to Robert Devereux, the young Earl of Essex. Her grief at Leicester's death was so slight that it did not prevent her from putting an execution into his house, sweeping off all he had, under a bill of sale, and submitting it to the public hammer in order to repay herself the sums she had advanced to him in his lifetime. Essex was a mere boy, and the part of favourite to a disagreeable ugly old woman like "our Bessy," was by no means a sinecure. He was expected to appear at all times as the light comedian of the Court, and was compelled to exercise

flattery and gallantry towards a harridan who neither justified the one nor inspired the other. He took the earliest opportunity of getting away from her for a short time, by going to sea against her express orders; but he would have braved anything for a respite from the society of the royal bore, whose fondness had become odious to its object, though policy restrained him from openly saying so. On his return home, he found himself almost cut out of the queen's good graces by Sir Walter Raleigh, whose name we have already mentioned as that of a young adventurer. Raleigh was a distinguished navigator, which does not mean that he worked on the cuttings of a railway; but that he belonged to a very humble line, is a point there is not a doubt upon.

His reputation rests chiefly on the luggage he brought with him after one of his voyages, when some potatoes, and a few ounces

of tobacco crammed into his sac de nuit were destined to hand him down to immortality, The most popular vegetable the world ever saw, has put Raleigh into everybody's mouth; and when we see the cloud rising from the cigar, our imagination may trace, in the "smoke that so gracefully curls," the name of one whose renown cannot be whiffed away into the regions of oblivion.

The jealousy of Essex caused Raleigh to be sent into Ireland, where he remained for years; and his long sojourn may account for the hold that the potato had taken upon the affections of the Irish people.

His rival being thus summarily got rid of, Essex was left to make his way with the "virgin queen," who was now verging on old age, and treated her young favourite less as a subject than a son; for she had come to that time of life when anything she could show in the shape of fondness deserved the epithet of motherly.

The boy was a fine one of his age, being brave and good-looking; but Burleigh and other wise counsellors, seeing that Essex made a fool of the queen, or rather, that she made a fool of herself by her partiality for him, took a dislike to the stripling. On one occasion, old Elizabeth getting kittenish and playful, boxed the boy's ears, which tingled with the pain—for her hand had become bony from age—when he laid his hand upon his sword, and was thrown into disgrace, like a child who had been guilty of naughtiness.

He was soon recalled, and promising that he would "never do so any more," he rapidly resumed his place in the favour of the royal dotard.

The death of Burleigh, on the 4th of August, 1598, for whom the hurly-burly of politics had been too much, left the entire field to Essex, and he made the most of it, by getting the appointment of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; from which he derived the double advantage of advancing his own views and getting away from Elizabeth.

He took with him a considerable force, which he somehow or other frittered away without doing any good whatever: and after losing several of his soldiers by marching them completely off

their legs, he determined that he must have “a truce to such an unpleasant sort of thing,” and entered at once into a truce with the enemy. Elizabeth, who had calculated upon his settling the Irish question at the point of the sword, was disgusted at his failure, and desired him not to come home till he had subjected his honour to thorough repair, and taken all the stains out of his character. As he had no relish for the task imposed upon him, he suddenly quitted his post, and hastening to England, arrived at the palace covered with mud and dirt, for he had made a regular steeple-chase of the latter part of his journey. Without going home to change his boots, he rushed into the presence-chamber before the queen was up, and, without asking any questions, he pushed his way to her dressing room. He found her completely en déshabille, and started back at finding her hair on a block before her, instead of on her head, for she had got her wig in hand, and was trying to turn and twist it into a becoming form, by means of powder, pomatum, tongs, combs, and curl-papers. Startled by his sudden appearance, she hastened to put herself to rights as well as she could, and was angry at the intrusion; but as he fell at her feet, she contrived to cover the baldness of her head, and then received him more affably. He had no sooner gone than she began to reflect upon his presumption in having thus taken her unawares; and when he returned, after going home to dress, she would have nothing to say to him. He was desired to stay at home, and consider himself a prisoner in his own house; but as the old crone had allowed so many former familiarities, he was quite unprepared for the game of propriety she was now practising. He went home and took to his bed, for it made him perfectly sick to witness the sudden prudery of the queen, who during his illness sent him a daily basin of broth from her own table. She ordered eight eminent physicians to consult on his case; but this calling in of a powerful medical force looks very much as if she had been disposed to get rid of him, and preferred physic to law for once, as a method of destruction. In spite of his eight doctors

Essex got better, and sent submissive messages, to which Elizabeth turned a deaf ear; and Essex, by attributing her deafness to age, irritated her beyond expression.

He was told that he would find her unbending; when he at once replied that he had found her bent nearly double, when he last had the honour of seeing her, and he was glad to hear that royalty was once more beginning to look up in England, by taking its proper position.

These remarks irritated Elizabeth beyond expression; and having brought him before the privy council, she caused a sentence of banishment to be inflicted upon him, which he sarcastically declared was agreeable to him, as it would keep from him the sight of Elizabeth, whom he now denominated his "old queene." Anxious to try the effect of intimidation upon the nervous septuagenarian who now sat upon the throne, he entered into a conspiracy with Scotland; but it was soon found out, and, rushing with desperate fury into the streets, he tried to raise a mob by addressing inflammatory speeches to the populace.

The citizens looked at him and listened to him, but shaking their heads, passed on, when he soon found out that a solo movement unsupported by any concerted piece, rendered him truly ridiculous. At length he was hurried off to the Tower, and having been tried, he was condemned to die, though he fully expected the palsied old creature who held the sceptre in her tremulous hand, would, in a love-sick mood, decree his pardon.

It is said that in "happier days," when Essex had been in the habit of striking "the light, the light, the light guitar," to the tinlike sound of Elizabeth's voice, she had given him a ring, telling him if ever he fell into disgrace, the return of that ring would obtain his pardon, Elizabeth was from day to day listening to every knock, expecting the identical ring, but it never came, and on the 25th of February, 1601, he was actually beheaded. Elizabeth never held up her head again; but, indeed, as she had long contracted a stoop from debility and old age,

there is nothing astonishing in the fact we have mentioned. The spectacle of an old woman pining in love after a mere boy, was revolting enough; but the fact is made doubly disgusting by the recollection that she had herself caused the death of the object of her disreputable dotage.

Some time after the execution of Essex, the Countess of Nottingham was taken ill, and sending for Elizabeth confessed that the favourite had given the ring before his death to be delivered to the queen, but that it had been kept back for party purposes, The sovereign, who was shaking in every limb from ambiguity and agitation, flew at the Countess of Nottingham in her bed, seized her by the shoulder, and administered the most violent cuffs that a female of seventy is capable of bestowing on one who has offended her. "Take that—and that—and that—and that—and that!"—was the cry of the queen, as she suited the action to the word in every instance.

The exertion was too much for the tottering fabric of human frailty, who threw herself on the floor when she got to her own room, and refusing to go to bed, rolled about for ten days on a pile of cushions. Being asked to name her successor, she is said by some to have specified James; while others maintain that she said nothing. When she was too exhausted to oppose her attendants, they got her into bed, and on the 24th of March, 1603, she died in the seventieth year of her age, and forty-fifth of her reign. Many people have a very natural objection to written characters, but we feel compelled to give a written character of Queen Elizabeth; and we are sorry to remark, that we can say very little that will be thought complimentary. In person she was bony, coarse, muscular and masculine. Her hair was red, but this she inherited from her father Henry, and thus her red hair has been said, by that mountebank, Stiype, to have been he-red-hair-tary at that time in the royal family. She endeavoured, by the aid of dress, to make up for the unkindness of Nature; and she surrounded herself with a quantity of hoops, which, as her figure was rather

tub-like, may be considered appropriate. She never gave away her old clothes, and no less than three thousand dresses were found at her death, the bodies of which, it is said, would have covered half London at its then size, while the skirts would have covered all the outskirts. Her portrait is always drawn with an enormous ruff round her neck, which she adopted, it is believed, to hide the roughness of her chin, which showed Nature to be her enemy, for it had bearded her frightfully.

She was exceedingly fond of visiting the houses of the nobility; but she usually ruined all whom she honoured in this way, by the expense they were put to in entertaining her. Lord Leicester, who had her staying with him at Kenilworth, for a few days, nearly ruined himself in bears, of which he took in a great quantity to bait for the amusement of his sovereign.

In disposition, manners and appearance, there was nothing feminine or graceful about Elizabeth; but Hume, who seems very fond of her, tells us, that in weighing her, one ought to sink the female and think only of the sovereign. We cannot, however, understand a person being at the same time a good queen and a bad woman, unless the woman happens to be somebody beside herself, when she is obviously unfit to be trusted with the responsibility of government, Elizabeth had a certain amount of talent; "for she had," says Hume, "both temper and capacity;" but capacity seems to have belonged rather to the bony bulkiness of her unfeminine form, than to the extent of her intellect.

Her private character was exceedingly disreputable; and her amorous propensities, which seemed rather to increase with her old age, rendered her disgusting to her contemporaries, as well as ridiculous in the eyes of posterity. She was constantly in love with some stripling about the Court, who, when he became un peu passé, was thrown aside for some more juvenile admirer.

There can be no doubt that the admirable character of Mrs. Skewton, if we may be allowed an irreverent allusion to fiction

amidst the awful solemnities of fact, is to be attributed to the extensive historical research of Mr. Dickens, and his intimate acquaintance with the period of the reign of Elizabeth. It may be admitted that she governed with considerable firmness; but the praise, such as it is, of “coming it exceedingly strong,” is, after all, a most questionable compliment.

Several of the greatest names in science and literature shed a glory on Elizabeth’s reign; but the most magnificent sunshine, by falling on a mean object, does not make the object itself in reality more respectable. Bacon, Shakespeare, Spenser and others, are said to have flourished at the time; but we have examined their autographs with peculiar care, and have seen no symptoms of flourishing about any one of them. To say they all wrote at the period would be true; but to say they flourished is an exaggeration to which we will not lend ourselves.

The reign of Elizabeth was, at least, considerably in advance of our own time in one respect, for it is remarkable for the passing of a Poor Law which, unlike that of the present day, was founded on the principles of humanity. This blot, however, will, we trust, be removed in time for a sixth though not quite quickly enough for a second, third, fourth or fifth edition of this work; for the Spirit of the Times has doomed the Poor Law to perdition. Theatres first came into vogue in Elizabeth’s reign; and it is a fact at which our sober reverence for the Swan of Avon takes considerable alarm, that that ever-to-be-lamented bird was in the habit of exercising his quills in the neighbourhood of the New Cut, at a concern called the Globe, where the prices were only twopence to the pit, and one penny in the gallery.

The critics sat on the stage, and were furnished with pipes and tobacco—a gentle intimation to them to “draw it mild” in their notices of the performances. It is possible, that through the fumes of the tobacco they got a bird’s-eye view of the stage, which was favourable to the performance of their critical duties. The audience used to read, play at cards, smoke, and drink, before the perfor-

mance began; and perhaps, if the piece happened to be dull, they relieved it by some of those pastimes even during its progress.

Smoking, which has since reached such universality that every man one meets is a chimney, and every boy a flue, is known to have been introduced by Raleigh, who, fearing; that his friends would rally him on the propensity, used to indulge it in secret. One day some smoke was seen to issue from his apartment, and the people about him, fearing he was on fire, inundated him with buckets of water that put him out very seriously, and determined him in future not to smoke the pipe of privacy.

The mode of living was not very luxurious in Elizabeth's reign, for a glass of ale and a slice of bread formed the ordinary breakfast, while brawn was an article of general consumption; and, as Elizabeth was very fond of it, her great brawny arms are easily accounted for.

An attempt has been made to attribute various graces and accomplishments to Elizabeth, which, even after attempting to enlarge our credulity, and stir up our organ of veneration to its fullest extent, we are unable to give her credit for. It is said that she played, sang, and danced tolerably well, though her figure seems to give very weighty testimony against her probable possession of the last of these accomplishments.

She admired dancing among her courtiers, and she is said to have promoted Hatton for his terpsiohorean efforts, she having once seen him practising his steps, when she declared that he held himself so well in the first position, that she would elevate him to the first positions soon as possible.

Elizabeth, though profuse in her own indulgences, was stingy in the extreme to others, and her accumulation of old clothes proves a tenacity of bad habits, and a shabbiness towards her *femme de chambre*, that are on a par with the other despicable points in her character.

**BOOK VI. FROM THE PERIOD OF  
THE ACCESSION OF JAMES THE FIRST TO  
THE RESTORATION OF CHARLES  
THE SECOND.**

**CHAPTER THE FIRST.  
JAMES THE FIRST.**



HE moment the queen died, Cecil and the other Lords of the Council sneaked out through the back garden gate of the Palace at Richmond at three o'clock in the morning on the 24th of March, 1603, and posted for Scotland to James, whom they hailed as the brightest Jem that had ever adorned the throne. Cecil having long been in correspondence with the Scotch king, had only been waiting to see which way the cat jumped, or, in other words, for the death of the queen, and she had lived so long that he began to think the royal cat had nine lives, which delayed her final jump much longer than her minister desired.. Before posting to Scotland, the Lords of the Council had stuck up several posters about London, proclaiming James the First amid those shouts which "the boys" are ever ready to lend to

any purpose for which a mob has been got together, The Scotch king was of course glad to exchange the miserable cane-bottomed throne of his own country for the comfortably cushioned seat of English royalty; but he was so wretchedly poor that he could not even start for his new kingdom till it had yielded him enough to pay his passage thither. „He tried hard to get possession of the crown jewels for his wife, but the Council would not trust him with the precious treasures. On his way to his new dominions he was received with that enthusiasm which a British mob has always on hand for any new object; but he did not increase in favour upon being seen; for if a good countenance is a letter of recommendation, James carried in his face a few lines that said very little in his favour.

His legs were too weak for his body, his eyes too large for their sockets, and his tongue was too big for his mouth; so that his knees knocked without making a hit, his pupils could not be restrained by the lash, while his lingual excrescence caused so many a slip between the cup and the lip, that his aspect was awkward and disagreeable.

During his journey to London he rode on horseback, but he was such a bungling equestrian that he was thrown by a sagacious animal intent on having his fling at the expense of the sovereign. Besides being ungainly in his person, he did not set it off to the best advantage, for he was exceedingly dirty; and thus he appeared to be looking black at everybody, for his face was encrusted in dust, and though his predecessor, Elizabeth, was very objectionable, he could not boast of coming to the throne with clean hands. Power was such a new toy to him that he could not use it in moderation, and he made knights at the rate of fifty a day, which caused Bacon so far to forget himself as to utter the silly sarcasm, that there would be a surfeit of Sirs, if James proceeded in the manner in which he was beginning.

Conspiracies were soon formed against a monarch so weak, and the ambitious. Raleigh, who had been in his youth a mere street

adventurer, thought he could vault over official posts as easily as he had vaulted, over those in the public thoroughfares. His designs being detected, he was deprived of some of the offices he possessed, and among others his monopoly of licensing taverns, and retailing, wines, for which his knowledge of the tobacco business had well fitted him. He plotted with Grey, a Puritan, Markham, a Papiſt, and Cobham, a Nothingarian, to seize the person of the king; but the tables were turned upon them by the seizure of themselves and their committal to the Tower. Grey, Cobham, and Markham were condemned to die; but juſt as they had laid their heads on the block, they were axed if they would rather live, and having answered in the affirmative, they were committed to the Tower with Raleigh for the remainder of their lives.

The Puritans having complained of eccleſiaſtical abuſes. James ordered a meeting at Hampton Court between the biſhops and their opponents, to talk over their differences.

The biſhops were allowed the firſt innings, and they continued running on for ſeveral hours, when James took the matter up on the ſame ſide, and the Puritans were not allowed to utter a word. After the king had talked himſelf out of breath, and his hearers out of patience, Doctor Reynolds was permitted to take a turn on behalf of the Puritans; but he was inſulted, interrupted, and regularly coughed down before he had ſpoken twenty words.

The king then exclaimed, “Well, Doctor, is that all you have to ſay?” Upon which the Doctor, being abaſhed by the unfairneſs ſhown towards him, admitted that he was unwilling to proceed. James boated that he had ſilenced the Puritans; and ſo he had, but it was by intimidation and bluſter alone that he had ſucceeded in doing ſo.

Encouraged by his triumph over a few trembling ſectarians, the king called Parliament together, expecting to overcome that body; but he found he had to deal with ſome very awkward customers. They queſtioned his rights, reſuſed his ſalary, and turned coldly

from a proposition to unite England with Scotland, which they resisted with a sneering assertion that oil and vinegar would never agree. Doubting whether he would get much good out of Parliament in the temper in which he found it, he abruptly closed the session.

The Catholics, who were subjected to much persecution, became very angry under it, and a gentleman of the name of Catesby, who had changed his opinions some three or four times, stuck to the last set with such fury, that he resolved to assist them at all hazards. His principles had been a mere matter of toss up, but he had settled down into a Papist at last; and conceiving the idea of destroying King, Lords, and Commons, at one blow, he expressed himself on the subject avec explosion, as the French dramatists have it, to Thomas Winter, a gentleman of Worcestershire, who, having been worsted in all his prospects, cottoned at once to the scheme.

The Catholics had solicited the mediation of the King of Spain, and Winter passed over to the Netherlands to hear how matters were going on, when he made himself

acquainted at Ostend with a fellow named Guido Fawkes, who has been equally misinterpreted by “the boys” and the historians. It has been usual to describe him as a low mercenary who got his name of Fawkes or Forks, from his way of brutally demanding everybody to fork out; but however etymology may encourage such an interpretation of his name, we must denounce it as a cruel libel on his character.

\* The eagerness of the juvenile mind to adopt any malicious absurdity that is proposed to it, has been exhibited in the boyish extravagance of making Guido Fawkes a man of straw, though there is little doubt that he was a man of substance, and not the mere Will-o'-the-Wisp that constitutes his portrait as we see him drawn on stone along the paved streets of the metropolis.

Guido, whose pretended ugliness has made his abbreviated name of Guy synonymous with a frightful object, was a gentleman, though a fanatic, and it is not true that had Fawkes been

invited to dinner, it would have been necessary to look after the spoons as well as the Fawkes with unusual vigilance.

Catesby invited Winter and Guido to his lodgings, where they were met by Thomas Percy, a distant relation of the Earl of Northumberland, and by John Wright, an obstinate fellow, who would never own himself wrong. Grog and cigars—the latter being a novelty recently imported by Raleigh—were liberally provided, when Catesby suggested that before business could be regularly gone into, an oath of secrecy must be administered. With a melodramatic desire to give the affidavit all the advantages of appropriate scenery, it was suggested that a lone house in the fields beyond Clement's Inn should be the spot where the oath should be administered.

Some monster or punster in human form, declares he was called Fawkes or Forks, because he was ready to con-knive in anything sanguinary. The atrocity of this assertion needs no comment.

In the course of a few days the affidavit had been drawn, perused, settled, and engrossed, when the parties met at the place appointed, and were all sworn in, with due formality. Catesby, acting as a sort of chairman, then proceeded to explain to the meeting his views.

He commenced rather in the shape of innuendos, by hinting that he wished the Parliament further, and he thought he knew a mode of despatching all the Members at once, by a special train. As his associates did not take the hint immediately, he proceeded to expatiate on the expediency of a regular blow up, and getting rid of the whole Parliament "slap bang;" accompanying his observation by dealing on the deal table a tremendous thump, that made a noise resembling the explosion of gunpowder. The action seemed to strike a light in the eyes of all present, and by putting this and that together, they perceived that Catesby's intention was to act the last scene of the Miller and his Men, beneath the walls of Parliament. Percy, who was a gentleman pensioner—though he seems to have been rather more of the

pensioner than the gentleman—had an opportunity of banging about the Court, and watching the movements of his intended victims. The first care of the conspirators was to take a house in the neighbourhood; but no one of the lot, except Percy, had sufficient credit to justify his acceptance as a tenant, by any prudent landlord. At length they got hold of a dwelling by the water side, which was occupied by one Ferris—probably a ferryman—who, for a small consideration, vacated the premises in Percy's favour. The back of the house abutted—by means of a water-butt—on the Parliamentary party wall, and they began picking a hole in the wall as soon as they obtained possession. At every move they renewed their oath of secrecy, as if they were mutually better known than trusted among themselves, and a secret which, even in ordinarily honest hands, is tolerably sure to get wind; was very soon known to twenty people at least, through the leakiness of one or more of the conspirators.

Emboldened by their success, they took a coal shed on the Lambeth side of the river, where one of them, under pretence of going into the potato business, accumulated as large a quantity of coals, coke, and wood, as he could with the small means upon which he was enabled to speculate. The chief scene of their operations was, of course, the house at Westminster, where they laid in a large supply of hard boiled eggs; “the better,” says Strype, “to be enabled to hatch their scheme, and to avoid suspicion, by not being compelled to send out for food.” The wall offering considerable resistance to their projects it was found advisable to send for the keeper of the potato shed, over the way, to aid in the work, and young Wright, a brother of the same Wright that never would admit himself to be wrong, was admitted to a partnership in the secret.

Vainly did these ninny-hammers go hammering on at the walls of Parliament, which stuck together in a manner very characteristic of bricks, and no impression seemed to be made upon them; while the mine from Lambeth, by means of which they

intended under-mining the British Constitution, made scarcely any progress at all. One morning, in the midst of their labours, they were startled by a rumbling noise overhead, when Guido Fawkes, who acted as sentinel, ran to ascertain the cause of the alarming sound. It seemed that one Bright, who carried on the coal business in a cellar immediately below the Parliament, was clearing out his stock, at “an alarming sacrifice,” with the intention of moving his business to some more fashionable neighbourhood. Perhaps he was a bad tenant, and being on the eve of ejection, removed his coals in revenge for having got the sack from his landlord; but, at all events, he had a cart into which he was shooting the Wallsend, though he may have had no intention of shooting the moon at the expense of his creditors.

Percy, knowing the cellar must be vacant, went to look at it, and pronounced it the very thing; though it might, naturally, have excited some surprise that one who had hitherto been considered a man of ton should become a man of chaldrons and hundredweights by going into the coal business, on a scale somewhat limited.

A tenancy was nevertheless effected, and several barrels of gunpowder were carried into the vault, under the pretence that the small-beer and bloater business was about to be commenced by the new lessee, in a style of unusual liberality.

Guy Fawkes was despatched to Flanders, to obtain adherents to the scheme, but he got no further than to obtain a promise from Owen that he would speak to Stanley, which seems to have been merely equivalent to an extension of the secret, without any beneficial result to the conspirators.

On the return of Guido, he found that while he had been extending the secret abroad, his colleagues had been blabbing—of course confidentially—at home, so that the secret was becoming a good deal like an “aside” in a melo-drama, which comes to the ears of every one but the person most interested in being made acquainted with its purport.

Every arrangement was now made for blowing up the Parliament sky-high, when a prorogation, until the 5th of November, was suddenly announced, and the conspirators began to fear that the secret, which had experienced as many extensions as a railway line, had found its way, by some disagreeable deviation, to the ears of the intended victims.

The expense of the conspiracy had hitherto been borne by Catesby, who paid for all the hard-boiled eggs, the rent of the coal-cellar, with the wood and the coals that had been had in; for, the rest being soldiers of fortune, which means that they were soldiers of no fortune at all, would not have got credit for even the bull's-eye lanthorn, which has since cut such a conspicuous figure in the history of the period. Catesby had, however, spent so much in new-laid eggs and new-laid gunpowder—for he had to support a numerous train—that he was obliged to take in fresh capital, and Sir Edward Digby, with Francis Tresham, were admitted as shareholders in the dangerous secret.

Digby put down £1500 on the allotment of a slice of the mystery to himself, and Francis Tresham, who did not much like the speculation, though he consented to enter into it, gave his cheque for £2000, saying that he considered the money thrown away as completely as if he had wasted it in horse-chestnuts, Venetian grog, or raspberry vinegar. His givings were accompanied by fearful misgivings, and he never expected to see the hour when he should have the honour of being sent up to posterity on the wings of a barrel of gunpowder.

The 5th of November was the day that the conspirators had agreed to immortalize, for the benefit of future dealers in squibs, crackers, Catharine-wheels, and all the other “wheels within wheels,” that are so completely in character with this complicated project. They used to take blows on the river preliminary to the great blow they had in their eye, and a house at Erith was their frequent place of rendezvous. They also held consultations at White Webbs—not Webb's the White Bear—near En-

field, and here they arranged that Guido Fawkes, after putting matters in train, should set fire to it, by a slow burning match, which would give him time to escape, though he often said, half jestingly, that to find his match would be exceedingly difficult. As the scheme drew near its intended execution, the "secret" had become so fearfully divided that every one who possessed a share of it had some friend or other he wanted to save; and if each had been allowed to withdraw his man, the residue of the Parliament would scarcely have been worth the powder and shot it had been determined to devote to them.

Tresham, for example, was seized with a sudden fit of benevolence towards old Lord Monteagle; while Kay, the seedy and needy gentleman in charge of the house at Lambeth, wanted to save Lord Mordaunt, who had cashed for poor K. an I O U, when the money was of great use to him. Catesby, who was not so tender-hearted, declared it was all very well, but if they were to go on saving and excepting one after the other, there could be no explosion at all, unless they could procure some of that celebrated discriminating gunpowder, which blows up all the villains, in the last scene of a melo-drama, and spares the virtuous characters. He insisted, therefore, on the necessity of leaving the result to a toss-up, in which all would have an equal chance of winning or losing.

Tresham, who combined the wavering of the weathercock with the tremulousness of the tee-to-tum, was still intent on giving a sort of general warning to a number of his friends, and when his blabbing was objected to, he declared the affair had better be put off, as he could find no more money to carry on the conspiracy. Catesby, Winter, and Fawkes objected to delay; whereupon it is supposed that Tresham not only ratted but let the cat out of the bag in a most unwarrantable manner.

Lord Monteagle, who had a country box at Hoxton, was giving a petit souper to a few friends on the 26th of October, and he was just finishing the leg of a Welsh rabbit, when his page pre-

sented him a letter that had just been left by a tall man who had refused to leave his name or wait for an answer. Lord Montea-  
gle, thinking it might be a bill, desired one of his guests to read  
it out, when it proved to be a letter written in the characteristic  
spelling of the period. "I would advyse yowe, as yowe tender  
yower lyf, to devyse some excuse to shift of vower attendance  
at this Parleament," said the anonymous scribbler, which threw  
Montea-  
gle into such alarm that he took the Hoxton 'bus, and  
went off to Whitehall the same evening to see Cecil.

The king was "hunting the fearful hare at Royston," in the most  
hare-um scare-um style, and it was resolved that nothing could,  
would, or should be done until the return of the sovereign.

Notwithstanding the letter having been delivered as early as the  
26th of October, nothing seems to have been done to stop the  
conspiracy, for Fawkes went regularly once a day to the cellar,  
to count the coals, snuff the rushlight, and do any other little odd  
job that the progress of the conspiracy might require.

Cecil and Suffolk having laid their heads together on the subject  
of the letter, at last fancied they had found the solution of the  
riddle, which for the convenience of the student, we will throw  
into the form of a charade, after an approved model.

My first is a sort of peculiar tea;

My second a lawn or a meadow might be;

My whole's a conspiracy likely to blow

King, Commons, and Lords to a place I don't know.

The "peculiar tea" was gunpowder, the "lawn" or "meadow"  
was a plot—of grass, and the whole was the Gunpowder Plot,  
which, though it went off very badly at the time, caused an ex-  
plosion from which the country has not yet quite recovered.

Notwithstanding the solution of the mystery, no steps were tak-  
en to bring the matter, to an issue, and Fawkes was permitted  
to be at large about town, paying his diurnal visits to the cellar  
without attracting the observation of anyone.

Tresham and Winter talked the matter over in Lincoln's Inn Fields,

or wandered amid the then romantic scenery of Whetstone Park, to consult on the scheme and its probable completion. The timid Tresham proposed flight, but his fellow conspirators, who were not so flighty, resolved on persevering, and the intrepid Fawkes kept up a regular Cellarius, by dancing backwards ana forwards about the cellar.

We may as well state, for the benefit of that posterity which this work will reach and the Cellarius will not, that the Cellarius is a dance fashionable in the year 1847, when this history was writtenm ,The shilly-shallying of all parties with respect to the gunpowder conspiracy is one of the most remarkable features of the period when it occurred; for we find the plotters, with detection staring them in the face, adhering to their old haunts, while the intended victims though made aware of the plot, were as tardy as possible in taking any steps to baffle it. Fawkes continued his visits to the cellar just as confidently as ever; and one would think that ultimately detection was the object he had in view for he lurked about the premises with such obstinate perseverance that his escape was impossible. At length Suffolk, the Lord Chamberlain, took Monteagle down to the House the day before the opening of Parliament, to see that all was right, and they occupied themselves for several hours in looking under the seats, unpicking the furniture of the throne to see if anyone was concealed inside, and searching into every hole and corner where a conspirator was not likely to secrete himself. Having taken courage from the fact of there being no signs of danger, they determined to go down stairs into the cellar, under pretence of stopping up the rat-holes—for even in those early days rats found their way into the House—and they had no sooner opened the door than they saw in one corner a round substance, which they at first took for a beer barrel.

They approached it with the intention of giving it a friendly tap, when the supposed barrel rose up into the height of a water-butt.



Suffolk instantly got behind Monteaule, who stood trembling with fear, when the phantom cask assumed the form of a "tall, desperate fellow," who proved to be Fawkes, and the Chamberlain, affecting a careless indifference, demanded his "name, birth, and parentage." Guido handed his card, bearing the words G. Fawkes, and announced himself as the servant of Mr. Percy, who carried on a trade in coals, coke, and wood, if he could, in the immediate neighbourhood. "Indeed," said Suffolk, "your master has a tolerably large stock on hand, though I think there is something else screened besides the coals, which I see around me." Without adding another word, he and Monteaule ran off, and Fawkes hastened to acquaint Percy with what had happened. Poor Guido seems to have formed a most feline and most fatal attachment to the place, for nothing could keep him out of the cellar, though he knew he was almost certain of being hauled unceremoniously over the coals, and he went back at two in the morning to the old spot, with his habitual foolhardiness. He had no sooner opened the door than he was seized and pinioned, without his opinion being asked, by a party of soldiers. He made one desperate effort to make light of the whole business, by setting fire to the train, but he had no box of Congreves

at hand, and he observed, with bitter boldness, in continuation of a pun which he had made in happier days, that he had at last found his match and lost his Lucifer. Poor Guy Fawkes, having been bound hand and foot, was taken on a stretcher to Whitehall, having been previously searched, when his pocket was found filled with tinder, touch-wood, and other similar rubbish. Behind the door there was a dark lanthorn, or

bull's-eye, that had cowed the soldiers at first glance, by its glazed look, but it seemed less terrible on their walking resolutely up to it. Fawkes was taken to the king's bedroom, at Whitehall, and though his limbs were bound and helpless, he spoke with a thick, bold, ropy voice that terrified all around him. His tones had become quite sepulchral, from remaining so long in the vault, and when asked his name, he scraped out from his hoarse throat the words "John Johnson," which came gratefully as if through a grating—on the ears of the bystanders.

He announced himself as John the footman to Mr. Percy, and he threw himself into an attitude—which was rather cramped by his pinions—which he found anything but the sort of pinions that would enable him to soar into the lofty regions of romance to which he had aspired, He nevertheless boldly announced his purpose, with the audacity of a stage villain; and with that sort of magnanimity which lasts, on an average, about five minutes in the guilty breast, he refused to disclose the names of his accomplices.

One of the Scotch courtiers, who had a natural feeling of stinginess, asked how it was that Fawkes had collected so many barrels of gunpowder, when half the quantity would have done. Upon which Fawkes replied, that his principal had desired him to purchase enough to blow the Scotch back to Scotland.

"Hoot, awa, mon!" rejoined the Scot; "but ken ye not that ye might have bought half the powder, and put the rest of the siller in your pocket?" Fawkes sternly intimated that though he would have blown up the Parliament, he would not defraud his

principal. "Hoot, mon!" cried the Scotchman, who loved his specie under the pretence of loving his species, and who, it is probable, belonged to the Chambers; "Hoot, mon!" he whined, "dinna ye ken that there are times when you mun just throw your preincipal overboard?" \*\* A fact!

On the 6th of November Fawkes was sent to the Tower, with instructions to squeeze out of him whatever could be elicited by the screw, which was then the usual method of scrutiny.

For four days he would confess nothing at all; but his

accomplices began to betray themselves by their own proceedings. Several of them fled; but Tresham exhibited the very height of impudence by coming down to the Council and asking if he could be of any use in the pursuit of the rebels.

Nothing but the effrontery of the boots which ran after the stolen shoes, crying "Stop thief," and have never returned to this very hour, can be compared with the coolness of Tresham in offering to aid in effecting the capture of the conspirators.

Catesby and Jack Wright cut right away to Dunchurch, Percy filled his purse, and Christopher Wright packed up his kit, to be in readiness for making off when occasion required, while Keyes made a precipitate bolt out of London the morning after the plot was discovered.



Rookwood, who had ordered relays of fine horses all along the road, went at full gallop through Highgate, and never slackened his pace till he reached Turvey, in Bedfordshire, where he came tumbling almost topsy-turvy over the inhabitants. Arriving at Ashby, St. Legers, with a légèreté quite worthy of the race for the St. Leger itself, he had already travelled eighty miles in six hours; but he nevertheless pushed along on his gallant steed—a magnificent dun—who always ran as if he had a commercial dun at his heels, to Dunchurch. Here he found Digby, enjoying his otium cum dig.—with a hunting party round him; but the guests guessed what was in the wind, and fearing they might come in for the blow, had vanished in the night-time.

When Digby sat down to breakfast the next day, his circle of friends had dwindled to a triangle, consisting of Catesby, Percy, and Rookwood, who, with their host, now become almost a host in himself, took speedily to horse, and rode a regular steeple-chase to the borders of Staffordshire.

Here they arrived on the night of the 7th of November, at Holbeach, where they took possession of a house; but by this time Sir Richard Walsh, the sheriff of Worcester, who had got writs out against them all, was close upon them with his officers. In the morning their landlord, one Littleton, having been let into their secret, let himself out of his bedroom window through fear, and Digby decamped under pretence of going to buy some eggs to suck for breakfast, as well as to look for some succour.

Digby had hardly shut the street door when its bang was echoed by a bang up stairs, occasioned by Catesby, Percy, and Rookwood having endeavoured to dry some gunpowder in a frying pan over the fire.

Catesby was burnt and blackened, besides being blown up for having been the chief cause of the accident; and shortly afterwards, to add to their misfortunes, the sheriff, with the posse comitatus, surrounded the dwelling.

The conspirators endeavoured to parry with their swords the bul-

lets of their assailants, but this was a hopeless job, and keeping up their spirits as well as they could, they exclaimed at every shot fired on the side of the king, "Here comes another dose of James's powder." Catesby, addressing Thomas Winter, roared out, "Now then, stand by me, Tom!" and Winter, suddenly taking a spring to his friend's side, they were both shot by one musket.

Their attendants, not being able to get the bullet out, issued a bullet-in to say they were both dead, and the brothers Wright were not long left to bewail the fate of their accomplices. Percy, who had persevered to the last, got a wound which wound him up, and Rookwood had received such a home-thrust in the stomach from a rusty pike, that the pike rust sadly disagreed with him. Digby, whose feelings had run away with him, was overtaken, caught, and made fast, because he had been too slow, while Keyes came to a dead-lock, and the prisoners being all brought to London, were lodged in the Tower.

Tresham, who had never left town, but was strutting about with all the easy confidence of a man with "nothing out against him," was suddenly nabbed, in spite of his remonstrances, conveyed in exclamations of "What have I done?" "La! bless me!

there must be some mistake!" and other appeals of an ejaculatory but useless character.

Poor Guido Fawkes was examined by Popham, Coke, and Wood, whose names may now for the first time be noticed as appropriate to the business they were entrusted with. Popham is surely emblematical of the series of pops, bangs, and explosions that would have ensued from the Gunpowder Plot; while Coke and Wood are obviously symbolical of the combustibles required for fuel. In vain did these sagacious persons attempt to get anything from Guido, who said "he belonged to the Fawkes and not to the spoons, who might perhaps be made to convict themselves by cross questioning." Popham popped questions in abundance; Coke tried to coax out the truth; and Wood, if he could, would have got at the

facts; but neither threats nor promises could prevent Fawkes from showing his metal, Posterity, in altering his name to Guy Fox, has happily hit upon an appropriately expressed the cunning of his character, He confessed his own share in the business readily enough, but resolutely refused to betray his associates I will not acknowledge that Percy is in the plot," he cried; which reminds us of an intimation made by a gentleman just arrested, to his surrounding friends, that "he did not wish the bailiff pumped upon.", A nod is as good as a wink in certain cases; and like winking the sheriff's officer was submitted to a course of hydropathic treatment. In the same manner the declaration of Fawkes that "Percy had nothing to do with it—oh, dear no, nothing at all!" was quite enough to put the authorities on the right scent had any such guidance been required.



Poor Fawkes was so fearfully damaged by the torture he had undergone, that his handwriting was entirely spoiled; and specimens of his mode of signing his name after the torture, contrasted with the copy of his autograph before the cruel infliction, present the reverse of the result which writing-masters of our day boast of producing by their six lessons in penmanship, Guido Fawkes, however, confessed nothing specifically beyond

what the Government already knew, but Tresham and Catesby's servant Bates, a man remarkable for his bêtise, confessed whatever the authorities required. Tresham being seized with a fatal illness in prison, retracted his confession, which he declared had been extorted or "extorted"—as Strype has it—from him, and he died after placing his recantation in the hands of his wife to be given to Cecil. The surviving conspirators were brought to trial after some delay, and though they all pleaded not guilty, as long as there was a chance of escape, they were no sooner convicted beyond all hope than they began boasting of their offence, and were all "on the high ropes" when they came to the scaffold. Garnet the Jesuit was served up by way of garniture to the horrible banquet that the vengeance of the Protestants required.

This brilliant character shone with increased lustre as the time for his execution approached, and however glorious had been his rise, the setting was worthy of Garnet in his very brightest moments. Besides those who were executed for an avowal, or at least, a proved participation in the Gunpowder Plot, several persons were punished very severely, in the capacity of supplementary victims, who might, or might not, have been implicated in the conspiracy. Lords Mordaunt and Stourton, two Catholic nobles, were fined, respectively, £10,000 and £4000 because they did not happen to be in their places in Parliament, to be blown up, had Fawkes succeeded in accomplishing his object. The Earl of Northumberland was sent to the Tower for a few years, and mulcted of £30,000, because he had made Percy a gentleman pensioner, some years before; but no trouble was taken to show how this could have rendered him afterwards a rebel, nor how Northumberland could be responsible, even if such a result had really arrived. But it was urged by the apologists for this severity, that the Gunpowder Treason would have been fatal alike to the good and the bad, and that as the punishment should correspond with the offence, an indiscriminate dealing out of penalties among the guilty and the innocent was quite allowable.

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