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Poetry.

The Jolly Mariner:

A BALLAD.

BY JOHN G SAXE.

It was a jolly mariner
As ever hove a log;
He wore his trowsers wide and free,
And always ate his prog,
And blessed his eyes, in sailor-wise,
And never shirked his grog.

Up spoke this jolly mariner,
Whilst walking up and down
"The briny sea has pickled me,
And done me very brown;
But here I goes, in these here clothes,
A cruising in the town!"

The first of all the curious things
That chanced his eye to meet,
As this undaunted mariner
Went sailing up the street,
Was, tripping with a little cane,
A dandy all complete!

He stopped,—that jolly mariner,—
And eyed the stranger well:—
"What that may be," he said, says he,
"I'm more than I can tell;
But ne'er before on sea or shore,
Was such a heavy swell!"

He met a lady in her hoops,
And thus she heard him hail:
"Now blow me tight! but there's a sight
To manage in a gale!
I never saw so small a craft
With such a spread o' sail!

"Observe the craft be fore and aft,
She'd make a pretty prize!"
And then in that improper way,
He winked about his eyes,
That mariners are wont to use
In anger or surprise.

He saw a plumber on a roof,
Who made a mighty din:—
"Shipmate ahoy!" the rover cried,
"It makes a sailor grin
To see you copper-bottoming
Your upper-decks with tin!"

He met a yellow-bearded man,
And asked about the way,
But not a word could he make out
Of what the chap would say,
Unless he meant to call him names,
By screaming "Nix for-tay!"

Up spoke this jolly mariner,
And to the man said he,
"I haven't sailed these thirty years
Upon the stormy sea,
To hear the shame of such a name
As I have heard from thee!

"So take thou that!"—and laid him flat,
But soon the man arose,
And beat the jolly mariner
Across his jolly nose,
Till he was fain, from very pain,
To yield him to the blows

'Twas then this jolly mariner,
A wretched jolly tar,
Wished he was in a jolly boat
Upon the sea afar,
Or riding fast, before the blast,
Upon a single spar!

'Twas then this jolly mariner
Returned unto his ship,
And told unto the wondering crew
The story of his trip,
With many oaths and curses, too,
Upon his wicked lip!

As hoping—so this mariner
In fearful words harangued—
His timbers might be shivered, and
His leeward scuppers danged,
(A double curse, and vastly worse
Than being shot or hanged!)

If ever he—and here again
A dreadful oath he swore—
If ever he, except at sea,
Spoke any stranger more,
Or like a son of—something—went
A-cruising on the shore!

Atlantic Monthly.

Selections.

From Chambers' Journal.

The Cock and Bull Club.

I have never seen a ghost, and I don't want to see one. If anything of that nature, under a mistaken notion of benefiting me by warning me of a danger, or pointing out a treasure-hole, or putting me up to a good thing on a future sporting event, should present itself, I should be frightened to death; there would, if I know myself, be another ghost in the room in about half a minute.—As for devil-may-care dogs who visit necropolises alone and at midnight, or who are prepared to sit up in their solitary beds and pronounce their own names solemnly three times, with the intention of raising their familiar spirits—I don't believe such creatures exist. What man dare do—with reason and respectability—I dare; "who dares do more," I have good authority for stating, "is none." When a certain spectral light steals into my bed-chamber upon a sudden, I am accustomed to make me a sort of Crimean tent of the blankets, whereupon I emerge only at long intervals to breathe; I have lost more pounds of flesh in this manner, through moonbeams, than any African traveler surrenders to the sun. Well do I remember that particular terror in my boyhood, which resulted in my remaining at five feet seven, instead of six feet one and a half—the altitude attained by each of my brothers; that shock from which my constitution took two entire years to recover itself, during which, at youth's most growing time—I did not approach the stars by a single inch. I was about nine years of age when the frightful incident occurred, and what is called—by very old persons who have forgotten what school was—a happy school boy; that term, however, was, just then, applicable to me enough, since I had got away from my place of durance and instruction for a few days of Easter vacation. I was staying at the house of a cousin, who lived in the outskirts of a large provincial town, of which—as I kept in mind with unutterable awe—he was then the Mayor. Cousin Richard was short and stout to a degree that I should be now inclined to term "podgy;" but being invested with this supreme and mysterious dignity, he seemed to me to possess a presence more imposing than that of any other being upon the earth's surface. When he said: "You must sleep in the red room, Harry, since you are so fond of getting up early, and then you won't disturb the house in the morning, in putting on your boots," I submitted without remonstrance. That I *did* like getting up early—so that I might enjoy as much of the present immunity from my scholastic privileges as possible—that I *did* commonly make a tremendous noise in pulling on my boots, was true enough; but that I should be put in the red room, the state-apartment dedicated to exalted guests, away from the rest of the house, and,—almost to a certainty—haunted, seemed a mode of prevention worthy of the worst days of the inquisition. Had my father proposed such a proceeding, had my schoolmaster, had, indeed, any authority with whom I could grapple, and of whose powers I could calculate the extent, I would have protested manfully; but the edict of the Mayor appeared to settle the matter beyond dispute, and I knocked under at once with an Asiatic servility.

I need not say how the rest of that afternoon was embittered by the thought of the night that was to follow; those who are acquainted with such terrors can easily enough imagine them; those who are not can never be made to understand them by mere description. Enough to say that about nine o'clock, P. M., I found myself in the big bed in the red room, in a cold bath of perspiration, and with my eyes tightly closed, endeavoring to go to sleep before the adults of the house should have retired. As long as the noise of tongues and feet continued, however much in the distance, my mind would, I knew, be comparatively tranquil, and subject to the influence of the dreamy god; but if once the sense of solitude should creep over me, slumber would become impossible, and I should fall a victim to the dreadful powers of darkness for the rest of the night.

I did go to sleep, in accordance with these profound calculations; but unhappily, and contrary to them, I awoke about three hours afterwards. It was midnight. I did not require the weird accents of the cuckoo-clock upon the stairs to tell me that. I possessed as acute a perception of that ghostly time a alderman of their dinner hour, or stationmasters of the period when the night express is wont to flash for a moment between the trembling walls. The moon was shining through the shutterless windows, and throwing all kinds of suspicious shadows about the old red rooom. Red room. Why red? The marrow in my youthful bones caught such a chill at the bare idea, that I did not care to repeat the question. Two oaken cupboards, which in my haste I had forgotten to examine, began to harass me with anxieties about their contents. I slipped cautiously out of bed. Good heavens, was somebody holding on to my nightgown, or —? No; it was a long one, and I had trodden upon it with my own foot—that was all. I approached the doors, and, without taking the liberty of opening them, turned their keys, which happened fortunately to be outside of them. Comforted with this ingenious device of my own, I had retired to my couch, and was once more courting slumber, when a tormenting thought seized hold of me and roused me up again. *I had forgotten to look under the bed.* I lay awake, endeavoring to reason with myself upon so absurd an anxiety, but nothing came of it, except a singing of the ears and increased suspicion. I thought I heard respirations from under the mattress; I heard groans; I began to feel the mattress move under me. "No, dash it all!" cried I, as I sprang to my feet and lifted the valance, "I am not going to be frightened to death in this manner, by nothing." By nothing! Oh, was it nothing, though, that met my affrighted gaze under that bed!

I was beneath the blankets in about a quarter of a second afterwards, in a state of terror that absolutely for a little time deprived me of sensation. My imagination, fertile as it always had been in conjectures of a horrible nature, had never, indeed, come up to the reality of what I had just seen; a robber, a ghost, the arch-enemy of man and boy himself, any or all of these I had been, in a measure, prepared to find in the red room, but a Coffin—an enormous Coffin—large for the shoulders, and tapering somewhat delicately towards the feet: to find an article of that description under my bed was a shock unexpected indeed. There it was, however, sure enough, with a double row of handsome gilt nails all the way round, handsome initials over the spot where the face would come, and a little inscription, doubtless setting forth in a handsome manner the virtues of the deceased party. The five hours which intervened between that discovery and daylight I passed in picturing to myself the features of the murdered—I had not a doubt of him or her having been murdered—and in estimating the chances of the return of the murderer to the red room. No sick man ever longed for the morning as I longed, and with the first faint streaks of dawn, I was standing, in my scanty drapery, by the side of my cousin's pillow. "Richard, Richard," cried I, "there's murder in the house, and they've put the coffin under my bed in the red room."

"Pooh; pooh, you little fool," replied he; "go back again; I'm the Mayor this year, *it's only the big box which the mace is kept in.*"

Notwithstanding this constitutional weakness of mine, which has not much abated with years, the supernatural has still a wondrous charm for me, and I snatch a fearful joy from the tales of ghosts and spectres. My happiest evenings—with the most miserable nights to follow—are spent, weekly, at a Society for the Investigation of Spiritual Phenomena, or, as some of the unbelieving have disrespectfully termed it, the Cock-and-Bull Club. We assemble every Friday, at seven o'clock. If the police were suddenly to break in upon our speculations, as we sit, thirteen in number, looking at one another, around a table with lighted candles, they would, I believe, proceed to collar and shake us, with a view of discovering who had swallowed the dice. No written accounts of apparitions are admitted, no published records of any such may be referred to, and it is essential that the narrators in some sort be personally acquainted with the matter of which they speak; it is not indispensable that the individual should have seen a ghost himself—although more than one of our society have been highly favored in that way—so that the *narratio obliqua*, so popular with the historians of a dead language, is the general form amongst us, too, of our communications from without the world.

I rarely speak much myself, but listen—as may be imagined—with the most voracious attention. The three members of our society who interest me most are Heywood Wilkinson, and Arnold. The nature of their relations is commonly as different as their respective characters, and for that reason—rather than because of any peculiar wonder belonging to them—I will repeat, in brief, the three strange stories they favored us last night.

Heywood, who is the son of a dean, possesses, with the exception of the emoluments, all the popular attributes of that dignitary: he is stout, and rosy about the gills; takes several glasses of port during the little supper which concludes our spiritual investigations; and, by some means or other, it always happens that he obtains possession of the only arm-chair in the room. There is a matter-of-fact-ness, and absence of any care for effect about what he has to say, which I love to listen to—while it makes my blood run cold—on account of its obvious truth.

I. "My father," said he last night, "was, as most of you are aware, before he was made a dean, the vicar of Tredlington. The vicarage-house was a small one; and to it and to residences of the like humble kind I had been exclusively accustomed up to the age of fourteen years. I knew nothing of paneled oak chambers, secret staircases, passages in the thickness of a wall, and all the machinery of romantic discomfort, except through books. Tredlington—where I had the dream which I am about to relate—was not in the least degree allied to Udolpho; and yet the dream I dream there was just such a one as dear old Mrs Radcliffe might have had herself after a pork supper. I dreamed that some half-an-hour before dinner, and immediately after the bell had rung for dressing, my cousin—a lad of the same age, who was then stopping with me—had mischievously locked me up alone in the drawing-room, and there left me. Anxious not to displease my father by being late, and not daring to leap out of either of the windows—which were on the first floor—I strove, in my dream, to find some other mode of egress. There were several large pictures hanging up on the walls—quite strange to me, but which, as is usual in such cases, produced no astonishment—and pushing these aside, one after another, I found behind the last on the east wall a flight of little stairs, which led, to my great joy, up into my bedroom.

"I told this dream to the whole breakfast party the next morning, when this and that solution were given; but although the impression still remained, doubtless, in my mind, no circumstance arose for several years to cause me to refer to it. I was a young man of about one-and-twenty, and at college, when my father's elevation to the deanery of Donnington took place. This same cousin of mine was my fellow student, and accompanied me, at the vacation, on my first visit to the fine old cloistered place which I was proud to be able to call my future home. A little banter upon this pardonable vanity of mine assisted by the spirits of youth, brought on between us what is popularly termed "a scrimmage;" and my father happening to be out just at the particular time of our arrival, although it was nearly the dinner-hour, my cousin playfully pushed me by the shoulders into the new drawing-room, and locked the door behind me. At that instant the dinner bell rang; in the next I recognized completely the room of my dream, and walked to the last great picture which hung on the eastern wall, for a means of egress, as naturally as I should have walked to the door. Behind the picture was a secret stair leading into a secret chamber which had been set apart for my reception, and I very much astonished the servant who brought up my trunks by appearing therein through a sliding panel. As for the secret staircase, if any of this company will do me the honor to come down to Donnington, they shall lock me into the drawing-room, even after the first dinner-bell has rung, as often as ever they please."

Arnold the youngest and latest-joined of the society, but notwithstanding—or perhaps I should say, by reason of—that circumstances, he is the most enthusiastic of us all. He told us, after Heywood had finished, the following story in a quiet undertone, such as the brook sings in "to the sleeping woods, all night, in the leafy month of June," and with eyes that looked through and through us while he spoke, as upon some strange uncanny sight beyond.

II. "My father was left a widower in his first year of marriage, his wife having died in childbirth with us twins—myself and my brother George, whom some of you have mistaken at times, you know, for me. My poor mother herself had been also one of twins. For a few months after her death, her two sisters stayed in my father's house to comfort him and look after us children. I was, however, soon put out to nurse, and George only remained at home. He slept in the same room with his two aunts. I had been from home about a week or so, when Aunt Susan, on awaking about midnight, found her sister out of bed, and walking about the room. She knew Maria suffered from 'a raging tooth,' so merely informed her where the laudanum was, and went to sleep again. Next night, as the two sisters were undressing, Susan said: 'Be sure to put the bottle so that that you will know where to find it, and not run the risk of your death of cold, as you did last night.'

"'I had not the toothache last night, and never left my bed at all,' replied Maria.

"'Then you must have done it in your sleep, for I saw you as plainly as I ever saw you in my life.' So, with mutual recrimination and denial, they retired to rest.

"Again Susan was awakened, and again she saw her sister pacing about the room.

"'Maria, come to rest,' said she; 'the fire is out, and the cold will only increase the pain.'

"Her sister turned a pale face towards her, with an indescribably sorrowful and touching expression, but said nothing. Susan, thinking her to be seriously ill, was about to leave the bed, when, to her extreme astonishment, she perceived Maria fast asleep beside her.

"It was my dead mother, then—the very image of my living own sister—who she had looked upon those two nights. Susan fainted with excess of fear, and did not waken her bedfellow till after dawn, when nothing unusual was to be observed. She told, however, all she had seen; and Maria, who was much the bolder of the two, promised to keep vigil next night, upon condition that my father was not to be informed of the matter, which she knew would distress him greatly. She attributed the thing herself to fancy and a disordered system. That night, then, they both watched; and when they had been in bed some time, they heard the front door of the cottage open—my mother had been accustomed in her lifetime to carry, for convenience, a latch key—and a well-known gentle foot-tap pass up the stairs and go into my father's room. Presently their own chamber door opened, and, dressed in a white garment betwixt bed gown and dressing gown, their dead sister glided in. She gave them an appealing, almost reproachful look, and then turned to the little cradle where her baby-boy was sleeping, and stooped down as if to kiss it. Once again she seemed to beseech them dumbly, and left the room with a slow, noiseless tread. It was some minutes before they dared to speak. Maria longed to address the spirit, but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. In the morning they asked my father whether he had seen any strange sight or no.

"'I saw nothing unusual,' he replied; but when they told him all, he confessed, not without some effort: 'And I, too, for these last ten days have seen her every midnight. I hear the key in the front-door; her tread upon the landing as of old; but her face, as she stands by my bed-foot, seems worn and piteous, and I know she has some grief she may not tell. I have spoken to her many times, but she does not answer me. I know not what to do.'

After some more conversation, a sudden thought flashed upon my father's mind: and, saddling his horse himself, he rode off at full speed to the town about ten miles off, where I had been been intrusted to a respectable nurse. In that short interval which I had passed away from home, he found me shockingly altered; half-starved, and ill, and bruised. Another nurse was instantly obtained, who, however, remained at my own home with me. Never more was seen by mortal eye that messenger from the dead; the boundless love which had burst the barriers of death itself—the affection of a mother for her child—was never tried so terribly again."

It is our custom to dilate upon and analyse every statement; those only which can stand a good deal of sifting are thought worthy to be enrolled in the records of the society, and unless to concern ourselves in such investigations at all is a proof of gullibility, we cannot certainly be said to be easily satisfied. Wilkinson cross-examined Arnold on this story of his with his usual rough acuteness, but without at all shaking his evidence; it was impossible for any one who had heard the story to suppose that the narrator himself was otherwise than in earnest. There is a certain mystery and supernature about Wilkinson himself in our eyes, from the fact of his being a drysalter—the attribute of such a character being utterly unknown to and unmanageable by us—but otherwise he is very far from being an appropriate vehicle for a spiritual narration; it is marred the more by the circumstance of his always having a cigar between his teeth the end of which always wabbles against his tongue, and clips his English. The somewhat flippant manner of his relating the following occurrence will, it is likely detract from the *vraisemblance;* but that it really did happen as described, I am well assured.

III. "I have an elder sister who is married to a country gentleman in Sussex.—She has been his wife these twenty years, and has an abundance of children. The first governess of these children was a Miss Beauvais, of Dunkirk. She was of a reserved and taciturn disposition, and although performing all her duties admirably, was rather respected by her pupils than beloved. She never looked quite like other people, and had an old fashioned manner of dressing. In particular, she wore her sleeves very large at the shoulders—pillowed sleeves, as I think they were then called. I have seen her many times, and remember her perfectly well: but one sight of her would have been sufficient for recollection. She was a very remarkable, a most extraordinary looking person—very, indeed. (And here the drysalter took snuff profusely, as his custom is when more than usually pleonastic.) She had an ancient father who came every Christmas to take her home to Dunkirk for her few weeks' holiday—a wonderful Frenchman, quite silent and all puckered about the lips like an umbrella. In my nieces' old drawing books there are several pretty sober and accurate likenesses of him, which all resemble caricatures. Perhaps when they got away from the English folks, and the *pere* and *fille* were alone together, they shed some natural tears; but their behavior, as it seemed to me, was far from being affectionate. I happened to be in Sussex when Monsieur Beauvais last came for his daughter. It was an especially bitter winter twenty years ago, and that was its coldest day. The earth was wrapped round in its white shroud very thickly, but no snow was falling. He had brought a little open carriage with him from the neighboring town, because it ran lighter over the choked roads than a close one would have done. There was, therefore, but little room for Miss Beauvais's luggage.

"She had been accustomed on these journeys to take all her possessions away with her, and she was evidently much distressed on this occasion at having to leave some of them behind. Two large black boxes of hers were left; locked and well corded.—'You will be sure to keep them safely madame,' she said to my sister; but she seemed to say it with a sigh of suspicion.

"We watched the two stiff figures drive slowly along the leafless avenue and over the white hill-top beyond. 'A strange pair,' we remarked, and soon forgot them both, as governesses and governesses' fathers are apt to be forgotten. On the two black boxes was written, in that infinite-imally small hand-writing of her's, that it was *defendu* to open them under any pretext. It was evident that the poor lady mistrusted the honesty of perfidious Albion.

"We read soon afterwards, in the newspaper—as soon that is as the newspaper of that time and in such snowy days, could reach us—that the Dunkirk sailing packet, in which we knew they had intended to take passage, was lost with every soul on board. Nevertheless, in hope that something might have deranged their plans, we made every effort to ascertain their fate.—Repeated letters to the continent obtained no answer, and indeed Miss Beauvais had often affirmed that she had no friend upon earth except her father. Moreover, the clerk in the packet-office described the two singular persons, who had paid for berths in the doomed ship, with an accuracy that left no room for doubt. Years rolled away—ten, fifteen, twenty years (the drysalter here took at least half an ounce more snuff than he could conveniently carry), and their deaths became a certainty. The few small bills which Miss Beauvais left behind her, had long been settled by my sister; but there was one somewhat larger one which still continued undischarged—a milliner's. The governess' pupils grew up and had governess's for their own children; the servants of the house had departed or died; there was no one about the place besides my sister and her husband who remembered poor Miss Beauvais, or knew whose those black boxes were that were piled one upon the other, put away in the old lumber closet up stairs."

"May I be allowed," observed the drysalter at this point, "to deviate from the society's rules so far as to read a portion of my sister's letter relating to this matter and received but yesterday morning?"

Leave having been granted by universal acclamation, he read as follows:—

"We drove to Loughborough last Monday to Miss Davies' the milliner, and while making my purchases, she observed to me 'By the by, madam, can there still be any hope of poor Miss Beauvais being alive, or must I consider those few pounds she owes me to be a bad debt?'

"I was distressed at having put off the matter so long, and paid her at once, observing that I would have the boxes opened which have been left with us these twenty years, to see whether their contents were worth anything. On our way home, I communicated this intention to Frederic, who approved of it. There was no servant in the pony carriage to overhear us; and I am certain that neither of us mentioned the matter subsequently. We sat down to dinner within a half an hour after we had got home. In the middle of it, and during a conversation about the new green-house, Lucy—the maid who came to me last autumn, if you remember—rushed into the dining-room quite white, and trembling excessively.—She could not speak at first for terror; but I sent Frederic and the man-servant out of the room, and contrived to comfort her.

"'I have seen such a strange lady, ma'am,' she whispered; she has no business here, I'm sure. I wonder I had strength to get away from the lumber garret.'

"'What is she like?' I asked as quietly as I could.

"'Like nobody I ever saw in my life, ma'am—with hard grey eyes like stones, and in the strangest dress; very large and puffed out above the sleeves. She was sitting on the old black boxes that are piled up in the corner, with the foreign directions upon them.'

"I tried to quiet the girl, who began to sob afresh, and to convince her that it was all fancy; and Frederick spoke to her also. She was not, however, to be shaken in the least, and I firmly believe she has seen Miss Beauvais. Frederic has promised me, upon his honor, that so long as I live those boxes shall never be opened."

"But I have not promised," added the drysalter in conclusion, "and I am going down to-morrow in Sussex to see what can be done."

For my part I should like extremely to see what is in those boxes, but not unless the disclosure can be made by daylight, and at somebody else's risk.

Something on my Mind.

Dark masses of my threatening fellow creatures, cloaked and cowled; chosen assassins equipped with noiseless goloshes and daggers diminishing to a point, wherefrom drips a gout of gore; an executioner, with a half mask and a chopper, with its edge turned towards me; vague and unknown shapes following, with a deadly unswerving purpose, whithersoever I take my frightened way; a thousand strangers with uplifted right hands, exclaiming together, artistically, and in the pause of slow music: "We swear, we swear," and doing it; half a dozen intimate friends striking at my breast with a curious and varied collection of weapons, from an overwhelming sense of duty, and averting their looks for pity's sake; secret societies setting down my name in blood, with a variety of other dismal pictures selected from the haunted chambers of imagination, had been presented to me in dreams for months. I was rendered miserable through having been made a free mason, with the terror of carying about with me so tremendous a secret. I felt that I was fated to be the unhappy wretch who should betray that which had been held sacred by multitudes for more than a thousand years. Nor was this idea altogether without grounds; for to so great a pitch of nervousness had I arrived that I was continually whispering the matter confidentially to myself, and then, in the belief that I had spoken aloud, looking horror stricken around me; or, not seldom, I would write it down upon slips of paper; which I afterwards took care to tear up small, or put them into the fire, or devoured them.

Once, however, when engaged in this practice, a high wind, coming in at the open window, scattered these interesting disclosures in every direction, and drove me as nearly mad as a sane man could go. There was as many as twenty distinct revelations of the most mysterious fact in the world's history thus set flying over space, so that any one might run and read them. Nineteen of these I recovered by means of almost superhuman exertions. Two were reclaimed at the peril of life and limb from a neighbor's wall with *chevaux de frise* at the top of it; three of them had lodged in a very lofty tapering tree, which practically demonstrated the dreaded fact of my Sybilline leaves becoming popular; five were carried into the river, and had to be recovered by a boat; seven had been whirled into the kennel of a proverbially savage dog, which, however, was so impressed by my eager haste and furious vehemence, that he vacated his quarters at the first summons, and fled, howling, to the utmost extent of his chain. One was brought down from a chimney pot by a very small sweep, who, luckily for me and for himself, proved to my satisfaction that he had never been taught to read; one I found the kitten at play with in the garden, which presently I put to death accordingly, without opening it. After the manner of the tribunal of Westphalia; *the twentieth could nowhere be found.* There was lying somewhere, patent to the first passer-by, an explicit solution of the whole art of free-masonry in my own peculiar and well known handwriting. This thought, which was of a nature to make the most stolid anxious, excited me to frenzy. I went about demanding of my fellow creatures whether they had seen a small piece of paper in the air lately.

"What paper? What was on it?" inquired they.

What was on it, indeed? A question not to be answered very readily. I did not go to bed for eight and forty hours, and then I found the precious missing manuscript neatly deposited between my neckerchief and my false collar, after which I abstained from writing out the secret any more. I carried it about with me on my mind, nevertheless, and a very dreadful burden it was. Waking or sleeping, but especially sleeping, I was always picturing to myself the consequences of revealing what I knew, and thereby endured the imaginary pains of half a dozen opium eaters. Methought that the Provincial Grand of our lodge, who in private life is a most respectable grocer, was the individual selected by the society as the avenger of all that [illegible]. He was wont to pinch me in his familiar manner, which, however, seemed to attract a greater attention from the users of the city than in the streets, (all having an inborn likeness to me the back garden of my private residence,) whither I sometimes in vain, took myself for refuge. He held his masonic ladder in one hand, and his trowel and a pair of compasses in the other; when he had come up with me, he would describe with the compasses a magic circle, out of which I could not stir; plant his ladder against my back, as though I were a cucumber frame, and mounting upon my shoulders, trowel in hand, would utter some cabalistic words, addressed to surrounding nature, explanatory of the reason why I was being sacrificed; at which period I was wont to be awakened with the chattering of my teeth. Once I remember throwing myself upon the protection of a policeman, who happened to be patrolling the desert for the greater security of the ostrich eggs; and he, instead of taking the Provincial Grand into custody, pointed to the collar of his surtout, upon which, in place of a number, was emblazoned the fatal triangle which proclaimed the Peeler to be a Deputy Grand Arch himself. My state of mind became at length so unsupportable that I was obliged to take a friend into my confidence. I did not, of course, confide to him the secret, but I told him of the anxiety which was continually consuming me regarding it.

"Well," said Jones, after having listened patiently to the sad recital—he was a very well meaning young man, only rather volatile—"I have a plan which, I think, will benefit you: for your sake—although I know the whole thing is nonsense—I am ready to become a freemason myself: *then*, you see, you will have a confidant—a being in whom you may repose your troubles. We will retire together for an hour or so every day into some lonely spot—down the well, or up the chimney, or into the House of Lords while they are dispatching business—and there we will converse about this secret, if there be a secret, and relieve your mind."

This project transported me with joy and gratitude. I made the necessary arrangements with the officials in our lodge for Jones' admission, without of course mentioning my particular reason for getting it done, and he came down to my house from London upon the evening preceding his installation. I had been useful to Jones more than once in the way of lending him a little money when he was hard up, and I was therefore not surprised when, as we were sitting together after dinner over our wine, he requested of me the temporary loan of a ten pound note.

However, as there was a small amount already between us, I moved as an amendment that the sum should be decreased by one half, to which, after a slight discussion, my friend acceded, and retired to rest apparently satisfied with a five pound note of mine in his purse.

We lay in a double-bedded room, for the convenience of conversing upon my all engrossing topic, and we fell asleep while talking of it. I was awakened in the morning by the entrance into the room of my companion, ready dressed and with his hat on, as though he had been out for an early stroll.

"Why, I never heard you get up," said I; "I must have slept very soundly."

"You did," replied Jones in a solemn and unusual tone: "very, very soundly. And you dreamed, I think."

"I believe you, my boy," cried I, chuckling with the thought of how soon such things would be all over; "I just did dream."

"You dreamed of the—the secret, did you not?" continued he.

"Of course I did," said I; "I always do dream of the secret."

"Indeed," observed Jones, with an unpleasant dryness in his manner; "and do you always *talk in your sleep?*"

I felt exactly as if a jug of ice-cold water had been poured down the nape of my neck.

We were both silent for at least a minute, and then Jones quietly remarked—"I think you might just as well make that five pound a tenner, do you know?"