

men were collegians going home for the holidays, and the undergraduate who drove was an amateur who had feed the coachman to have the privilege of taking the reins. A consummate driver in the days before railroads had the reputation which attaches to a famous cricketer in ours. Many noblemen and squires were adepts in the art, and the extreme test of their dexterity was to pass at full speed close to objects on the way, and almost touch without grazing them. It is recorded to the glory of the notorious Sir John Lade that "his eye was precision itself, and that he was distinguished for driving to an inch." He laid a bet, and won it, that he would go at a great pace, twenty-two times in succession, through a gateway only wide enough to admit his carriage, and would turn each time without stopping. The undergraduate, proud to display his power of shooting past the carriage in front with nothing to spare, had in appearance the intention of running it down, and the daring performance with a mail coach and four, and the horses at a gallop, must have made a considerable impression on Thackeray, since in the retrospect it was to him the most memorable circumstance in his exit from Cambridge.

He had traversed the entire circuit of undergraduate life before he left; and, unless he had been pursuing the special studies of the place, there was nothing to be gained by a repetition of the round. The remaining time before he would be qualified for what to him would have been a useless degree, could be spent to better advantage than in the sterile sameness of college routine.

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