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ENSIGN SIMMONDS, OF THE 10th.

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When railway travelling was undreamt of, and mail-coaches—like poor Sir John Moore in his narrow bed—were alone in their glory, the ancient and sooty town of Sheffield rejoiced in an inhabitant named Mr. Samuel Peach. To have inquired for him, however, by that appellation would have been next to useless. Not only in Sheffield but through the length and breadth of the three Ridings of Yorkshire, he was known and familiarly spoken of as 'Sam Peach, of the Tontine Coach-office.'

Eccentric in many things, yet with a dash of broad humour and a most catholic spirit of humanity in his nature, was this same Sam Peach. He was wealthy of course, for eccentricity is too great a luxury for the poor to indulge in. Of the importance of his position—as Autocrat of all the mail and stage-coaches which travelled to and from Sheffield—he had a high position. Not having any connexion with the Statistical Society, we cannot state, with the requisite fulness and particularity, how many of these coaches he possessed,—how many horses he had 'on the road.'—to how many families his calling gave bread,—or how many miles per diem his carriage travelled over.

Enough for the purposes of this story is it to say that Sam Peach, engineering all of the 'conveyancing department' in and from Sheffield, was considered a very wealthy personage,—the rather, perhaps, because he studiously avoided the appearance of riches. He had purchased some land in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, sufficiently extensive to be called an estate. He always spoke of it as 'The Farm,' though the house he had erected thereon was a mansion of sufficient imposing appearance and extent to make it look like the country-seat of one of the squirearchy. With that order Sam Peach had no desire to be identified. Plain, and somewhat brusque in his manner, he was proud of the business by which he had acquired an independence, and it is yet remembered as a fact that, on one occasion, when a distinguished coxswain in the neighborhood of Sheffield (since become a peer, and a cabinet minister) addressed him as 'Samuel Peach, Esq.,' the recipient who knew the writing, returned it with an endorsement, 'Not known at the Tontine Coach Office.'

Wealth and integrity, despite of the eccentricity we have mentioned, had made Sam Peach quite a popular character in Sheffield. But never did anyone less care for popularity. His line of conduct was to pursue the right whatever should betide. His very peculiarities 'leaned to mercy's side.' It was as much as any of his coachmen's place was worth for one of them to see a tired foot-traveller 'on the road, and not instantly 'pull up,' and invite the wayfarer to a seat. The character of the man may be best estimated from the fact that most of those around him had been employed for upwards of twenty years.

Of the name and system of Lavaier, it is more than probable that Sam Peach had never heard, and yet it is certain that he had a habit of smoking pipes and disking to

people's faces, which involved the putting them 'inside for outside fare,' or for no fare, or the stout refusal to take them inside or outside of any of his coaches at any price.

It happened that, one sunny morning in September, 1815, Sam Peach was sitting in his coach-office, 'his custom always of an afternoon,'—for he used to say that by attending to business he was pretty sure of business attending to him,—and engaged in examining a ledger. A gentleman came in and asked what was the coach-fare to London? The clerk, with his pen across his mouth, after the fashion of persons who would fain appear excessively busy, answered, 'One pun' fifteen out; two pun' ten in.' The traveller desired to be booked for an outside place, if there were room. 'No one seat taken,' said the book-keeper. 'I suppose I had better pay here?' inquired the traveller. 'Just as you please,' was the reply; 'only, until we have the money, you neither put foot into the coach, nor on it.'

The money was accordingly disbursed out of a not very plethoric purse.

'What name?' asked the booking clerk.

'What name?' echoed the traveller.

'Ay, what name are we to book you by?'

'I beg your pardon,' said the traveller with a smile, 'but I have been for some years where a man's name was the last question put to him. Put me down Ensign Simmonds, of the Tenth.'

Mr. Simmonds was duly entered in the book, and thence in the way-bill.

Indeed he was not!

The moment that the traveller had described himself as 'Ensign Simmonds, of the Tenth,' Sam Peach closed the big ledger with an emphasis which sounded not unlike a pistol-shot,—pushed the fat booking-clerk aside,—took his place, with a countenance quite radiant with excitement,—and, in his blindest tone, asked what name he should enter in the day-book?

'Ensign Simmonds, of the Tenth!'

'Well!' said Sam, in the subdued manner of a person holding a confidential conversation with himself. 'Well, my ears did not deceive me. What a singular thing this is!' Then, addressing Mr. Simmonds, he said, 'In the army, sir?'

'Why, considering that I bear His Majesty's commission, I think I may say that I am.'

'Seen any actual service?'

'Yes. Two years in the Peninsula, and in the last brush with the French at Waterloo.'

'Wonderful!' exclaimed Sam Peach.—'Got a Waterloo Medal?'

'Ay, and a wound. Indeed I have been at home since my return, getting cured; and now that I am on my legs again, I am off to town to report myself at the Horse Guards as fit for duty. Our second battalion is to be disbanded, and as we are likely to have a long peace, I shall have some difficulty in getting upon full pay in another regiment.'

'Then,' said Sam Peach, rather anxiously, 'I suppose you are not bound to be at the Horse-Guards by any particular day?'

Mr. Simmonds replied that he was not.

'That being the case, sir,' said Sam Peach, 'it can't make any great difference

your not being able to travel by any of my coaches this afternoon.'

'Not go! after paying for my seat?'

'Afraid not. All the seats are engaged.'

Here the fat book-keeper chimed in with, 'Not one of them.—Only look at the way-bill.'

But Sam Peach pushed the officious clerk away, declaring that he was 'a stupid, who did not know what he was saying.' Then, resuming his conversation with Mr. Simmonds, he added, 'The fact is, sir, all the seats are engaged. But, as you have paid your fare, I am bound to make the delay of no loss to you. My residence is within a few miles of the town. I shall feel gratified at your coming out to dine with me to-day. In the morning I shall drive you in, if you like, and you can start for town by any coach you please.'

Vainly did Mr. Simmonds assure Sam Peach that he had much rather proceed to London without delay—that he did not wish to intrude upon his hospitality—that he would prefer remaining at the Tontine.—Vainly, too, did he endeavor to ascertain, when it was evident there was no real impediment to his immediate journey to London, why Sam Peach should wish to detain him. But Sam, as if determined to play the host, steadily declined giving any explanation; and the result was, that, at six o'clock that afternoon, Mr. Simmonds found himself at Sam Peach's table, discussing what his gentleman, even if he had not campaigned in the Peninsula and had hospital fare at Brussels after the day of Waterloo, would be justified in considering an excellent dinner.

Such a thing as taking the pledge (except at the Lombard Arms) was not thought of at that time, and therefore a capital glass of wine did them no essential harm. Much they talked, of Ensign Simmonds and the adventures he had met with while on foreign service, and Sam Peach, who was a capital listener, pleasantly keeping up the ball, by occasional shrewd questions and racy remarks. At last,—but this was about the conclusion of the second bottle of that incomparable port, which tasted like nectar and smelt like a bouquet—Sam Peach grew communicative about himself; told how he had risen to opulence, by industry, from a small commencement, and boasted how, far above his wealth, he prized his only daughter. 'You shall see her in the morning,' said he, 'for I did not like to introduce you, until I saw whether my first impressions would be confirmed on closer acquaintance. It is not every one, I can tell you, that I would introduce as my friend to my daughter Mary.'

A capital breakfast, the next morning, and not the less pleasant because pretty Mary Peach presided at the board, assisted (as her mother had been dead for some years) in such social duties, by a maiden aunt, who was neither skinny nor shrewish.

'Pleasant weather!' observed Sam. 'Are you much of a sportsman?'

'Rather,' said Mr. Simmonds. 'We had plenty of practice at the red-legged partridges on the Peninsula. You should have seen how Lord Wellington peppered them, when he had nothing else to do.'

'Well,' answered Sam, 'unfortunately I had not the honor of seeing him. I think