

## POETRY.

## THE LAMENT.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

While the moon laughs on the mountains,  
While the stars smile in the fountains,  
While from cot and castle glancing,  
Comes light, with sounds of mirth and dancing;  
I must tread, in mournful measure,  
The footsteps of departed pleasure;  
With soul in sorrow—heart a breaking,  
The moments of past gladness reckon.  
As with the dead in thought I wander,  
I scarce can dream we are asunder;  
The flowers we oft have prest are springing;  
The stream by which we walked is singing;  
Yon is our star: see how 'tis glowing,  
The air with fragrance seems o'erflowing.  
Nay, as night comes, and balmy shadows  
Hang, like a veil, o'er groves and meadows  
I go—and to her bower obedience  
Make—'t seems breathing of her presence,  
And fancy, with a fond beguiling,  
Brings her, all sweetness and all smiling—  
She looks such looks—her ripe lips mutter  
Such words as lips of love but utter—  
'Tis sweet—though followed by much sadness,  
To live o'er hours of by-gone gladness.

Athenæum.

THE CONFESSION AND ADVENTURES  
OF A COMMERCIAL SWINDLER.A fellow by the hand of nature mark'd,  
Quoted and sign'd, to do a deed of shame.

SHAKESPEARE

What daring pencil can portray my picture?  
What bard sing a swindler's deeds?  
Let not the mild and blended colours of Titian  
limn me to the world; but rather the strong  
expression of Rubens, and the fiery  
Tartarian hues of Fuseli, give life to the glowing  
canvases, as it shadows forth my form and  
feature to future ages.

The keen air of the northern hills first braced  
my tender body; and from subtle nature  
I imbibed a cunning, deceitful, and insidious  
mind. My ancestors, a barbarous, cruel,  
lawless tribe, were greater strangers to honesty  
than to rapine and robbery. Some of them  
were sent across the seas at the public  
expense, while others were suddenly elevated  
in society above their neighbours; and,  
in that situation, continued very quiet subjects  
ever after! Nor were they thus elevated  
undeservedly; to their credit be it told,  
it was nothing but what their deserts fully  
merited! Being a docile child, I followed  
their example, by heading a little band of  
freebooters. Thus nature and education early  
conjoined to plant the proper ingredients of  
a perfect swindler in my bosom. In my very  
infancy I discovered an apt disposition to  
wheedle, whine, deceive, and overreach my  
fellow-creatures: continued impunity after-  
wards added ingenuity to cunning, and bold-  
ness to deception. I possessed an instinc-  
tive propensity to rob orchards, hen-roosts,  
and sheep-folds. I remember my father to  
have gone frequently out to the hills, and  
return home with a deer, a goat, or a sheep as  
his prey. One morning, as in duty bound,  
I followed this parental example, and brought  
home a lambkin. But I was not so old in  
the business as my father; for, somehow or  
other, the little mistake of neglecting the dif-  
ference between *meum* and *tuum* was traced  
to me, and I was immediately invited to new  
lodgings, in a very secure building in the  
county town. I was afterwards very uncer-  
tiously brought into court, and asked why I  
had stolen the lamb. I affirmed, upon my  
honour, that I saw it by chance, ran after it,  
and caught it; then, holding it up on the  
hill, asked several times if any body claim-  
ed it: receiving no reply, I thought myself  
entitled to it. Our neighbours' cattle were  
*ferre nature* to all our family. I had now  
the choice of either being elevated to the rank  
of my fathers, or of entering for a soldier.—  
The safety of my neck preponderated; and,  
instead of carrying a halberd, I preferred a  
halbert. Myself, and a few more of my  
countrymen, were escorted to a sea-port, in  
order to join some regiment; but, as a sol-  
dier's life is too contracted for one of my  
pretences, I gave my keeper the slip. My  
companions followed. We soon came in  
sight of the sea, at the expansive surface of  
which my heart bounded with delight. We  
had no time to lose: so, taking the uncer-  
emonious loan of a fishing-bark, containing  
some provisions, we immediately launched  
on the merciless element of the deep. True,  
"we left our country for our country's good;"  
and, equally true would it have been, if some  
of us had never returned to it.

In a few days we arrived on the coast of  
Sweden, where we sold the fishing-boat;  
and, after swindling my companions out of  
the greater part of the proceeds, I made  
the best of my way to Stockholm. Here, in  
time, I wormed myself into the good graces  
of the court sycophants, by whom I was em-  
ployed in various offices. While overlook-  
ing the masons, working on the royal palace,  
I joined the free-masons, and that freely; for  
I made very free indeed, with their funds,  
trinkets, and other foolish emblems of their  
more foolish nummeries! After pursuing  
my own interest for some time, with an ap-  
parent attention to that of my employers, I  
left Sweden as I entered it, rather abruptly,  
having, in my anxiety to depart, quite for-  
gotten to settle with any body. I came next

to Hamburg. The French soon come there  
also; and I joined them in killing, plunder-  
ing, burning, nay, I committed sacrilege in  
the very temples of the Deity, with the same  
callous indifference with which I afterwards  
swindled my creditors of their money and  
goods. No repugnant feelings—no silly con-  
scientious scruples disturbed by repose, or  
retarded my career. Booty was my object,  
and I obtained it. I now wished to leave  
the French; and, accordingly, agreed with a  
Dutch pilot to carry me to England. But,  
"Providence marks guilt, as 'twere with a fatuity;"  
we were taken on our passage by a French  
privateer, and carried into Brest. Here I  
was imprisoned, and stripped of my ill-got-  
ten gains; but procured the favour of my  
jailers, by turning spy on the actions of my  
countrymen imprisoned in that country.—  
Some time afterwards, on an exchange of  
prisoners, I came to England.

I had the world to commence again, for I  
was now without money and friends. But  
was my case hopeless? By no means. To  
a general swindler, seared in mind, callous  
in feeling, and bent on over-reaching his fel-  
lows—gifted, moreover, with those specious  
and insinuating qualities, which impose on  
the credulity, and prey on the industry of  
mankind—to him, I say, there are innume-  
rable ways and means of sailing through the  
sea of life without paying for his passage.—  
Nature early endowed me with all the ingre-  
dients for constituting a villain; showy, libe-  
ral, full of "promises to the ear, but break-  
ing them to the hope," in external com-  
merce with men; but dark, deep, and design-  
ing in the wanderings of my own mind. I  
soon courted the smiles of propitious fortune  
by all subtle expedients, dissembling appear-  
ances, and crafty representations: every fac-  
ulty of my mind, and every propensity of  
my passions, were concentrated in one grand  
career of swindling—

"Search, then, the ruling passion: there alone,  
The wild are constant, and the cunning known."  
If these qualities do not succeed with one  
sex, with the other they are infallible since  
the days of mother Eve and the wily ser-  
pent.

I lodged with a young widow who had re-  
cently lost her husband, a respectable trades-  
man, leaving her in easy, but not in affluent  
circumstances. To her I sued, nor sued in  
vain, for I passed myself off as an officer just  
returned from a French prison. I soon gained  
her sympathy, her confidence followed  
soon after; for I was intrusted with, and  
advised, on every circumstance respecting  
her fortune. Poor creature! she little knew  
her man. The greater part of her effects  
being turned into money, I advised her to  
put it out on mortgage. She agreed, and I  
was to take the money to her solicitor as  
soon as the deeds were ready. How did I  
act, think you? Elope with the money?—  
No; that would be a breach of trust, and  
amenable to the laws: a professional swin-  
dler knows better than to stare the laws of his  
country full and broadly in the face. No,  
no; I found me out another swindler, who  
assisted me in passing off a sham robbery,  
wherein I pretended to lose the money. He  
discharged a pistol at my head; I overpow-  
ered him, took the pistol home, after inflicting  
several wounds on myself, and, after this  
counterfeit attack, I made a great noise in  
the papers, handbills, &c. In short, I had  
the money, and the widow had—her credu-  
lity to deplore.

"How quickly nature falls into revolt  
When gold becomes her object."

Some of my best enterprises have been in  
getting widows and old maids to give me  
their money in trust, on good interest, at the  
highest per centage. I also played well with  
double, sometimes with treble mortgages;  
and, as for swindling my fellow lodgers, I  
never yet had one who did not leave me  
considerably minus in his effects. One of  
the grand secrets of swindling is to change  
your lodgings frequently and rapidly, before  
you are promoted to the *Gazette*. I have  
got many hundred pounds this way. False  
pretences, high-flowing promises, and a great  
show of little business soon deceive your ac-  
quaintances, and I shorn some of them of  
their beams. I have regularly fleeced them.

I now turned over a new leaf in my ad-  
venturous page, by settling in a distant part  
of the country where I was unknown.—  
Here I followed, for a year, the profession  
most congenial to all my tribe, that of a gen-  
tleman at large, doing—nothing. I then  
commenced business, not in a moderate,  
contracted, prudential plan, but on a scale  
commensurate with a large capital, which I  
—had not; for I solemnly swear before my  
Maker I had no more than £50; and this is  
the only truth I revealed to the commis-  
sioners when they put me on my oath! But,  
in the course of three years, I had an establish-  
ment where the business done was equal to  
5 or £6000. People may wonder at this,  
but I again solemnly aver it to be a fact: the  
cause I will gradually develop to the world.  
People may wonder how I came into so  
much credit with so small a capital; but the  
secret springs of swindling dry not easily or  
suddenly up, if one has ingenuity and assis-  
tance. I found out a few of my own pro-  
fession, or who would easily become so;  
needy, careless, boasting adventurous fellows,  
with a little money and no brains. I studied  
their minds, and made their purses for some

time, subservient to my every purpose, till,  
at last, we understood each other so well,  
that we had but one feeling in common as to  
getting forward in the world. There is a  
secret sympathy among swindlers, whether  
high or low, small or great, which is instinc-  
tive, and, like a talisman, finds out, by its  
magical influence, the secret views and  
springs of action of each other.

We commenced the unvariable practice of  
our profession, bills of accommodation and  
references to each other. I accommodated  
freely, and was accommodated in return. I  
enlarged my connexions, gave orders libe-  
rally to every house where I could get cred-  
it: paid A with the proceeds of B's goods,  
by which I got a double supply from A, and  
which would keep B in abeyance for some  
time. This is the grand system of doing a  
great deal out of nothing. Then comes the  
never-losing export business. O ye simple-  
tons of Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield,  
who supply orders without hesitation, and  
accept bills without discretion, how often,  
ye hardware-men, must ye wear hard by the  
swindlers' friction! I have frequently clean-  
shaved the razor-manufacturer, cut the knife-  
maker, and pricked the needle-grinder. I  
never followed the silly maxim, that

"Surely the pleasure is as great  
In being cheated as to cheat;"

for all my pleasure lay one way, that of  
cheating by wholesale and retail. I lived  
gloriously for some time on the advances  
which any fool can get on his exports. Let  
the manufacturers settle with the assignees,  
some years after, respecting the returns, if  
any.

I now hasten to that grand acme of mod-  
ern speculation—that goal to which the  
swindler rapidly advances with unerring aim  
—that haven where he is at rest,—yea, that  
refuge where the murmur of the law and the  
dun of creditors are alike hushed in the—  
*Gazette*! Not that every one who enters  
the *Gazette* is a swindler. By no means:  
although every bold and extensive swindler  
enters the *Gazette*! Many, alas! too many,  
are the cases where the noble-minded—the  
honourable and honest merchant and trades-  
man are compelled to go there. But mine  
was a case long-prepared and anxiously look-  
ed for. To be sure, I shed tears, "as fast as  
the Arabian tree its gum," (as many bank-  
rupts do) when I announced my fate to my  
friends and creditors. But they were "cro-  
codile tears." I had them at command, and  
pressed them into the service of any emer-  
gency.

All my plans were deep and well laid.—  
Shallow plots and petty conspiracies are the  
offspring of mean and timid minds, which  
are neither good or bad, but a contemptible  
mixture of both: without virtue to be hon-  
est, or courage to be villainous!

"True swindling no cold medium knows."  
It may, indeed, be honest by design, but ne-  
ver from principle. I never meditated half  
measures. If, perchance, I did, I scorned  
to execute them; for I have always been im-  
pressed with the truth of the maxim, that  
whatever is worth doing at all, is worth do-  
ing well.

I now looked forward to the *Gazette* with  
that anxious impatience with which an heir  
looks to his majority, or a merchant to his  
homeward-bound ship, or an abstruse astro-  
nomer to the return of his wandering comet.  
My comet my luminous planet—my scintil-  
lating star, brightly beaming in the distant  
horizon of swindling darkness, was—the  
*Gazette*: and no mortal ever prepared for it  
better than I did. As the wolf prowls about,  
watches its prey, pounces upon it, and re-  
treats to its dark cavern, there to satiate its  
voracious appetite, so does the swindler with  
his unfortunate creditors, when he flies with  
their money, bills, goods, and habiliments  
to his secure den—the *Gazette*! I was al-  
ways a bold, unabashed, barefaced villain,  
whose *os frontis*, covered over with the in-

side—  
open to my creditors and customers (my purses  
properly so called). My table was well cov-  
ered, and my bottle often poured the liba-  
tion to Bacchus till the morning's dawn  
awaked from sleep a slumbering world.—  
But my deluded guests knew not the price  
of their entertainment; Every ounce they  
consumed was paid for in gold! Every  
glass they drank was dearer than the very  
nectar of the Olympian deities themselves!  
Deluded mortals! soon was the loud ap-  
plause changed to the bitter execration, the  
resounding song to the hollow murmur, and  
the friendly promise to the deep curse!

When all was ripe for the grand blow—the  
*coup de grace*, I called one meeting of my  
creditors after another. At one I promised  
a composition of 7s. 6d. in the pound, then  
5s. 6d., and, at the third, 2s. 6d., knowing  
well they would not accept of any such pro-  
posal, and that getting into the strong hold  
of the *Gazette* would exonerate me from any  
future demands; and compel them to take  
what I then chose to give them. I was not  
idle. I bought a gold watch, "with all the  
appurtenances belonging thereto," which  
cost me about £120; but, previous to my  
examination, I got an old case, in which I  
snugly placed the valuable body of my cost-  
ly watch, and placing it before the commis-  
sioners, expressed my hope that the creditors

would not descend to take it. Creditors sel-  
dom do: and mine, after their wrath had  
cooled a little, told me to take up my watch,  
trinkets, coins, &c., as they were not worth  
much! I had my watch, and they, poor  
creatures, had their dividend of 11½d., *first  
and final!* Delightful sound to a bank-  
rupt's ear: In nine months I was complet-  
ely "*whitemashed*,"—divided my debts  
equally,—that is, I had about 15s. in the  
pound. My creditors were paid as already  
stated, and the remainder was taken by the  
lawyers, honest fellows, and my assistants in  
the whole farce of this modern bankruptcy.  
I had lined my pockets well for recommen-  
cing the world, in fear my credit should get  
too great a shock from the sudden concuss-  
ion which my bankruptcy gave to my nume-  
rous connexions. No man need be poor  
from a bankruptcy, if he be wise and hon-  
est to himself; I swindled as many of my  
distant relations as I could inveigle into the  
scheme of my operations; and the best of it  
is, that they, and many of my creditors, were  
credulous enough to believe I had surren-  
dered up all to them! Oh!

"Fools that hence into the notion fall,  
That money, swindled, there was none at all."  
But I laughed in my sleeve at the unsuspi-  
cious simpletons.

A little time before my bankruptcy, my  
inventive genius pointed out a new species  
of extortion. I went round to all my young  
acquaintances; those unsuspecting youths  
in offices, book-keepers, cash-keepers, all  
who had money or command of money, (the  
same thing to me;) and, on pretence of some  
pressing emergency, got all they had of their  
own, or could give of other peoples'. Cre-  
dulous fools! I swore by our friendship—  
my honour—all, to repay them in a week or  
two; but, when they became impatient and  
demand payment, they found me safely en-  
rolled in the *Gazette* under the auspices of  
my friendly attorney! They poured "cur-  
ses not loud but deep" on my head. Inno-  
cent missiles! There was one poor credu-  
lous fool whom I treble took in. His money,  
bills, and goods were given to me without  
reserve. At the bankrupt meeting I stood  
up with a bold unbashed forehead, callous  
and intrepid front, to deny £100 he lent me  
a few weeks before. Oh! it was a dreadful  
moment. Just as I was about to seal my de-  
nial with an oath on the gospels of our holy  
religion I beheld his indignant eye. It pier-  
ced my very soul. "Hold! dissembling vil-  
lain," said he, "nor add perjury to your al-  
ready multiplied crimes." Oh!

"Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes,  
That, when I note another man like him,  
I may avoid him."

"Unhappy being," continued he, "who are  
so lost to honour, shame, and reputation, as  
to deny what you must know to be perfectly  
true. This stamps you as the disgrace of  
your country, the scorn of your friends, and  
the jeer of the world! Behold conscious in-  
nocence confront powerful guilt! The ac-  
cusing spirit within will be your scourger:  
and, while the finger of scorn shall point at  
your deeds, your name will become a by-  
word among men. Here are your own ac-  
knowledgments for every farthing." The  
whole creditors stood amazed, and well they  
might. "These dumb but damning witness-  
es before me" were enough. I could not  
now "out-herod Herod;" but, shading my  
shaggy brow with my trembling hand, while  
I felt the blood of rebellious shame suffuse  
my face, I stammered something about *con-  
fusion and bad memory*. My friends inter-  
posed, and saved me, for awhile, from—my-  
self!

But above, an impartial jury awaits us all.  
Alas! the future to me uncertain; the pre-  
sent gloomy; and the past miserable, I am  
not happy. No halcyon joys are mine; but  
the salt tear and bitter pang instead. True  
it is, that "Omniscience keeps heaven's re-  
gister," and that our deeds, "at the great  
review of us all," will be more narrowly  
scrutinized: I now live on my spoils; and,  
though fallen, perhaps, not like Lucifer,  
"never more to rise," I shall never get a  
glimpse of fair fame. I have sacrificed re-  
putation to interest, sober industry to machi-  
nation, and honesty to the love of swindling.  
*Cum dolis et insidiis ego successi*; and the  
fruit of my prosperity is gall; the reflection  
wormwood. My mind often overhangs the  
precipice of despair when the black surges of  
memory beat against my rock-rugged consci-  
ence; and the "still small voice" whispers  
—ah! dreadful prospect, "to have no one  
love me living, nor my memory when dead!"  
I was a fell demon, whose pestilential touch  
blasted the fair prospect of many a promising  
youth, and left to chill penury the widow  
and the orphan. Cruel, cruel torture, to be  
susceptible of the pang that feels my fellow-  
creature pointing to my narrow bed, and ex-  
claiming, "There lies a villain!" Such a  
thought is liquid fire to him who once was  
falsely supposed to be

## A CLEVER FELLOW.

Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, a man of consid-  
erable experience, who visited England several  
years ago, says—"From what I know my-  
self, it is easier to live with two tigresses  
than with two wives!"

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