

from the busy, active walks of life, his loss would have been lamented as that of a great celebrity. Possessed of a childlike simplicity, and confidence in his fellow-men, that well nigh disqualified him from fighting successfully the stern battles of life, when once the demand for his peculiar labour ceased, his occupation was gone—the times had changed, but he could not change.”

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THE corner of Fulton and Nassau-streets, now “*The Sun*” Office corner, was once the celebrated “SHAKSPEARE Tavern,” kept by Hodgkinson a retired actor, a gentleman and a wit. Here congregated all the eccentrics of the time, and among them many whose equals at this day would scarcely be found visiting a tavern. But not so *then*. George Frederick Cooke, J. W. Jarvis, Micah Hawkins, and a host of others, equally well known, were the nightly inmates of this omnium of eccentrics. Indeed, “Hodgkinson’s” was the “*Exchange*” for fun and humor. Old-style New-Yorkers were moderate in their libations; but still, the single pot of ale, or its equivalent, was the necessary accompaniment of an evening’s gossip.

One little table, in a sly corner, seemed by common consent to be sacred for a special use every evening from eight to nine o’clock: and if a stranger should by accident seat himself alongside this table, some of the guests would inform him that he had better take another seat, and leave those for “*The Bird-Fanciers*,” or he might “spoil the quarrel.” Many a night have I gone to this room at a few minutes before eight o’clock, to see “the quarrel” aforesaid.

Just as the clock struck eight, in would come Jemmy Bessonnet, at the Fulton-street door, and at about the same time John Lentner would enter by the Nassau-street door. If either should arrive one minute before the other, he would look vacantly around the room until his companion arrived. This had occurred every night for twenty years. Jemmy Bessonnet was a dealer in birds, bird-cages and wooden ware, in Nassau-street, three doors above Maiden-lane, and was celebrated for his Mino, a talking-bird of superior quality. John Lentner manufactured fishing-tackle and sold birds in Fair, now Fulton-street, near “Golden Hill,” and was celebrated for his untiring friendship for Jemmy Bessonnet, and for an excess of patience, which constituted him a good fisherman.