

THE OLD LETTER.

CHAPTER I.

Some twenty-five years ago—for it is close upon a quarter of a century since it was demolished—there stood within sound of the dreamy chimneys of St. Clement. Dances and ancient inn of Chancery. A more silent, haunted-looking inn, so near to the noisiest thoroughfare in London, was never known; at least, so thought I, while seated by the fire in my rooms one gusty autumn evening.

It was never denied by any one—any one, be it understood, who ever walked through Lyon's Inn—that it must have been an abode of disembodied lawyers. Even by daylight, strange shadows flitted about the dwarfish doorways, and fled up the spiral staircases into the low-pitch upper stories, with their small bay windows looking out upon Bookers' Row, like the windows in the stern of an old ship. Below these windows there was an entrance to the inn, and there was another approach through a dismal alley known as Horne Court, where a corner post, carved with a lion's head and paws, had bravely supported the mouldering brickwork for some four hundred and fifty years. Nearly three centuries ago, Lyon's Inn was spoken of as "a guest inn or hostelry, held at the sign of the Lyon, and purchased by gentlemen, professors, and students in the law, and converted into an inn of Chancery." It has also been described as a "nursery of lawyers"—the nursery too often, it is to be feared, of lawyers in their second childhood; for there are many quaint stories told about the aged men of the law who dwelt in this weird retreat. One of these was heard to say that he was born there and that there he should wish to die; and another, in his dingy garret, took such strange delight in his window gardens that he never sighed for bowers, fresh fields, or "pastures new," but he lived there to a great age in measureless content.

In the courtyard below my windows, on this particular autumn evening, the rustling of the fallen leaves broke the silence of this sombre old place; for in those days there were still a few trees alive in Lyon's Inn. The wind, sweeping round the old sun-dial, as it sounded to me, was driving those leaves into nooks and corners and up the open staircase into the dark landing and passages above. How well I remember the sun-dial, that symbolic adjunct to an old inn of Chancery! It was sadly out of repair; its gnomon was gone—as if to express contempt for the flight of time—and its figures were going fast.

The rooms which I occupied were cosy enough, with their dark-paneled walls and oaken furniture. The curtains were drawn across the windows, and the shaded lamp described a limited circle of bright light across the table. On the other side of the hearth opposite to my chimney corner was a vacant arm-chair, antique and comfortable. I can distinctly recollect, while staring at that chair, that I became exceedingly drowsy; for I was worn out after an exceptionally hard day's work; and between sleeping and waking—as I fancied—the rustling of the withered leaves sounded like footsteps crossing the old courtyard.

I began to dream; and from thinking of the footsteps, I suppose, my dream took this outward form. It appeared to me that I opened my eyes and saw a stranger seated opposite me. He was a tall lean man, and his face was very thin and pale. His dark eyes and black beard may perhaps have made this pillar all the more remarkable. He held a letter nervously, first in one hand and then in the other. His whole manner expressed agitation; his restless fingers tugged now at his beard and now at the shabby coat-collar almost without ceasing. He had the appearance of a broken-down gentleman—broken down through mental suffering. Suddenly meeting my glance, a confused expression crossed his face. He got up, and held the letter towards me without uttering a word. I took it from him as one might do in one's sleep, but without feeling it; and as my lips moved to question him, he vanished.

When I awoke, I found my lamp fluttering dimly, as if a current of air had caught the flame; it flared up feebly and went out. But the fire was still burning, at least with sufficient brightness to throw an uncertain light round the room. My first thought was about my dream; and I looked instinctively towards the arm-chair. It was empty.

I listened. No sound reached me except the rustling of those dead leaves outside; and again they seemed to me like footsteps hurrying away through the open staircase and across the courtyard. I sprang to my feet, drew back the curtain, and looked out. The court was in darkness; only at the gateway beyond a few straggling rays of light, from some flickering street-lamp, seemed to be contending for entrance with the opposing shadows outside. I saw no one. Lighting a candle, which stood on the mantle-shelf, I walked through my rooms, passing into every corner. So vivid an impression had this dream made upon me that I could not at once shake off the feeling that I had actually received a visit from a pale-faced man. I even went into the little hall, opened the outer door, and glanced up and down the landing. No one was there that I could see. I turned to re-enter my chambers, and as I turned, the wind blew out my light.

Groping my way back to my sitting-room, and thinking to myself that I must indeed have been overworking my brain of late, I knelt upon the hearth-rug to relight the candle. But as I was bending down something caught my attention—something that set my heart beating loudly. A strange-looking letter was lying upon the floor close to my arm-chair. It was surely no dream this time; there it lay, with the flitting flames from the fire playing upon it, as if in silent ironical laughter at my surprise. An odd thought crossed my mind; I fancied that if I stretched out my hand to grasp this letter, it would disappear. I hesitated—glanced around the room—and again looked at it. There it was still, with the flicker of the fire upon it as before.

The candle was soon relighted, and I was holding up the letter and scrutinizing it on both sides. It had a very autumnal appearance; for it was yellow with age, and begrimed with a dust that was not to be shaken off. Had it been blown in like a dead leaf from the courtyard below? On one side was a large red seal, that had upon it the impression of a lion's head. On the other side, written in bold hand, was an address. But the ink was so faded, and the writing in consequence so difficult to decipher, that I puzzled over it despairingly for some minutes. It then appeared to read as follows:

"MISS POINING, 31A Dean Street, Soho."

I am not superstitious. Never at any moment of my life, unless it was now, have I believed in the supernatural. And yet—I must confess it—when I placed that letter in my iron safe and locked it up, I never expected to find it there next morning.

Speculations as to who "Miss Poining" was—whether alive or dead—kept me awake the greater part of the night. Was she young and beautiful? The antique appearance of the letter chased away a vision of bright eyes. I was a bachelor in those days—twenty-eight or thirty at the most; but I saw no prospect, though the thought naturally crossed my mind, of finding a suitable partner for life in Miss Poining, of Dean Street, Soho.

An important case in the law-court, a case which demanded my undivided attention, compelled me to dismiss this incident from my thoughts, until evening again came, and I was once more seated at the fireside. It then recurred to me with all its former vividness and force. The letter which had not taken flight, was again undergoing the most severe examination. "What shall I do with it?" This was the question I asked myself over and over again. An impulse suddenly seized me; I resolved to clear up this mystery, if the thing were possible. Soho was only a short walk from Lyon's Inn. I would go there and inquire if such a person as Miss Poining lived, or had lived in Dean Street, at No. 31A.

I hurried along through dingy courts and dark alleys; for not a street in the neighborhood of Seven Dials, which lay in my way, had been pulled down twenty-five years ago. I soon reached Dean Street, and stopped before a small old-fashioned house with steps leading up to the front-door and a square canopy overhead of carved oak. I grasped the knocker, which I noticed was an iron fist, gave a bold "rat-tat," and waited the result with blank expectation.

A neat little maid-servant presently answered the summons.

"Does Miss Poining live here?"

The girl replied unhesitatingly, "Yes."

"Is Miss Poining at home?"

"Yes, sir.—What name, if you please?"

"Mr. Robert West." And I handed the servant my card.

An oil-lamp hung from the hall ceiling, dimly lighting the dark oaken staircase. I followed the servant up the narrow flight to a drawing room floor; and I presently found myself in a quaintly furnished room, where the curtains were closely drawn, and everything had a very snug appearance. An elderly lady with a pinched face sat near the hearth wrapped in a white woollen shawl. She looked up with a slight shiver when the door was opened; and something in the expression, like a passing shadow, reminded me of the face in my dream.

"Mr. Robert West?"—she was studying my card with a troubled look—"of Lyon's Inn?"

I bowed acquiescently.

"Pray be seated." And when I had taken a seat opposite her, she added in a formal tone: "I don't remember the name. To what may I attribute the honor of this visit?"

"A matter of business, Miss Poining.—Have I the pleasure of addressing that lady?" She inclined her head stiffly.

"A matter of business—I can give it no other name—brings me here," said I. "A letter has come into my possession—was in fact left in my rooms in Lyon's Inn last evening; and it is addressed to Miss Poining, Dean Street, Soho."

"Left at Lyon's Inn?" repeated Miss Poining in a low agitated voice, with her eyes bent upon the fire, "and addressed to me?"

Taking the letter from my breast-pocket, I got up and held it towards the old lady. She looked round quickly, glanced at my hand and then at me. "Is that for me?"

"Yes. It was delivered yesterday evening, Miss Poining, dusty and discoloured as you now see it. The writing is very faded; but the red seal"—I stopped abruptly for at this moment the door opened, and a lovely girl—a girl of nineteen or twenty—stepped into the room. She paused at the door with her pretty lips half parted, and a quick inquiring expression filled her large dark eyes. Again the face in my dream—it seemed to recur to me strangely to-night—passed across this girl's face and vanished.

As a busy student in Lyon's Inn, with no romantic surroundings, with nothing but prosaic law-books and billious-looking deeds to stimulate my imagination, this poetic figure seemed almost like a revelation to me. I had come to this old house in Dean Street, with this mysterious letter of introduction to Miss Poining, simply to satisfy a craving curiosity, without the expectation of finding that she was alive and ready to receive me. It had astonished me in no small degree to discover the old lady, with her pinched and wrinkled face—so young-looking and so alert; nothing under the age of a hundred, by the name of Poining, would have caused me the least surprise. But who was this, I wondered, with these bright eyes and that inquiring glance? I looked from her to Miss Poining, and back again into the girl's face. I began to think that I was still dreaming and that I should wake up and find myself once more at my fireside in Lyon's Inn, with nothing but the vision of this beautiful creature, lingering in my memory, in that haunted old place where such beings are never seen.

"Hester, my dear," said the old lady, with a wave of her hand, "this is Mr. Robert West of Lyon's Inn.—Miss Gretworth."

Hester Gretworth regarded me, as I thought, with an expression of actual dread. Did she suspect me of being disembodied? "Lyon's Inn?" She appeared more troubled than Miss Poining at the mention of my address.

Miss Poining hastened to explain. "Mr. West has brought that letter, left at his rooms, and addressed to me." Then she added: "Will you take it to the lamp, my dear, and look at the handwriting?"

The girl's agitation increased; it was painful to witness. After examining for a moment the dingy superscription which had so puzzled me, she said in a fearful voice: "It is his, aunt; it is Reginald's!"

Miss Poining hastened to adjust her spectacles with trembling fingers. She spoke somewhat sternly: "Break the seal, my dear, and give me the letter."

The girl instantly obeyed, and then placed the lamp on the table beside Miss Poining.

The old lady turned to me; she took the open letter in her hand: "Pray, be seated, Mr. West," for I had been standing since Miss Gretworth entered the room; "and you too, my dear. You make me nervous."

Every detail of that distressful moment—every shade of expression on Miss Poining's face and on Hester Gretworth's too, as she sat down between us with hands tightly clasped—comes back to me now. The letter was not a long one—three pages of not very closely written matter; but it appeared to take a long time to read; at least the minutes seemed to me like hours.

The old clock on the mantle-shelf, whose "tick-tack" had not until now caught my ear, filled the room with its loud vibrations. I began to wonder that the noise did not awaken the white Persian cat which was lying curled up on the hearth-rug at the old lady's feet.

Hester Gretworth never took her troubled eyes off Miss Poining's stern face. It was a painful study. Miss Poining's spectacles had to be taken off and wiped more than once during the reading, and each time that she removed them I noticed tears upon her wrinkled cheeks.

At last the letter was read and slowly folded; and while Miss Poining was folding it I remember thinking the expression in her face suggested a struggle with her worse nature. I expected every moment to see her tear the letter to atoms and fling it into the fire. Perhaps the same thought crossed Hester Gretworth's mind; for she now rose and took the letter gently from her aunt and quickly re-folded it; she seemed to dread even to give a glance at the writing.

"May I ask," said Miss Poining, suddenly looking towards me, "who left that letter at Lyon's Inn?"

I knew not how to answer. I had asked myself this very question more than a hundred times within the last four-and-twenty hours; and so little had I anticipated finding the person in Dean Street to whom this letter was addressed, that it had never entered into my head to prepare even a plausible explanation about the affair beforehand. That Miss Poining noticed my hesitation, and that Hester Gretworth's eyes were fixed searchingly upon my face, did not mend matters; for the first time in my life I knew that it was to feel utterly embarrassed. All that I could do—with those bright eyes persistently bent upon me—was to stammer out in a disjointed sentence: "I do not know; I found it there."

"In your letter-box?" said Miss Poining.

"No. I fell asleep last evening in my arm-chair; I had over-fatigued myself in the law-courts; and when I woke up the letter was lying on the rug near my chair."

Miss Poining stared at me in blank surprise. "Indeed?" Her tone was studiously polite, but devoid of credulity.

"I had a vivid impression"—the courage to call it a dream had deserted me—"a very vivid impression in my sleep that I saw some one—a young man with a pale face and dark eyes—seated opposite to me; some one handed me a letter and disappeared. That is the only explanation," I added, "that I have to offer you. I have puzzled my brain."

"Perhaps," interrupted Miss Poining with suppressed emotion, "perhaps you would know the face again—the face of the young man, I mean, who gave you that letter. Do you think you would, Mr. West, if you were to see it now?"

The tone in which Miss Poining spoke was somewhat startling. Was it in her power to solve this mystery? For a moment I felt completely unnerved: the incident of the preceding night had filled my mind with all sorts of odd fancies, and I was almost prepared, at a word from this lady, to see the pale-faced man appear, as he had done at Lyon's Inn; and confront me in her presence. I answered, as with much assurance as I could muster: "I should know it again; I am sure of that."

The old lady instantly glanced at her niece. "Hester," she said, pointing towards a recess, "let Mr. West see his face."

The girl crossed the room and lifted a heavy curtain. I could not suppress a slight exclamation. A pale young man with a short black beard looked out upon me. I recognized him at once; and yet there was no trace of restlessness in the fine dark eyes, no shade of mental suffering about the brow. Such expressions gathered there out of my own imagining while I gazed at the portrait.

"It is the face," said I, "the face in my dream."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Asbestos Mining in Canada.

Mining is carried on by cutting down the hills of asbestos-bearing serpentine, much as a farmer cuts down a stack of hay or straw, or by open quarrying, on the level. The rock is blasted out, and the asbestos, separated from the containing rock, is "cobbed," that is, separated by hammering from inferior foreign matter. This cobbing is a comparatively easy matter in the case of the finer quality, as it usually separates readily from the gangue, but in the lower grades much difficulty is experienced in separating the fibrous matter from the non-fibrous. At best there is a great waste. Much of the asbestos is in thin and narrow veins, and is wasted, as by the present mode of operating it does not pay to separate this from the serpentine. A machine that will enable these narrow veins to be utilized is needed.

When "cobbed," the asbestos is graded according to purity, color, and length of fibre into three grades and bagged for shipment. The first quality of "firsts" finds ready sales at prices ranging from \$80 to \$110 per ton; while "thirds" may be valued at \$12 to \$15 per ton. In good mines the yield of asbestos is from 3 to 5 per cent. of the rock quarried, and the cost of mining may be put down at \$20 to \$30 per ton. Returns obtained by the Geological Survey of Canada show that, for the year 1888, Canada's output was 4,404 tons, valued at the mines at \$255,000, and this the output of nine different mines. Over three-fourths of the whole was shipped to the United States, small quantities going to Great Britain, Germany, France, Belgium and Italy, and being used in domestic manufacturing.

If black dresses have been stained with a handful of fig leaves in a quart of water and reduce it to a pint. A sponge dipped in this liquid and rubbed upon them is said entirely to remove stains from crapes, bombazines, &c.

Dr. H. Rhodes has demonstrated that the use of cooking utensils made of nickel is without danger. Nevertheless, he does not think it advisable that eatables should be kept for any length of time in such vessels.

Strange Customs of Lent.

In the early Christian Church wine was as much forbidden as meat to those who were fasting. Very terrible must have been the ancient days of Holy Week that were classed under the euphonious title of Xerophagy, when the only food allowed was bread and salt, to which, in certain localities only vegetables were added. The rules concerning Lent varied greatly in different localities for several centuries. A writer in the fifth century mentions that in certain places it lasted only three weeks, in others six, and in some as much as seven. Then there were countries in which the Lenten fast was kept on every day of the week. Sunday was omitted in others, and elsewhere there was no fasting on either that day or Saturday. The Cistercians, who did so much in the Middle Ages for agriculture in this country, used to fast from the 14th of September until Easter, eating neither meat, fish, nor eggs.

To this day in the Roman Catholic Church the fast days vary greatly in different countries and even dioceses, and although its Lent now begins or ends on the same days throughout the world, there is considerable difference in the rules for keeping it in certain localities. Then with regard to Advent there is some diversity. In the fifth century it was kept as a general fast of forty days, from Nov. 11 till Christmas. This custom, as I have said, died out, although in England and Ireland Roman Catholics are made to fast on the Wednesdays and Fridays in Advent, there is no such rule on the Continent, except in religious houses, and only in some of those. A curious custom prevails in France of allowing a certain waterfowl that feeds chiefly on fish to be eaten on days of the year on which other flesh meat is forbidden. We think, however, that many people who have once tasted this particular delicacy will not be likely to avail themselves of the privilege a second time. The most interesting exceptional rule connected with abstinence is one that exists in Spain. It seems that at the time of the Crusades all who contributed a fixed annual sum were dispensed from certain days of abstinence by a Papal Bull, and this dispensation has never been withdrawn. As the fee required has now become a mere trifle through the deterioration in the value of the money (about a couple of shillings), the dispensation has fallen within the reach of most people, and the funds thus accumulated are devoted to charitable purposes.

It is interesting to remember that when the rules about fasting were far stricter among Roman Catholics in England than they are now, such a thing as eating flesh during Lent was unheard of, and the fast days at other times being then much more numerous than at present, it was very difficult for those living inland to get any fresh fish caught in the sea, and that the potato, to say nothing of certain other vegetables, had not yet been introduced into this country. Tea and coffee were unknown, as also were tobacco and many other little luxuries which tend to make a day of fasting or abstinence far from intolerable in modern times. Nor should it be forgotten that eggs were not allowed on fast days in the middle ages. Cheese, milk, and butter were long forbidden. The permission to eat meat at the "one meal" on every day in Lent except Wednesdays and Fridays and the last four days is very modern indeed, nor is it universal. Another modern innovation is the toleration of the custom of taking a little tea or coffee with a few mouthfuls, which are not to count at all, at breakfast time, as well as the "half meal," which, with certain restrictions, is allowed under the title of collation later on in the day.

A Good 'Oss.

A wealthy rancher of Wyoming Territory recently related a story of a rich young Englishman, who, while looking about the West for good investments, visited his ranch. He stayed there a few days, and one afternoon as the cowboys were about to round up a bunch of cow-ponies the young man said that he would enjoy a good ride in the saddle. He said he was used to riding only thoroughbreds and he didn't think they had a horse good enough for him. The boys convinced him that they had one of the finest horses on the plains and if he knew how to ride he was welcome to the animal. He was apparently insulted when questioned about his ability to ride and answered that he could ride any kind of a horse. A sleepy-looking bronco was brought out from the corral and he was the worst buckner in the herd. "E's lifeless," said the foreman when the pony was brought to him. The boys said the "nag" would wake up after the first mile and the visitor got into the saddle. He didn't linger long. The first buck-jump placed him on the horse's neck, and after the second he was in the atmosphere. He turned a double somersault and landed on the sharp end of a cactus plant. When he picked himself up one of the boys asked what he thought of thoroughbreds now. The question made the Englishman turn pale. "E's a good 'oss," he answered, "but 'e lopes too bloomin' high."

Incombustible Curtains.—There are many substances which have the property of rendering the fabrics to which they are applied incombustible, but they usually spoil them, either by changing the color or stiffening them to such a degree that they cannot be used. An easy and safe way of protecting curtains and mosquito nets against fire is said to be by steeping them in a solution of phosphate of ammonia, obtained by mixing half a litre of water (one pint) with one hundred drams (about three ounces) of phosphate. In this way the color and texture remain unaltered.

Crickets in danger of receiving a set-back in America. It is generally considered that the game is too long and too slow for this hemisphere. At any rate it is certain that from a spectator's point of view it lacks popularity. The Philadelphia clubs, inspired by the pernicious example of baseball, has determined to give a new plan, known as the Thayer, from the name of its author, or the American plan, a trial: According to this ten balls are to constitute one over, and a game is to consist of six innings, three men on each side going out alternately. Supposing three wickets happened to be knocked down by successive balls the game will be intensely interesting. Five a side to go out alternately might not be so bad, but three is absurd. But, there, it is all absurd and if the name of my forefathers, descendants of a line of kings, protest against any radical changes in the grand old game.

Meditation.

"Sow in the morn thy seed." "In the morning sow thy seed." Truly the light is sweet. And a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun."—Ecclesiastes xi., 7.

Many were the wise and wonderful questions asked by the patriarch Job: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring out Mazzoroth in his season? Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? The starry heavens furnished many a theme for wondering questions, as well as for silent admiration. And as year after year the planets of the spring grew nearer and nearer to the earth, men of the meditative mood saw the pleiades as Tennyson describes them, "glittering like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid." The Him who is their great source, were both alike to Job in this at least that they were both causes and occasions of wonder and praise to him. He had songs for the morning, and he was one of few poets of the early world who had also "songs for the night." What questions he asked! Hast thou commanded the morning since the days? And caused the day-spring to know its place? Where is the way where light dwelleth? And as for darkness, where is the place thereof? Solomon was wiser than Job. If not so profoundly metaphysical he was a more practical philosopher. He saw beauty in each rising moon, and more than that he saw in every rising moon an opportunity for delight, for work. And so he says: "In the morning, the beautiful morning, sow thy seed, and in the evening hold not thine hand." These words have been used for centuries, and not unwisely, as an earnest injunction to the young to do life's work in the early years, with deepest care. Youth is, indeed, the sowing time, the best, true sowing time. But the truth is that the figure of the sower is only a fragmentary figure of a man. From the cradle to the grave we are sowing and reaping all the time. But Solomon is talking of a day, not of the day of life. He would have us fill the morning hours with work and joy and labor. How sad it is that there should have crept into our language such a word as "pastime." As if time were not all too short for its joys and duties, its cares and interests. The bleak winds of March are tossing the banners of an early spring. We shall soon begin to sow seeds in the garden and the field. And from the hour we begin sowing to the last of autumn's waning days, may through all the year, we inherit the interest, the wealth of our sowing. The sooner we begin sowing the good seed of life the sooner we shall reap. To the beauty of the early dawn let us sow our seed, and we shall be reapers through unchanging years.

Prison Life in Russia.

If the "old bear" would stand well in the eyes of the nations, let her change her ways in regard to her political offenders whom she punishes by sending to the mines. She cannot expect to retain the respect of self-respecting peoples, while she winks at the atrocities and barbarities which are there carried on. That some of the reports are exaggerated may be granted, still there is enough truth to warrant the indignation and condemnation so generally felt and expressed. Despatches from Tomsk, the central Siberian depot for prisoners, containing the record of the numbers brought to the prison each year since 1886, say that the daily average number of prisoners in 1888 was 1,390, and the daily average number on the sick list was 396. A majority of the sick had typhoid fever. An official report declares that owing to lack of room hundreds of sick had to be placed in the open air while the temperature was as low as ten degrees below freezing, and that in consequence of this exposure the mortality among the sick was enormous. In the presence of such facts as these one reads with a good degree of satisfaction that the Russian government has been disagreeably impressed by the meetings held in England and America to denounce the outrages committed upon exiles in Siberia. It is a hopeful sign when the authorities manifest a sensitiveness to outside opinion, even though it assumes the form of anger. Anything is better than callous indifference.

France and Germany.

It is an open secret that France has never felt satisfied with the result of the late Franco-Prussian war, by which she lost the valuable provinces of Alsace-Lorraine. Many, too, entertain the opinion that she is only waiting for a favorable opportunity to regain her lost possessions. The fact is, she can never feel perfectly safe with these provinces under German control, seeing that they lie within a twelve hours run of her capital city. It is interesting, therefore, to learn that M. Jules Simon, the eminent French statesman, at present attending the Berlin Labor Conference, and who was the other day presented by Emperor William, with the Order of the Red Eagle, has had a long conversation with the Emperor during the course of which he broached the subject of the neutralization of Alsace-Lorraine. To this proposition the Emperor, made reply that "it was never too early to discuss a question that concerned the friendly relations existing between Germany and France." While it is doubtful whether Germany would consent to such a settlement of the old feud, it is certain that some such arrangement would go far to securing the peace of Europe, which depends in no small degree upon the attitude of these two nations towards each other.

Giving Shape to the Feet.

Everyone, but especially children, should wear properly-fitting shoes, no matter how common their material. They should be neither too large nor too small, and should have low, flat heels that must be promptly "righted" as soon as they begin to wear to one side. If the toes of the foot show a tendency to overlap they should be rubbed with the hands once or twice each day; and if this care be given when the curving commences it will, as a rule, prove sufficient to correct any irregularities of this nature. If a nail is wayward in its growth, trim it only lightly at the ailing corner, but fully at the opposite corner. If both corners grow too deeply into the flesh, clip them carefully and lightly, and then scrape the center of the nail from the top to near the root until it is thin and flexible. This process seldom fails to correct refractory nails—provided, of course, they are not neglected too long.

In a recent hunt upon the estate of Lord Granville, England, the fox bolted through the hall of the castle into the drawing-room with the pack in full pursuit. Reynard was killed at the mantle.