

SOME TALES OF QUAIN COACHES.

A great many years ago, fifty at the least, writes a correspondent of *Land and Water*, there was a coach from Alton to London, called "The Flying Machine," which the prospectus, or bill, stated would run, "God Willing," on such and such days. It was owned, and sometimes driven, by a person named Collier, who one day informed a friend of mine, for whom he always kept the box-seat, when he was duly advised that he should have his company, that he had all his life been trying to run over a duck, but had not been able to accomplish that feat of Jehuship. He had more than once managed to pin one, as it were, by the tail, but somehow or other the creature invariably contrived to waddle off unhurt, with the loss of a few feathers.

And apropos of coaches, did you ever hear of Sir William Chambers's bill for the design of the Royal State Coach? It was at first actually £8,000, but fortunately it was taxed, and reduced to nearly £500. Walpole's description of it is rather quaint: "a beautiful object crowded with improprieties." Sir William was a good architect, certainly, witness Somerset House, but the palm trees in the state coach, or rather on it, are a trifle too Oriental. He was not designed by nature for a coach-builder. Then there was Moore's invention of large wheels, and the attention his curious coach attracted when he went in it with five friends to Richmond, and was presented to old George the Third. The body of Moore's coach was, by all accounts, like that of an ordinary one reversed—hung between two high wheels nine feet and a half in diameter. The passengers sat sideways in it.

One of the best purposes which Moore put his inventive powers at work on was trying to improve the condition of traffic horses. He made a cart on two wheels to convey coals in about London, and took, with two horses, twenty-two sacks of coals from a wharf in Thames-street to his own house in Cheapside, repeating the journey four successive times in one day. The wheels of this cart were fifteen feet high. All these inventions were thought very wonderful in those days, but in the present we are well aware that a carriage of any sort with high wheels will run more easily than one with small.

There was a great outcry raised in London against hack-coaches at first. All the shopkeepers were up in arms; they said these coaches deprived them of custom, for when people walked through the streets they often looked in at the wares through the shop windows and were tempted to make purchases, but these horrid coaches whisked them by in a second.

"Caroches, coaches, jades, and Flanders mares,
Do rob us of our shares, our wares, our fares;
Against the ground we stand and knock our heels,
Whilst all the profit runs away on wheels."

Taylor, the poetical waterman, wrote a satire, entitled "The World Runs on Wheels," and compared the coaches in London to an "infernal swarm of trade-spoilers who, like grasshoppers and caterpillars of Egypt, overrun the land and prevent watermen from getting a living on water." The old-fashioned citizens also complained of the noise these new coaches made. What would they say now to the tide of carriages and cabs, omnibuses and waggons, in parts of the city, if a dozen or more hack-coaches and a few private ones were deemed to make such a clatter in the streets, "shaking," as one writer has it, "the basements, and making such a confused row as if all the devils were at barley-break," and then says, "It doth sour wine, beer, and ale most abominably, to the impairing of the health of those that drink it." Preachers also railed against coaches, because the noise prevented their congregations from hearing the sermons they preached, but in spite of all Captain Bailey's four hackney coaches increased rapidly. He began in 1634, and in 1637 the law interfered to prevent a greater number than fifty; in 1652, 200 were allowed, and so on until the year 1771, when their number was 1,000.

Bailey was an old sea-captain, and his first hack-stand was at the Maypole, in the Strand. He put his drivers in livery, and gave them his orders at what rate to carry people into all parts of London, where they were to be found all day at stated times. Other coaches, which were at that time much more expensive, lowered their charges, and their owners sent their drivers to the same place as Bailey's men, so in a very short time the cab-stands became known as a London institution.

PASTA AT HOME.

An account is given in "Lippincott's" of a visit to Pasta in 1860, when she was nearly sixty-two, from which the following is taken:—"It was nearly noon when we reached our destination. The villa, or, rather, the villas of Pasta—for there are three of them—are agreeably situated on the right bank of the lake. They are surrounded by handsome gardens, neatly cultivated, and, as usual in the mountainous part of Italy, constructed on artificial terraces. You enter by a gate opening on to the lake, and then pass into a little wood fragrant with the odour of the pretty white and pink cyclamen. The first villa used to be rented to strangers; the second was a kind of oratory, and, I believe, also the residence of a priest; the third house was that inhabited by the signora. As we met no one to inform us to which of the houses we were to direct our steps, we ventured to knock first at the oratory. At our summons a head was thrust out of an upper window, and we were informed that the padrona was in the garden indicated, and soon reached a kind of plateau, planted with nectarine trees, heavily laden with fruit. Beneath them were gathered five peasant women, picking up the delicious products and piling them into big baskets. I asked one of these women in the Milanese dialect if the 'sciora padrona' (the lady-mistress) was in. She I questioned was of medium height, rather stout, and arrayed in an old checked cotton gown, a white jacket, and a wide, coarse straw hat. She wore no stockings on her feet, which were thrust into those ancient, heelless wooden shoes, called *broccole* in Italian, which were as common in the days of Pliny as they are now. She held a long pole in her hand, with which she was engaged in knocking down the nectarines. 'La son mi la padrona' ('I am the mistress') answered she. At this unexpected answer Miss Vaughan and I were both dumfounded. Could this common-looking old countrywoman be Pasta, the famous *Div*, the greatest lyric actress that ever lived? We produced our letters, the signora read them, and then wiping her fingers, wet with fruit-juice, step

ped forward to greet us pleasantly. She apologized for her costume, said she was in the country and loved to live *sans gêne*, and, to break the ice completely, offered us some of her nectarines, which seemed to me the finest I had ever tasted. Then she invited us to breakfast and led us within. Having introduced us into the *salon*, she begged us to amuse ourselves as best we could whilst she went to change her dress, adding, with a laugh, as she glanced at her *broccole*, 'and put on a pair of stockings. You English people,' she went on, 'call this kind of costume "shocking." I remember when I was in London, noticing how young ladies, and old ones, too, used to bare their necks very low—so very low that I used to think it "shocking." It was amusing to notice how clearly she pronounced the word 'shocking,' which is so popular amongst foreigners. Pasta spoke always in Italian, with a very pure accent, and much grace, but in a voice unusually harsh and loud for a woman."

THE LITERARY WORLD.

There is a prospect that a complete concordance to Pope's poems will be published.

Mr. Dion Boucicault has written a comic sketch of his journey across the American Continent.

The autobiography of the late John Stuart Mill has been translated into French by M. E. Cazelles.

A rumour is current in London that "one of the chief English poets" has written a historical tragedy.

In the July number of *The Atlantic* is to appear the first instalment of Mr. Howell's new novel of Italian life.

Mark Twain having paid two very brief visits to England, is writing an account of the manners and customs of the English.

A new publication on the principle of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, to take a similar place in German literature, is about to be issued in Berlin.

The family of the late Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel have determined not to authorize the compiling of any biography of their departed relative.

The finished manuscripts left by Mr. John Stuart Mill, dealing with "Theism" and "Nature," are now passing through the press, and will be shortly issued by Messrs. Longman.

A volume by Mr. Tom Taylor, illustrative of the history of Leicester Square and of its royal, artistic, literary, and eccentric inhabitants, will, it is expected, make its appearance before long.

The venerable Charles Cowden Clarke, now in his eighty-sixth year, will publish presently in the equally venerable *Gentleman's Magazine* an account of his friendship with Dickens, which was intimate and characteristic of both men.

Gerald Massey stated at his last lecture in the States—at Boston—that he had gathered in some 1500 sequins—let us say \$3,000—by his talks in America, most of them on spiritualism. He returns to England in a cheery state of mind.

Mr. Bellow will probably be incapacitated from resuming any active occupation, and the appeal signed by Wilkie Collins, Edmund Yates, George Augustus Sala, and others, is destined to establish a fund which will place him beyond actual want for the remainder of his life.

Edmund Yates, who is at present in Southern France for the materials of a French story, has in press a novel founded upon his last year's studies in the Lotos and Arcadian clubs of New York, which, says the *Daily Graphic*, is said to treat American journalistic and literary characters with that charming freedom from social restraint and accurate information which is so characteristic of the criticisms of our average foreign visitor.

The *American Canadian* is the title of a new paper to be published in the city of Boston. In the prospectus it is stated "this enterprise contemplates especially the benefit of the people of the Provinces and of the Republic, in all their direct or indirect mutual relations. Its ambition is to furnish both with a recognized representative journal, calculated to promote closer acquaintance and attachment, unity of action and progress, and reciprocal forbearance and respect between them."

The nuns of the Convent of the Visitation at Nancy have discovered a number of manuscript sermons by Bossuet, which have never been published. They were left in the said convent by the great preacher himself when he visited it, and have never been touched since. The MS. is now in the hands of Colonel Ferval, and will ere long be made public. Among many interesting documents it contains all the letters addressed by Bossuet to the famous Duchess de Vallière upon her conversion.

The Khedive of Egypt is now, according to a correspondent of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, collecting the treasures of Arabic literature scattered throughout his dominions into a library at Cairo, and has already enriched this foundation by thirty most valuable copies of the Koran, chiefly taken from the local mosques. One of these copies, that of the learned Gaafar, is the oldest known. It dates from about A.D. 720, and is written on the skin of gazelles, in Cufic characters, and in colours, black, red, and gold.

The new Shakespeare Society, which already numbers three hundred members, is anxious to raise these to five hundred, as subscriptions to that amount would cover their necessary expenses. The first part of the society's transactions will be issued by the end of the month. The will consist of the papers already read, a table of the quarto editions of Shakespeare's works, the first two quartos of "Romeo and Juliet," suggestive stories from which he wrote his plays, and a Shakespeare allusion book, to point the sources of his quotations.

It is said that Mr. Gladstone is at work upon a semi-historical, semi-critical account of the Greek drama, in eight volumes, a subject that he has had in his mind for many years. A note upon the subject from the right honourable gentleman's pen is to be published in a few days, or rather from the pen of his secretary, for Mr. Gladstone rarely writes anything with his own hand, his gift of spontaneous composition, like Mr. Lowe's, amounting to improvisation, and this treatise upon the Greek drama is dictated from a few notes to a staff of shorthand writers, who pay the right honourable gentleman a visit every morning for a couple of hours, and take turns as they do in the gallery, passing on their MS. to the printer at the end of the day.

The original MS. of Dickens' "Our Mutual Friend" was purchased a few days ago of Messrs. Scribner, Armstrong & Co., (to whom it had been sent for sale) by Mr. George W. Childs, of Philadelphia. It is written with blue ink on blue paper, about 8 by 9 inches in size. These sheets are pasted upon white paper, and bound up into two thick quarto volumes. The handwriting is rapid, the lines are crowded together, and the pages are filled with interlineations. The whole is prefaced by the skeleton pages where Dickens has sketched out his plans. He evidently followed the curious plan of questioning and answering himself on paper, as at the head of one of these skeletons we find: 'Bella—three chapters? Yes.' Farther down he writes down the name of another character, and queries whether he shall dispose of it in a certain manner—then subjoins a curt 'No,' as if disapproving his own original plan. This is the only manuscript of Dickens not owned by his biographer, Mr. John Forster. The price paid for it was \$1,250.

DRAMATIC GOSSIP.

"Single Play Albery" is what the *Herald* calls the author of "Two Roses."

Dumas' "L'Ami des Femmes" has been revived at the Gymnase, Paris.

Victorien Sardou's "Les Prés St. Gervais" is said to be being set as an opera bouffe by Lecocq.

A new drama, founded on the Tichborne case, and entitled "L'Affaire Tichborne" is in preparation at the Cluny, Paris.

Mlle. Krauss has had to prove that she is an Austrian in order to be accepted at the French Opera, so fiercely does Germanophobia rage in Paris.

"Le Sphinx" has been produced at the Princess's, London, by the French company now playing there. Mlle. Favart sustains the leading rôle.

Madame Laurent, a "fine actress with Ristori-like passion and Celeste's majestic style of beauty," has been appearing in French plays in London.

Ristori is expected in this continent next fall. She has been remarkably successful in London, and shows no diminution of her wonderful powers of acting.

The Khedive of Egypt is said to have asked Wagner for an opera on an Egyptian subject. The Prophet—perhaps remembering Moses—has not yet replied.

Mr. A. Thompson is preparing an extravaganza, "The Adventures of Telemachus," for the Court Theatre, in which a leading part will be taken by Miss Nellie Moore.

Capoul is mentioned as likely to be engaged as a star at the Paris Châtelet, which is to be turned into an opera house for the production of another opera of Litolff.

Prime Donne are expensive people to be ill. Nilsson, for instance, says she cannot be sick a day without occasioning a loss to herself and her managers of at least \$1,000.

An adaptation of Bronson Howard's "Saratoga," made by Frank Marshall, the author of "New Year's Eve," was announced as in preparation at the Court Theatre, London.

It is now definitely fixed that M. Lecocq's new opera bouffe, "Giroflé Girofla," will be produced in London in September at the Philharmonic Theatre. It will be sung in English.

Theo and Judie, the reigning Parisian favourites, are soon to appear in the same piece together, and a gushing writer says: "It will be like joining the morning and evening stars."

It is remarked that the only three artistes who have sung the rôle of *Ophelia* in Thomas's "Hamlet" at the Paris Opera—Miles, Nilsson, Sæst, and Devries—have recently married.

An actor named Stephens, who broke one of his legs recently in taking the sensation leap in Miss Braddon's "Genevieve," at the Alexandra Theatre, Liverpool, may have to relinquish his profession in consequence of the accident.

Albery's new comedy of "Pride" is said to be built upon a sound and interesting foundation, but marred, as so many of his other productions are, by his suddenly altering his design just as his characters have obtained a firm hold on attention. The dialogue is pronounced charming.

"Orphée aux Enfers" having attained its hundredth representation at the Gaité, Paris, M. Offenbach, who is both the director of the theatre and the author of the piece, has given a grand supper to the artistes at the Grand Hotel. They in turn presented him with a crown of gold, on which their names were engraved.

The Grand English Opera Combination have arranged for a season of from eight to ten performances at the Horticultural Gardens, Toronto, commencing on or about the 8th of June. The stage will be enlarged, and new scenery fitted up. The repertoire will consist of Balfe's "Bohemian Girl," Verdi's "Trovatore," Wallace's "Maritana," Auber's "Fra Diavolo," Flotow's "Martha," Bellini's "Sonnambula," and Gounod's "Faust."

The following table of receipts will show that, notwithstanding recent events in France, the Parisians have not lost their taste for theatres:—

	1869.	1873.
Palais Royal	759,000 fr.	930,000 fr.
Châtelet	599,000 fr.	941,000 fr.
Vaudeville	456,000 fr.	624,000 fr.
Variétés	810,000 fr.	1,027,000 fr.
Comédie Française . .	995,000 fr.	1,380,000 fr.
Opéra	1,639,000 fr.	1,758,000 fr.

A writer in *Macmillan's Magazine* says: "I once witnessed a curious example of that almost morbid conscientiousness of Mendelssohn's with regard to the possible perfection of his compositions. One evening I came into his room and found him looking so heated and in such a feverish state of excitement that I was frightened. 'What's the matter with you?' I called out. 'There I have been sitting for the last four hours,' he said, 'trying to alter a few bars in a song (it was a quartet for men's voices) and I can't do it.' He had made twenty different versions, the greater number of which would have satisfied most people. 'What you could not do to-day in four hours,' said I, 'you will be able to do to-morrow in as many minutes.' He calmed down by degrees, and we got into such earnest conversation that I stayed with him till a late hour. Next day I found him in unusually good spirits, and he said to me, 'Yesterday evening when you were gone I was so excited that it was no use thinking of sleep, so at last I composed a little hunting-song, which I must play you at once.' He sat down to the piano, and I heard the song, which has since delighted hundreds and thousands of people, namely, Eichendorff's 'Sei gegrüsst du schoener Wald!' I hailed it with joyful surprise."