

# THE WILD GEESSE

BY Stanley J. Weyman.

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**Synopsis of Previous Chapters**

Colonel John Sullivan, an Irish soldier, who has served abroad for many years, returns to his native Kerry on the sloop *Cormorant*, a French smuggling vessel, laden with Bordeaux wines. The cargo of the sloop is seized by the natives of Skilly, against the futile protests of Captain Augustin, who realizes that he has no law on his side.

Colonel Sullivan is coldly received by Flavia and her mother, the McMurroughs, because of his alien faith and his undesirable position as their legal guardian. When Captain Augustin returns with Luke Asgill, the nearest justice, and demands the return of the sloop, the McMurroughs, Flavia and her guardian are in favor of returning the cargo on the captain's payment of the dues. The McMurrough objects to this, but finally agrees to it on Colonel Sullivan's promise to get back Flavia's favorite mare, which was seized by British soldiers. The Colonel and his servant, Bale, set out and find the mare at the barracks of Tralee. The Colonel is invited into the mess room by the English officers, and one of them, named Payton, who seized the mare, throws wine in his face. The Colonel refuses to fight, because his right arm is permanently disabled. He wins a left-handed fencing bout with the *maître d'armes*, at the same time winning the mare on a wager. At dinner upon his return to Morrisstown, he is amazed when Flavia drinks a toast "to the King across the water," and fears that a rising is contemplated. His fears are realized next morning when his kinsman, Ulick, warns him to leave the place and the people to their fate. The Colonel refuses and next morning Flavia is invited to join a family council of war. He refuses to join the proposed uprising, knowing its futility. Fearing that the Colonel may turn informer, the McMurrough and his friends imprison him and his servant, Bale. The next morning the two are led out to their death by the agent of the McMurrough, O'Sullivan Og. At the last moment this sentence is revoked and the Colonel and Bale are rowed out through the mist to imprisonment on a Spanish war ship in the harbor. The rowboat capsizes and the two prisoners, luckily escaping, take refuge on the French sloop. Captain Augustin and his sailors, under the Colonel's direction, steal to the house at Morris town under cover of the fog, and seize and imprison the leaders of the uprising.

## CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued)

SO HALP STIFLED and bitterly chagrined as they were, they did not waste their strength in a vain resistance.

With the third of the prisoners it was otherwise. The courage of the Irish is more conspicuous in the adjoining cabin in the retreat; and even of that joy in the conflict, which is their birthright and their fame, Flavia had taken more than her woman's share. In James McMurrough's mind the man who had been small room for generous passions. Unlike his sister, he would have struck the face of no man in whose power he lay; nor was he one to keep a stout heart when his hands were bound. Conscience does not always make cowards. But he knew into whose hands he had fallen, he knew the fate to which he had himself consigned Colonel John, and his heart was water, his hair rose, as he pictured in livid hues the fate that now awaited him.

As he had meant to do to the other, it would be done to him! He felt the cruel pike rend his gasping throat. Or would they throw him, bound and blind as he was, into the sea? He clenched his teeth, that was it! They were carrying him to the lake.

And once or twice, in the insanity of fear, he fought with his bonds until the blood came, even throwing himself down, until the men, out of covetousness, pricked him savagely, and drove him, venting choked cries of pain, to his feet again. After the second attempt he staggered on, beaten, hopeless.

He was aware that Colonel John was not with them, and then, again, that he was with them; and that they were on the wide track now between the end of the lake and the sea—that they were proceeding with increased caution. That might have given a braver man hope, the hope of rescue.

But rescue itself had terrors for the McMurrough. His captors, if pressed, might hasten the end, or his friends might strike him in the melee. And so with every furlong of the forced journey, he died a fresh death. And the furlongs seemed interminable. But at last he heard the fall of the waves on the shore, the men about him spoke louder, he caught a distant hail. Laughter and exclamations of triumph reached him, and the voices of men who had won in spite of odds.

Then a boat grated on the pebbles, he was lifted into it and thrust down to the bottom. He felt it float off, and heard the measured sound of the oars in the tholopes. A few moments elapsed, the sound of the oars ceased, the boat bumped something. He was raised to his feet, his hands were unbound, he was set on a rope ladder and bidden to climb. Obeying with shaking knees, he was led across what he guessed to be a deck, down steep stairs, and sweating, dishevelled, pale with exhaustion and fear, he looked about him.

The fog was still thick outside, turning day into twilight, and the cabin lamp had been lit and swung above the narrow table, filling the low browsed, Dutch-like interior with a strong but shifting light. Behind the table Colonel John and the skipper leaned against a bulkhead; before them, on the nearer side of the table were ranged the three captives. Behind these, again, the dark, grinning faces of the sailors, with their tarred pigtales and flashing eyes, filled the doorway; and, beyond that, viewed under the uncertain light of the lamp, they showed a wild and savage crew.

Colonel John looked at the last few minutes, sank. Escape, or change of dress, there was none. He

was helpless, and what those into whose hands he had fallen determined, he must suffer. For a moment his heart stood still, his mouth gaped, he swayed on his feet. Then he clutched the table and steadied himself.

"I am giddy," he muttered.

"I am sorry that you have been put to so much inconvenience," Colonel John answered civilly.

"The words, the tone, might have reassured him if he had not suspected a devilish irony. Even when Colonel John proceeded to direct one of the men to open a porthole and admit more air he derived no comfort from the attention. But steady! Colonel John was speaking again.

"You, too, gentlemen," he said, addressing Cammock and the Bishop, "I am sorry that I have been forced to put you to so much discomfort. But I saw no other way of effecting my purpose. And," he went on with a smile, "if you ask my warranty for acting as I have acted—"

"I do!" the Bishop said nothing, but breathed hard.

"Then I can only vouch," the Colonel answered, "the authority by virtue of which you seized me yesterday. I give you credit, reverend father, and you, Admiral, for a belief that in creating a rising here you were serving a cause which you think worthy of sacrifice—the sacrifice of others as well as of yourselves. But I tell you as frankly, I feel it my duty to prevent that rising; and for the moment fortune is with me. Now I need hardly say," Colonel John continued, with an appearance almost of bonhomie, "that I do not wish to go further than is necessary. I might hand you over to the English authorities. But far be it from me to do that! I would have no man's blood on my hands. And though I say at once I will not shrink, were there no other way of saving innocent lives, from sending you to the scaffold—"

"A thousand thanks to you!" the Bishop said. But, brave man as he was, the irony in his voice masked relief;



"I Would Have No Man's Blood on My Hands!"

and, not then, but a moment later, he passed his handkerchief across his brow. Colonel John smiled, but the angry bloodshot eyes which he fixed on the Colonel lost a little of their ferocity.

"I say, I would not shrink from doing that," Colonel John continued mildly, "were it necessary. I might provide against your immediate return. I must see that the movement, which will die in your absence, is not revived by any word from you. To that end gentlemen, I must put you to the inconvenience of a prolonged sea voyage."

"If I could speak with you in private?" the Bishop said.

"You will have every opportunity," Colonel John answered, smiling, "of speaking to Captain Augustin in private."

"Still, sir, if I could see you alone I think I could convince you—"

"You shall have every opportunity of convincing Captain Augustin," Colonel John returned, smiling more broadly, "and of convincing him by the same means which I venture to think, reverend sir, you would employ with me. To be plain, he will take you to sea for a certain period and at the end of that time, if your arguments are sufficiently weighty, he will land you on the French shore. He will be at the loss of his cargo, and that loss, I fear, you will have to make good. Something, too, he may charge by way of interest, and for your passage." By this time the sailors were on the broad grin. "A trifle, perhaps, for landing dues. But I have spoken with him to be moderate and I doubt not that within a few weeks you, Admiral Cammock, will be with your command, and the reverend father will be pursuing his calling in another place."

For a moment there was silence, save for a titter from the group of seamen. Then Cammock laughed—a curt, barking laugh. "A bite!" he said. "If I can ever repay it, sir, I will be sure of that."

Colonel John bowed courteously. The Bishop took it otherwise. The veins on his forehead swelled and he had much ado to control himself. The truth was he feared ridicule more than he feared danger, perhaps more than he feared death; and such an end to such an enterprise was hard to bear.

"Is there no alternative?" he asked, barely able to speak for the chagrin that took him by the throat.

"Due, if you prefer it," Colonel Sullivan answered, smiling. "You can choose your chance with the English authorities. For myself, I lean to the course I have suggested."

"If money were paid down—now? Now, sir?"

"It would not avail."

"Much money?"

"No."

The Bishop glared at him for a few seconds, then his face relaxed, his eyes grew mild, his chin sank on his breast. His fingers drummed on the table.

"His will be done!" he said—"His will be done! I was not worthy."

His surrender seemed to sting Cammock. Perhaps in the course of their joint adventures he had come to know and to respect his companion, and felt more for him than for himself.

"If I had you on my quarter deck for only half an hour," he growled, "I would learn who was the better man! Ah, my man, I would!"

"The doubt flatters me," Colonel John answered, viewing them both with good respect; for he saw that, had or good, they were men. Then, that being settled, he continued, "I shall ask you, gentlemen, to go on deck for a few moments, that I may say a word to my kinsman."

"Is it not to go with us?"

"That remains to be seen," Colonel John replied, a note of sternness in his voice. Still he hesitated and he stood; but at last, in obedience to his courteous gesture, they bowed, turned—with a deep sigh—the Bishop's part—and clambered up the companion. The sea had already vanished at a word from Augustin, who himself proceeded to follow his prisoners on deck.

"Sit down!" Colonel Sullivan said, the same sternness in his voice. And he sat down on his side of the table, while James McMurrough, with a sullen look but a beating heart, took his seat on the other. The fear of immediate death had left the young man, but with so little success that if his sister had seen him thus she had been blind indeed if she had not discerned between these two men seated opposite to one another the difference that exists between the great and the small, the strong and the infirm of purpose.

It was significant of that difference that the one was silent at will, while

the other spoke because he had not the force to be silent.

"What are you wanting with me?" the young man asked.

"Is it not you?" Colonel John answered, with a piercing look, "will be wanting to know where O'Sullivan Og is—O'Sullivan Og, whom you sent to do your bidding this morning?"

The young man turned a shade paler and his bravado fell from him. His breath seemed to stop. Then, "Where?" he whispered, "where is he?"

"Where, I pray, heaven!" Colonel John answered, with the same solemnity, "may have mercy upon him."

"He is not dead?" the McMurrough cried, his voice rising on the last word.

"I have little doubt he is," the Colonel replied. "Dead, sir. And the men who were with him—dead also, or the most part—dead. Dead, James McMurrough, on the errand they went for you."

The shock of the news struck the young man dumb, and for some moments he stared at the Colonel, his face colorless. At length, "All dead?" he whispered. "Not all?"

"For what I know," Colonel John replied, "Heaven forgive them!" And in half a dozen sentences he told him what had happened. Then, "They are the first fruits," he continued sternly, "God grant that they be the last fruits of this reckless plot! Not that I blame them, who did but as they were bid. Nor do I blame any man or any woman who embarked on this with a single heart, for the sake of an end which they thought was for their own lives. But—"

Colonel John's voice grew more grave—"there was one who had not a single heart. There was one who was willing to die for a great cause, but to serve his own private interest."

"No! No!" the young man cried, covering before him. "It is not true!"

"One who was ready to die for me," Colonel John continued pitilessly, "because it suited him to remove a man!"

"No! No!" the wretched youth cried, almost grovelling before him. "It was all of them! It was all!"

"It was not all!" Colonel John retorted; but there was a keenness in his face which showed that he had still something to learn.

"It was—those who—on deck!" the McMurrough cried eagerly. "I swear it was! They said it was necessary."

"They were one with you in condemning! Be it so! I believe you! But who spared?"

"The McMurrough cried breathlessly eager to excupulate himself.

was I alone! I swear it! I sent the boy!"

"You spared? Yes, and you alone!" the Colonel said, his eyes fixed on the young man. "You spared because you learned that I had made a will, and you feared lest that which had passed to me in trust might pass to a stranger for good and all! You spared because you were to your interest, your advantage! I say, of your own mouth you are condemned."

James McMurrough had scarcely force to follow the pitiless reasoning by which the elder man convicted him. But heavy death duties, an equal division of his property, his own conscience, and what his tongue did not own his colorless face, his terrified eyes, confessed, "You have fallen into our hands."

Colonel John continued, grave as fate, "Why should we not deal with you as you would have dealt with us? No!"—the young man by a gesture had appealed to those on deck—"no! They may have consented to my death; but as the judge condemns, or the soldier kills, you for private profit and advantage. Nevertheless, I shall not deal so with you. You can go as they are going—aboard, to return, I hope, a wiser man. Or—"

"Or you can stay here," Colonel John continued, "and we will treat the past as if it had not been. But on a condition."

James' color came back. "What'd you be wanting?" he muttered, averting his gaze.

"You must swear that you will not pursue this foolish plan further. That first."

"What can I be doing without them?" was the sullen answer.

"Very true," Colonel John rejoined. "But you must swear, also, my friend, that you will not attempt anything against me, nor be party to anything."

"What'd I be doing?"

"Don't lie!" the Colonel replied, losing his temper for a single instant.

"I've no time to bandy words, and you know how you stand. Swear by your hope of salvation to those two things, and you may stay. Refuse, and I make myself safe by your absence."

The young man had the sense to know that he was escaping lightly. He was willing enough to swear that he would not pursue that enterprise further. But the second undertaking stuck in his gizzard. He hated Colonel John—for the past wrong, for the past defeat, above all for the present humiliation.

"I'm having no choice," he said, shrugging his shoulders.

"Very good," Colonel John answered. "And, going to the door, he called Bale from his station by the hatchway, and despatched him to the Bishop and to Admiral Cammock, requesting them to do him the honor to descend."

They came readily enough, in the hope of some favorable turn. But the Colonel's words quickly set them right.

"Gentlemen," he said politely, "I know you to be men of honor in private life. For this reason I have asked you to be present as witnesses to the bargain between my cousin and myself. Blood is thicker than water; he has no mind to go abroad, and I have no mind to send him against his will. But his presence, after what has passed, is a standing peril to myself. To meet this difficulty he is ready to swear by all he holds sacred, and upon his honor, that he will attempt nothing against me, nor be a party to it. Is that so, sir?"

The speaker continued, "Do you willingly, in the presence of these gentlemen, give that undertaking?"

The young man, with averted eyes and a downcast face, nodded.

"I am afraid I must trouble you to speak," Colonel John said.

"I do," he muttered, looking at none.

"Further, that you will not within six months attempt anything against the government?" Colonel John continued.

"I will not."

"Very good. I accept your word, and I thank these gentlemen for their courtesy in condescending to act as witnesses. Admiral Cammock and you, reverend father, Colonel John continued, "remain at your post. You, however, I'd have you notice, that cannot be repeated."

"Maybe not," the Colonel answered. "I am content to think that for some time you will remain in a sphere where I am not concerned for the lives of the people."

"There are things more precious than lives," the Bishop said.

"I admit it. More by token, I'm blaming you little, only you see, sir, I differ. That is all."

With that Colonel Sullivan bowed and left the cabin, and the McMurrough, who had listened to the colloquy with the air of a whipped hound, slunk after him. On deck the Colonel and Augustin talked apart for a moment, then the former signed to the young man to go down into the boat which lay alongside, with a couple of men at the oars and Bale seated in the sternsheets.

After the lapse of a minute or two Colonel John joined him and the rowers pushed off, while Augustin and the crew leaned over the rail to see them go and to send after them a torrent of voluble good wishes. A very few strokes of the oars brought the passengers to land.

Bale stayed to exchange a few words with the seamen while Colonel John and the McMurrough set off along the beach. And astonishment filled the young man and grew as they walked. Did Colonel John, after all that had happened, mean to return to Morris town—to establish himself calmly—alone—in the midst of the conspirators whose leaders he had removed?

(To be Continued)

be introduced, men like Mr. Keir Harcourt, Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald, and Mr. H. G. Wells repudiate the idea that Socialism is opposed to present family bonds and organization.

Again, while Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Wells would not abolish altogether individual right to bequeath property, Dr. Menger, George Bernard, and other foreign Socialists would refuse to give to a wealthy man the free right to dispose of the goods he leaves behind him at death. The suggestion is made that the larger estates should be diminished by heavy death duties; an equal division of the property of the testator's children, and that only children, parents, brothers and sisters have any right to inherit. When these have died out, say a certain section of Socialists, the State should take over the property.

"Socialists do not object to property," says Mr. MacDonald, to quote an extract from Jane T. Stoddard's able exposition of "The New Socialism" (Hodder and Stoughton). "They are not opposed to private property. They are not, therefore, opposed to inheritance. The right to acquire and hold involves the right to dispose by will or by gift. We only object to such a use of property as enables classes, for generation after generation, to live on the proceeds of other people's labor without doing any useful service to society."

And whatever one's political views may be, there seems to be some justification for this view, after an examination of the following startling figures provided by Mr. Chiozza Money, M.P. "Last year," says Mr. Money, "about 600,000 persons died in the United Kingdom, leaving property behind them to the extent of £299,234,000; but of the 700,000 who died, 617,879 died with practically nothing; 50,335 died leaving on the average only £200 each, and 42,616 died with small estates not exceeding £1,000 each. The remaining 21,000 died worth £279,840,000, of which £218,200,000 was left by only 4,172 persons."

Here is another of Mr. Money's striking statistical illustrations regarding the inequality of wealth. The population of the United Kingdom is roughly estimated at 43,000,000, and the income at £1,710,000,000; but of this sum £585,000,000 is absorbed by 1,250,000 of the rich, £245,000,000 by 3,750,000 of the comfortable, while the remaining £880,000,000 is divided amongst 38,000,000 people. Thus while 1,250,000 each earn, on an average, close upon £500 a year, 38,000,000 have to exist on £23 a year each.

It is such facts and figures as these which have led to the Socialist outcry for a redistribution of wealth, to be achieved by State control of all means of production and redistribution. In other words, all capital is to be vested in the State, the capitalist class thus being abolished and the State becoming the employer of labor of all descriptions. This means to say that, in addition to taking over the land and the great industries, Socialists propose to take over all means of transport—including, of course, the railways, mines, banks, and insurance companies, the control of water, gas, electric light, and milk supplies, as well as the drink trade.

Says the novelist, Mr. H. G. Wells: "There are to be no private landowners, no private bankers and lenders of money, no private insurance adventures, no private railway owners nor shipping owners, no private mine owners, no kings, silver kings, coal and wheat forestallers, or the like. All this realm of property is to be resumed by the State—is to be State-owned and State-managed."

That is the main plank of Socialism, by which Socialists hope to remove the inequalities of wealth as they exist today. "The economic object of Socialism," says Mr. Keir Harcourt, "is to make land and industrial capital common property and cease to produce for the profit of the landlord and the capitalist and to begin to produce for the use of the community." And that view is backed up by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, in the following words: "We must look upon production as a national function, and not as a task assigned to a class of separate individuals pursuing their own ends."

But, the reader may naturally ask, suppose the industry and commerce of the United Kingdom is nationalized for the good of each individual member of the community, is everyone to be equally paid? Is the doctor to be paid at the same rate as the navvy? Is the lawyer to earn no more than the newsboy? Will the author's brains be worth no more than those of the printer's "devil"? Will a clever actor be paid at the same rate as his dresser? Because, if so, gain being an incentive to every worker would be quickly arising, we should soon develop into a nation of killers. If, on the other hand, men in this proposed Socialist State are to be paid according to their respective abilities as they now are, then a new ruling class would quickly arise. On this point there is difference of opinion amongst the leaders of Socialism. While Mr. Robert Blatchford and his school argue that equal payments to every worker would be the only fair system in the ideal community, and that, to quote Miss Stoddard, "it would be most unreasonable for the more highly-gifted citizens to sulk and refuse to benefit their fellows because nothing can be given them beyond the essentials of a happy and healthy life, with esteem and love to boot," Mr. MacDonald asserts that "Socialism proposes to establish no state of equality" in regard to the reward of labor, while Mr. H. G. Wells is equally as emphatic in his assertion that "Socialism would leave men free to compete for fame, for service, for salaries, for position and authority, for leisure, for love and honor."

Thus it will be seen that, while Socialists agree in the main, they are divided amongst themselves somewhat when it comes to deciding important details in their scheme of an ideal community. This, however, in no way detracts from the earnestness with which they are pursuing their aims. The world's Socialist vote is estimated at 7,500,000, and no reader needs telling that the movement has made enormous strides during the last few years. There are many side issues to be settled, but the Socialists have a practical plan, which will be found embodied in the following resolution, framed at the annual conference of the Labor Representation Committee in 1906. This resolution runs as follows:

"That in view of the difficulty of meeting the schemes of social reform, because taxation, as at present levied, falls so oppressively on the industrial classes, and being of the opinion that

the cost of social reforms should be borne by socially-created wealth, such as rent and interest; and, further, being of opinion that a gradual distribution of the burdens of taxation is an excellent means of effecting the transfer of land and capital from private to public ownership, this conference declares that it should be the duty of a national Labor party to secure a re-adjustment of taxation, so that the national income and the cost of social reform should be levied by a system of taxation designed to secure for the community all unearned incomes derived from what is in reality communal wealth."

**FORTUNES FROM OLD CHINA**

A FEW moments spent with the records of Christie's, perhaps the most famous auction mart in the world, reveal many romantic incidents. Here is an entry in one of their old catalogues: "Some odd pieces of china, the property of two aged ladies in Warwickshire," and yet this prosaic entry conceals a romance stranger than fiction.

The two aged ladies were, in fact, peasant women, whose life was closing in bitter, grinding poverty. In the hope of keeping starvation from their door for a week or two, they sent a few old pieces of china, their only treasures, to London, hoping against hope that they might yield a few shillings—possibly a sovereign. Picture their amazement when they received a cheque for £720, the price realized by their odds and ends of china, which included a large dish of Limoges, a small pair of vases, a service which had once graced the table of Mme. de Pompadour!

The records of Christie's are full of similar examples of sensational prices realized by articles which were considered almost worthless. Recently, two white Chelsea groups, which had been bought for a guinea some years earlier, found an eager purchaser for 610 guineas; twenty-six Chelsea plates, which a few months before had changed hands for £2, were snapped up by an African millionaire for £20 guineas; and a well-known collector became the proud possessor for £320 of a white Chelsea group of "Hercules and Omphale," for which the original owner paid 18s. 6d.

A picture by Xattier, for which its owner had paid £4 10s., realized 3,000 guineas at Christie's; a portrait of Lady Waldegrave, by Hopper, which had been picked up by Mr. Woods, a partner in the firm of Christie's, for 12s. 6d., was sold to Messrs. Colnaghi & Co. for £6,300; and, still more amazing, an egg-shaped vase, painted with branches of flowering prunes on a rich marbled-blue ground, which had come into the hands of a Wardour Street dealer, was knocked down, after a most exciting competition between two rival West-end dealers, for £5,900.

Quite recently the Gabbits biberon, in the form of a grotesque animal in rock-crystal, 1 1/2 lbs. high, realized the colossal sum of 15,500 guineas; a black vase of encaustic porcelain was sold to Mr. Duveen for 2,500 guineas, a sum which represented no less than 2 1/2 an inch; and £10,000 was the price paid for four pieces of tapestry, the property of a French Count.

In four crowded and sensational hours at Christie's, a few months ago, some jewels belonging to Mrs. Samuel Lewis were knocked down for £94,000; among them a besckite of forty-four graduated pearls which, from an original bid of £1,000, rose in a few thrilling moments to £16,700. After such a sensation as this one looks quite apathetically on such prices as 4,000 guineas, bid in two minutes for a 1 1/2 lb. emerald; £1,200 for eight Chippendale chairs; and £4,950 for a shabby-looking volume, Sir J. Thorold's "Psalterium Codex," which to the inexperienced eye would have seemed dear at half a crown.

Even at Christie's, however, sales have been more remarkable than that of Mr. Hawkins' collection of snuff-boxes, five alone of which realized £12,350. So careless was the collector of his treasures that one of the boxes—a Louis XV, oblong gold—for which Mr. Duveen gladly paid £5,400, was actually found in the drawer of a washstand!

To go from Christie's, with its rare and costly treasures of art, to Stevens' well-known rooms at Grosvenor Gardens is to travel from one historic hoarding to other in the world of auctioneering, each of which is equally romantic, for at Stevens' you can purchase the most remarkable lots ever put up to auction—from an auk's egg to an Egyptian mummy or a pygmy's head.

Some years ago—Mr. Henry Stevens himself tells the story—a young man purchased at a furniture sale in the South of England a miscellaneous collection of shells and birds' eggs, for which he paid what he considered an exorbitant sum of 36s. An examination of his purchase, however, soon changed his disgust to satisfaction, for he discovered two eggs of the great auk, which he had long been hunting for, and which he paid what he considered an exorbitant sum of 36s. An examination of his purchase, however, soon changed his disgust to satisfaction, for he discovered two eggs of the great auk, which he had long been hunting for, and which he paid what he considered an exorbitant sum of 36s.

Since then Mr. Stevens has sold an auk's egg—a single specimen, too—for 300 guineas; and a stuffed auk, worth an egg, for twice this figure. Another curious "lot" which the writer once saw knocked down at Stevens' was the under-vest of silk worn by the ill-fated Charles I. at his execution, which found a purchaser for 200 guineas.

**SARAH BERNHARDT'S DOLLS**

THE actresses of the French capital and other grown-ups who are not dolls which are peculiarly interesting. Mme. Marthe Regnier has a whole roomful, Mlle. Marcelle Yrven has galleries of dolls and M. Leo Claretie, the son of M. Jules Claretie, of the Francais, has a house full.

The other day there was talk at Mme. Sarah Bernhardt's house of these collections, and somebody wondered why Mme. Sarah had never thought of starting one. She laughed, and let the way into a room, where three hundred beautiful dolls in costumes of all kinds received her visitors. At the end of the room was a curtain. Mme. Sarah Bernhardt drew it aside and showed a collection of exquisite little figures carved by herself, painted by her friend Louise Babona, and representing the actress in all the parts she has ever played, from Iphigenie, in which she made her debut at the Francais in 1862, to Joan of Arc, in which she is now appearing. This collection is probably the most valuable little collection of dolls in the world.