

UNCLAIMED LETTERS, REMAINING IN C. P. to NOV. 14th, 1910.

Table with columns A through S listing names and addresses of individuals with unclaimed letters. Includes names like Ansty & Co., Andrew, Miss Eliza, Alcock, Miss Stella, etc.

SEAMEN'S LIST.

Table listing names and details of seamen, organized by letters A through S. Includes names like Hollet, Capt. T., Crouse, Ambrose, Moulton, John Thos., etc.

G. P. O., November 14th, 1910. H. J. B. WOODS, P.M.G.

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The Chest Drawers.

I AM about to relate a rather curious piece of domestic history, some of the incidents of which revealed at the time of their occurrence in contemporary law reports, may be in the remembrance of many readers. It took place in one of the midland counties, and at a place which I shall call Watley; the names of the chief actors who figured in it must also, to spare their modesty or their blushes, as the case may be, be changed; and should one of those persons, spite of these precautions, apprehend unpleasant recognition, he will be able to console himself with the reflection, that all I state beyond that which may be gathered from the records of the law courts will be generally ascribed to the fancy or invention of the writer. And it is as well, perhaps, that it should be so.

Caleb Jennings, a shoemaker, cobler and snob—using the last word in its genuine classical sense, and by no means according to the modern interpretation by which it is held to signify a genteel sneer or pretended—he was anything but that—occupied, some twelve or thirteen years ago, a stall at Watley, which, according to the traditions of the place, had been hereditary in his family for several generations. He may also be said to have flourished there, after the manner of cobblers; for this, it must be remembered, was in the good old times, before the outa-percha revolution had carried ruin and dismay into the stalls—those of cobblers—which in considerable numbers existed throughout the kingdom. Like all his fraternity whom I have ever fallen in with or heard of, Caleb was a sturdy radical of the Major Cartwright and Henry Hunt school; and being withal industrious, tolerably skillful, not inordinately prone to the observance of Saint Mondays, possessed, moreover, of a neatly-furnished sleeping and eating apartment in the house of which the projecting first floor, supported on stone pillars, overshadowed his humble work-place, he vaunted himself to be as really rich as an estate squire, and far more independent.

There was some truth in this boast as the case which procured us the honor of Mr. Jennings's acquaintance sufficiently proved. We were employed to bring an action against a wealthy gentleman of the vicinity of Watley for a brutal and unprovoked assault he had committed, when in a state of partial inebriety, upon a respectable London tradesman who had visited the place on business. On the day of trial our witness appeared to have become affected with an almost total loss of memory; it was only saved from an adverse verdict by the plain, straightforward evidence of Caleb, upon whose sturdy nature the various arts which softened or neutralized hostile evidence had been tried in vain. Mr. Flint, who personally superintended the case, took quite a liking to the man; and it thus happened that we were called upon sometime afterward to aid the aid-Caleb in extricating himself from the extraordinary and perplexing difficulty in which he suddenly and unwittingly found himself involved.

nd shortened the life of the prematurely-aged man. The substance of this every-day, common-place story, as related to us by Jennings, and subsequently enlarged and colored from other sources, may be very briefly told. Ambrose Lisle, in consequence of an accident which occurred in his infancy, was slightly deformed. His right shoulder—as I understood, for I never saw him—grew out, giving an ungainly and somewhat comical twist to his figure, which, in female eyes—youthful ones at least—saddly marred the effect of his intelligent and handsome countenance. This personal defect rendered him shy and awkward in the presence of women of his own class of society; and he had attained the ripe age of thirty-seven years, and was a rich and prosperous man, before he gave the slightest token of an inclination towards matrimony. About a twelvemonth previous to that period of his life, the death—quickly following each other—of a Mr. and Mrs. Stevens, threw their eldest daughter, Lucy, upon Mr. Lisle's hands. Mr. Lisle had been left an orphan at a very early age, and Mrs.

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The projecting first floor of the house beneath which the humble work-shop of Caleb Jennings modestly disclosed itself, had been occupied for many years by an ailing and somewhat aged man of the name of Lisle. This Mr. Ambrose Lisle was a native of Watley, and had been a prosperous merchant of the city of London. Since his return, after about twenty years' absence, he had shut himself up in almost total seclusion, nourishing a cynical bitterness and acrimony of temper which gradually withered up the sources of health and life, till at length it became as visible to himself as it had for sometime been to others, that the oil of existence was expended, burnt up, and that but a few weak flickers more, and the ailing man's plaints and griefs would be hushed in the dark silence of the grave.

Mr. Lisle had no relatives at Watley, and the only individual with whom he was on terms of personal intimacy, was Mr. Peter Sowerby, an attorney of the place, who had for many years transacted all his business. This man visited Mr. Lisle most evenings, dined at chess with him, and gradually acquired an influence over his

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Stevens—his aunt, and then a madly-ely lady—had, in accordance with his father's will, taken charge of himself and brother till they severally attained their majority. Long, however, before that, she married Mr. Stevens, by whom she had two children—Lucy and Emily. Her husband, whom she survived but two months, died insolvent; and in obedience to the dying wishes of his aunt, for whom he appears to have felt the tenderest esteem, he took the eldest of her orphan children to his home, intending to regard and provide for her as his own adopted child and heiress. Emily, the other sister, found refuge in the house of a still more distant relative than herself.

The Stevens had gone to live in a remote part of England—Yorkshire, I believe—and it thus fell out, that, till his cousin Lucy arrived at her new home, he had not seen her for more than ten years. The pale, and somewhat plain child, as he had esteemed her, he was startled to find had become a charming woman; and her modestly disclosed talents, and her quick talents, and fresh young beauty, rapidly acquired an overwhelming influence over him. Strenuously, but vainly, he struggled against the growing infatuation—argued, reasoned with himself—passed in review the insurmountable objections to such a union, the difference of age—he, leading towards thirty-seven, she, barely twenty-one; he, crooked, deformed, of reserved, taciturn temper—she, full of young life, and grace, and beauty. It was useless; and nearly a year had passed in the bootless struggle, when Lucy Stevens, who had vainly striven to blind herself to the nature of the emotions by which her cousin and guardian was animated towards her, intimated a wish to accept her sister Emily's invitation to pass two or three months with her. This brought the affair to a crisis. Buoying himself up with the illusions which people in such an unreasonable frame of mind create for themselves, he suddenly entered the sitting room set apart for her private use, with the desperate purpose of making his beautiful cousin a formal offer of his hand. She was not in the apartment, but her opened writing-desk, and a partly finished letter lying on it, showed that she had been recently there, and would probably soon return. Mr. Lisle took two or three agitated turns about the room, one of which brought him close to the whiting desk, and his glance involuntarily fell upon the unfinished letter. Had a deadly serpent leaped suddenly at his throat, the shock could not have been greater. At the head of the sheet of paper was a clever pen and ink sketch of Lucy Stevens and himself—he, kneeling to her in a lover's, ludicrous attitude, and she, laughing immoderately at his lecherousness and pitiful aspect and speech. The letter was addressed to her sister Emily; and the engaged lover saw not only that his supposed secret was fully known, but that he himself was mocked, laughed at, for his dotting folly. At last this was his interpretation of the words which swam before his eyes. At the instant Lucy returned, and a torrent of imprecation burst from the furious man, in which wounded self-love, rageful pride, and long pent-up passion, found utterance in wild and bitter words. Half an hour afterwards Lucy Stevens had left the merchant's house—for ever, as it proved. She, indeed, on arriving at her sister's, sent a letter, supplicating forgiveness for the thoughtless, and, as he deemed it, insulting sketch, intended only for Emily's eyes; but he replied merely by a note written by one of his clerks, informing Miss Stevens that Mr. Lisle declined any further correspondence with her.

The ire of the angered and vindictive man, had, however, begun sensibly to abate, and old thoughts, memories, duties, suggested partly by the blank which Lucy's absence made in his house, partly by remembrance of the solemn promise he had made her mother, were strongly reviving in a provincial journal, directed to him, as

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he believed, in the bride's hand-writing; but this was an error, her sister having sent the newspaper. Mr. Lisle also constructed this into a deliberate mockery and insult, and from that hour strove to banish all images and thoughts connected with his cousin, from his heart and memory. He unfortunately adopted the very worst course possible for effecting this object. Had he remained amid the lull and tumult of active life, a mere sentimental disappointment, such as thousands of us have sustained and afterwards forgotten, would there can be little doubt, have soon ceased to afflict him. He chose to retire from business, visited Watley, and habits of mind, growing rapidly upon his cankered mind, never afterwards removed from the lodgings he had hired on first arriving there. Thus madly hugging to himself sharp-pointed memories, which a sensible man would have speedily cast off and forgotten, the sour misanthrope passed a useless, cheerless, weary existence, to which death must have been a welcome relief.

To be continued.

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