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The Ingoldsby Legends of Thomas Ingoldsby
(Richard Harris Barham), Volume 2
Annotated and edited by Carol Hart
© 2013 SpringStreet Books, LLC
ISBN: 978-0-9795204-8-8
USD: \$16.90

In the succeeding Legend we come nearer home.—Father Ingoldsby is particular in describing its locality, situate some eight miles from the Hall,—less if you take the bridle-road by the churchyard, and go along the valley by Mr. Fector’s abbey.—In the enumeration of the various attempts to appropriate the treasure (drawn from a later source) is omitted one, said to have been undertaken by the worthy ecclesiastic himself, who, as Mrs. Botherby insinuates, is reported to have started for Dover, one fine morning, duly furnished with all the means and appliances of exorcism.—I cannot learn, however, that the family was ever enriched by his expedition.

* * * * *

A LEGEND OF DOVER

The Lay of the Old Woman Clothed in Grey

ONCE THERE LIVED, as I’ve heard people say,¹
An “Old Woman clothed in grey,”
 So furrowed with care,
 So haggard her air,
In her eye such a wild supernatural stare,
 That all who espied her
 Immediately shied her,
And strove to get out of her way.

This fearsome Old Woman was taken ill:
She sent for the Doctor—he sent her a pill,
 And, by way of a trial,
 A two-shilling phial
Of green-looking fluid, like lava diluted,
To which I’ve professed an abhorrence most rooted—²
One of those draughts they so commonly send us,
Labelled “*Haustus catharticus, mane sumendus.*”
 She made a wry face,
 And, without saying Grace,
Tossed it off like a dram—it improved not her case.
 The Leech came again;

phial: vial, a small glass medicine bottle; **haustus catharticus, mane sumendus:** purgative drink, to be taken in the morning [Latin]; **dram:** small brandy or cordial; **leech:** doctor

He now opened a vein,
Still the little Old Woman continued in pain.
So her "Medical Man," although loth to distress her,
Conceived it high time that her Father Confessor
Should be sent for to shrive, and assoilzie, and bless her,
That she might not slip out of these troublesome scenes
"Unanealed and Unhouseled,"—whatever that means.³

Growing afraid,
He calls to his aid
A bandy-legged neighbour, a "*Tailor by trade*";⁴
Tells him his fears,
Bids him lay by his shears,
His thimble, his goose, and his needle, and hie
With all possible speed to the Convent hard by;
Requests him to say
That he begs they'll all pray,
Viz.: the whole pious brotherhood, Cleric and Lay,
For the soul of an Old Woman clothed in grey,
Who was just at that time in a very bad way,
And he really believed couldn't last out the day!—
And to state his desire
That some erudite Friar
Would run over at once, and examine, and try her;
For he thought he would find
There was "something behind,"
A something that weighed on the Old Woman's mind;—
"In fact he was sure, from what fell from her tongue,
That this little Old Woman had done something wrong."
Then he wound up the whole with this hint to the man,
"Mind and pick out as holy a Friar as you can!"

Now I'd have you to know
That this story of woe,
Which I'm telling you, happened a long time ago;

open a vein: let blood as a medical remedy; **shrive (v):** hear confession of, impose penance on; **assoilzie (v):** assoil, absolve from sin; **bandy-legged:** bow-kneed, with legs that turn out at the knees; **goose:** a clothes iron; **viz.:** namely

I can't say exactly *how* long, nor, I own,
 What particular monarch was then on the throne,
 But 'twas here in Old England: and all that one knows is,
 It must have preceded the Wars of the Roses;⁵
 Inasmuch as the times
 Described in these rhymes
 Were as fruitful in virtues as ours are in crimes;
 And, if 'mongst the Laity
 Unseemly gaiety
 Sometimes betrayed an occasional taint or two,
 At once all the Clerics
 Went into hysterics,
 While scarcely a convent but boasted its Saint or two:
 So it must have been long ere the line of the Tudors,
 As since then the breed
 Of Saints rarely indeed
 With their dignified presence have darkened our pew doors.
 —Hence the late Mr. Froude and the live Dr. Pusey
 We moderns consider as each worth a Jew's eye;⁶
 Though Wiseman and Dullman combine against Newman⁷
 With Doctors and Proctors, and say he's no true man.
 —But this by the way.—The Convent I speak about
 Had Saints in scores:—they said Mass week and week about;
 And the two now on duty were each, for their piety,
 “Second to none” in that holy society,
 And well might have borne
 Those words which are worn
 By our “*Nulli Secundus*” Club—poor dear lost muttons
 Of Guardsmen—on Club days, inscribed on their buttons.⁸
 They would read, write and speak
 Latin, Hebrew and Greek,
 A radish-bunch munch for a lunch,—or a leek;
 Though scoffers and boobies
 Ascribed certain rubies
 That garnished the nose of the good Father Hilary
 To the overmuch use of Canary and Sillery,

week and week about: on alternate weeks; **canary:** a sweet white wine
sillery: a fine champagne

—Some said spirituous compounds of viler distillery.

Ah! little recked they

That with Friars, who say

Fifty *Paters* a night and a hundred a day,

A very slight sustenance goes a great way.

Thus the consequence was that his colleague Basilius

Won golden opinions, by looking more bilious,

From all who conceived strict monastical duty

By no means conducive to personal beauty:

And, being more meagre, and thinner, and paler,

He was snapt up at once by the bandy-legged Tailor.

The latter's concern

For a speedy return

Scarce left the Monk time to put on stouter sandals,

Or go round to his shrines and snuff all his Saint's candles;

Still less had he leisure to change the hair-shirt he

Had worn the last twenty years—probably thirty,—

Which, not being washed all that time, had grown dirty.

—It seems there's a sin in

The wearing clean linen,

Which Friars must eschew at the very beginning,

Though it makes them look frowsy, and drowsy, and blowsy,

And—a rhyme modern etiquette never allows ye.⁹

As for the rest,

E'en if time had not prest,

It didn't much matter how Basil was drest,

Nor could there be any great need for adorning,

The Night being almost at odds with the Morning.

Oh! sweet and beautiful is Night, when the silver Moon is high,

And countless Stars, like clustering gems, hang sparkling in the sky,

While the balmy breath of the summer breeze comes whispering down the glen,

And one fond voice alone is heard—oh! Night is lovely then!

But when that voice, in feeble moans of sickness and of pain,

But mocks the anxious ear that strives to catch its sounds in vain,—

reck (v): take notice of; **pater**: the "Our Father" prayer; **bilious**: jaundiced, a yellow hue

When silently we watch the bed, by the taper's flickering light,
Where all we love is fading fast—how terrible is Night!!

More terrible yet,
If you happen to get
By an old woman's bedside, who, all her life long,
Has been, what the vulgar call, "coming it strong"
In all sorts of ways that are naughty and wrong.

As Confessions are sacred, it's not very facile
To ascertain what the old hag said to Basil;
But whatever she said,
It filled him with dread,
And made all his hair stand on end on his head,—
No great feat to perform, inasmuch as said hair
Being clipped by the tonsure, his crown was left bare,
So of course Father Basil had little to spare;
But the little he had
Seemed as though 't had gone mad,
Each lock, as by action galvanic, uprears
In the two little tufts on the tops of his ears.
What the old woman said
That so "filled him with dread,"
We should never have known any more than the dead
If the bandy-legged Tailor, his errand thus sped,
Had gone quietly back to his needle and thread,
As he ought; but instead,
Curiosity led,—
A feeling we all deem extremely ill-bred,—
He contrived to secrete himself under the bed!
Not that he heard
One half, or a third,
Of what passed as the Monk and the Patient conferred,
But he here and there managed to pick up a word,
Such as "Knife,"
And "Life,"
And he thought she said "Wife,"

come it strong: go to great lengths, overdo it; **sped:** accomplished, successfully completed



And “Money,” that source of all evil and strife;¹⁰
Then he plainly distinguished the words “Gore” and “Gash”;
Whence he deemed—and I don’t think his inference rash—
She had cut some one’s throat for the sake of his cash!

Intermixed with her moans,
And her sighs and her groans,
Enough to have melted the hearts of the stones,
Came at intervals Basil’s sweet, soft, silver tones;

For somehow it happened—I can't tell you why—
 The good Friar's indignation,—at first rather high,
 To judge from the language he used in reply,—
 Ere the Old Woman ceased had a good deal gone by;
 And he gently address her in accents of honey,
 "Daughter, don't you despair!—WHAT'S BECOME OF THE MONEY?"

In one just at Death's door it was really absurd
 To see how her eye lighted up at that word—
 Indeed there's not one in the language that I know
 (Save its synonyms "Spanish," "Blunt," "Stumpy," and "Rhino"),¹¹
 Which acts so direct,
 And with so much effect
 On the human *sensorium*, or makes one erect
 One's ears so, as soon as the sound we detect:—
 It's a question with me
 Which of the three—
 Father Basil himself, though a grave S.T.P.
 (Such as he have, you see, the degree of D.D.),
 Or the eavesdropping, bandy-legged Tailor,—or She—
 Caught it quickest:—however, traditions agree
 That the Old Woman perked up as brisk as a bee.

'Twas the last quivering flare of the taper,—the fire
 It so often emits when about to expire!
 Her excitement began the same instant to flag,
 She sank back, and whispered, "Safe!—Safe! in the Bag!"

Now I would not by any means have you suppose
 That the good Father Basil was just one of those
 Who entertain views
 We're so apt to abuse,
 As neither befitting Turks, Christians nor Jews,
 Who haunt death-bed scenes,
 By underhand means
 To toady or tease people out of a legacy.

sensorium: the center of sensory processing in the brain; **S.T.P.:** *Sacrae Theologiae* Professor, professor of sacred theology; **D.D.:** *Divinitatis Doctor*, doctor of divinity

For few folk, indeed, had such good right to beg as he,
Since Rome, in her pure Apostolical beauty,
Not only permits, but enjoins, as a duty,

Her sons to take care
That, let who will be heir,

The Pontiff shall not be choused out of his share,
Nor stand any such mangling of chattels and goods,
As, they say, was the case with the late Jemmy Wood's;¹²
Her Conclaves, and Councils, and Synods in short main-
tain principles adverse to statutes of *Mortmain*.¹³

Besides, you'll discern
It at once, when you learn

That Basil had something to give in return,
Since it rested with him to say how she should burn;
Nay, as to her ill-gotten wealth, should she turn it all
To uses he named, he could say, "You shan't burn at all,

Or nothing to signify,
Not what you'd dignify

So much as even to call it a roast,
But a mere little singeing, or scorching at most,—
What many would think not unpleasantly warm,—
Just to keep up appearance—mere matter of form."

All this in her ear
He declared, but I fear

That her senses were wand'ring—she seemed not to hear,
Or at least understand;—for mere unmeaning talk her
Parched lips babbled now,—such as "Hookey!"—and "Walker!"
—She expired, with her last breath expressing a doubt
If "his Mother were fully aware he was out?"

Now it seems there's a place they call Purgat'ry—so
I must write it, my verse not admitting the O—
But as for the *venue*, I vow I'm perplex
To say if it's in this world, or if in the next—
Or whether in both;—for 'tis very well known
That St. Patrick, at least, has got one of his own,
In a "tight little Island" that stands in a Lake¹⁴

chouse (v): dupe, swindle, defraud; **hookey walker:** nonsense, rubbish; go away [slang]

Called “Lough-dearg”—that’s “The Red Lake,” unless I mistake—¹⁵
 In Fermanagh—or Antrim—or Donegal—which

I declare I can’t tell,

But I know very well

It’s in latitude 54, nearly their pitch;

(At Tappington, now, I could look in the Gazetteer,

But I’m out on a visit, and nobody has it here.)

There are some, I’m aware,

Who don’t stick to declare

There’s “no differ” at all ’twixt “this here” and “that there,”

That it’s all the same place, but the Saint reserves his entry

For the separate use of the “finest of pisentry,”¹⁶

And that his is no more

Than a mere private door

From the *rez-de-chaussée*,—as some call the ground floor,—

To the one which the Pope had found out long before.

But no matter—lay

The *locale* where you may,

—And where it is no one exactly can say—

There’s one thing, at least, which is known very well,

That it acts as a Tap-room to Satan’s Hotel.

“Entertainment” there’s worse

Both for “Man and for Horse”;¹⁷

For broiling the souls

They use Lord Mayor’s coals;—¹⁸

Then the sulphur’s inferior, and boils up much slower

Than the fine fruity brimstone they give you down lower,

It’s by no means so strong—

Mere sloe-leaves to Souchong;¹⁹

The “prokers” are not half so hot, or so long,

By an inch or two, either in handle or prong;

The Vipers and Snakes are less sharp in the tooth,

And the Nondescript Monsters not near so uncouth;—

In short, it’s a place the good Pope, its creator,²⁰

Made for what’s called by Cockneys a “Minor The-âtre.”

Better suited, of course, for a “minor performer,”

proker: a poker

Than the "House," that's so much better lighted and warmer,
Below, in that queer place which nobody mentions,—
—You understand where
I don't question—down there
Where, in lieu of wood blocks, and such modern inventions,
The Paving Commissioners use "Good Intentions,"²¹
Materials which here would be thought on by few men,
With so many founts of Asphaltic bitumen
At hand, at the same time to pave and illumine.

To go on with my story,—
This same Purga-tory,
(There! I've got in the O, to my Muse's great glory)
Is close locked, and the Pope keeps the keys of it—that I can
Boldly affirm—in his desk in the Vatican;
—Not those of St. Peter—
These, of which I now treat, are
A bunch by themselves, and much smaller and neater,
And so cleverly made, Mr. Chubb could not frame a
Key better contrived for its purpose—nor Bramah.²²
Now it seems that by these
Most miraculous keys
Not only the Pope, but his "clergy," with ease
Can let people in and out, just as they please;
And—provided you "make it all right" about fees,—
There is not a friar, Dr. Wiseman will own, of them²³
But can always contrive to obtain a short loan of them.
And Basil, no doubt,
Had brought matters about,
If the little Old Woman would but have "spoke out,"
So far as to get for her one of those tickets,
Or passes, which clear both the great gates and wickets;
So that after a grill,
Or short turn on the Mill,²⁴
And with no worse a singeing, to purge her iniquity,
Than a Freemason gets in the "Lodge of Antiquity,"²⁵
She'd have rubbed off old scores,

rub off old scores: clear or cancel a record of debt or ill-doing, get "a clean slate"

Popped out of doors,
 And sheered off at once for a happier port,
 Like a white-washed Insolvent that's "gone through the Court."

But Basil was one
 Who was not to be *done*
 By any one, either in earnest or fun.
 The cunning old beads-telling son of a gun,
 In all bargains, unless he'd his *quid* for his *quo*,
 Would shake his bald pate and pronounce it "No Go."
 So, unless you're a dunce,
 You'll see clearly, at once,
 When you come to consider the facts of the case, he
 Of course never gave her his *Vade in pace*;
 And the consequence was, when the last mortal throe
 Released her pale Ghost from these regions of woe,
 The little Old Woman had nowhere to go!

For, what could she do?
 She very well knew
 If she went to the gates I have mentioned to you,
 Without Basil's, or some other passport to show,
 The Cheque-takers never would let her go through;
 While, as to *the other place*, e'en had she tried it,
 And really had wished it, as much as she shied it
 (For no one who knows what it is can abide it),
 Had she knocked at the portal with ne'er so much din,
 Though she died in what folks at Rome call "Mortal sin,"
 Yet Old Nick, for the life of him, daren't take her in,
 As she'd not been turned formally out of "the pale."²⁶
 So much the bare name of the Pope made him quail,
 In the times that I speak of, his courage would fail
 Of Rome's vassals the lowest and worst to assail,
 Or e'en touch with so much as the end of his tail;
 Though, now he's grown older,

done: cheated, swindled [slang]; **beads-telling (nonce adj):** saying prayers counted on the beads of a rosary; **quid pro quo:** an equal exchange of goods or services (literally, this for that); **vade in pace:** go in peace; **check-taker:** ticket taker at a theater or on a train

They say he's much bolder,
And his Holiness not only gets the "cold shoulder,"
But Nick rumps him completely, and don't seem to care a
Dump—that's the word—for his triple tiara.

Well—what shall she do?—
What's the course to pursue?—
"Try St. Peter?—the step is a bold one to take;
For the Saint is, there can't be a doubt, 'wide awake';
But then there's a quaint
Old Proverb says 'Faint
Heart ne'er won fair Lady,' then how win a Saint?—
I've a great mind to try—
One can but apply:
If things come to the worst, why he can but deny.—
The sky
's rather high
To be sure; but, now I
That cumbersome carcass of clay have laid by,
I am just in the 'order' which some folks—though why
I am sure I can't tell you—would call 'Apple-pie.'
Then 'never say die';
It won't do to be shy,
So I'll tuck up my shroud, and—here goes for a fly!"—
So said and so done:—she was off like a shot,
And kept on the whole way at a pretty smart trot.

When she drew so near
That the Saint could see her,
In a moment he frowned, and began to look queer,
And scarce would allow her to make her case clear,
Ere he pursed up his mouth 'twixt a sneer and a jeer,
With "It's all very well,—but you do not lodge here!"—
Then, calling her everything but "My dear!"
He applied his great toe with some force *au derrière*,
And dismissed her at once with a flea in her ear.

rump (v): turn one's back on; **dump**: a small coin [slang]; **apple-pie order**: perfect neatness; **fly** (n): a brief or hasty ("flying") visit; **au derrière**: to the buttocks [French]

“Alas! poor Ghost!”²⁷

It’s a doubt which is most
 To be pitied—one doomed to fry, broil, boil, and roast,—
 Or one bandied about thus from pillar to post,—
 To be “all abroad”—to be “stumped”—not to know where
 To go—so disgraced
 As not to be “placed,”
 Or, as Crocky would say to Jem Bland, “to be Nowhere.”—²⁸
 However that be,
 The *affaire* was *finie*,¹²
 And the poor wretch rejected by all, as you see!

Mr. Oliver Goldsmith observes—not the Jew—
 That the “Hare whom the hounds and the huntsmen pursue,”
 Having no other sort of asylum in view,
 “Returns back again to the place whence she flew,”—²⁹
 A fact which experience has proved to be true.—
 Mr. Gray,—in opinion with whom Johnson clashes,—
 Declares that our “wonted fires live in our ashes.”³⁰
 These motives combined, perhaps, brought back the hag,
 The first to her mansion, the last to her bag,
 When only conceive her dismay and surprise,
 As a Ghost how she opened her cold stony eyes,
 When there,—on the spot where she’d hid her “supplies,”
 In an underground cellar of very small size,—
 Working hard with a spade,
 All at once she surveyed
 That confounded old bandy-legged “Tailor by trade.”

Fancy the tone
 Of the half moan, half groan,
 Which burst from the breast of the Ghost of the crone!
 As she stood there,—a figure ’twixt moonshine and stone,—
 Only fancy the glare in her eyeballs that shone,
 Although, as Macbeth says, “they’d no speculation,”³¹
 While she uttered that word
 Which American Bird

all abroad: perplexed, at a loss; **l'affaire est finie:** the matter is finished [French];

Or James Fenimore Cooper would render "Tarnation!"³²
At the noise which she made
Down went the spade!—
And up jumped the bandy-legged "Tailor by trade"—
Who had shrewdly conjectured, from something that fell, her
Deposit was somewhere concealed in the cellar.
Turning round at a sound
So extremely profound,
The moment her shadowy form met his view
He gave vent to a sort of a lengthened "Bo-o—ho-o!"—
With a countenance Keeley alone could put on,³³
Made one grasshopper spring to the door—and was gone!
*Erupit! Evasit!*³⁴
As at Rome they would phrase it—
His flight was so swift the eye scarcely could trace it.
Though elderly, bandy-legged, meagre, and sickly,
I doubt if the Ghost could have vanished more quickly;—
He reached his own shop, and then fell into fits,
And it's said never rightly recovered his wits,
While the chuckling old Hag takes his place and there sits!

I'll venture to say,
She'd sat there to this day,
Brooding over what Cobbett calls "vile yellow clay,"³⁵
Like a Vulture, or other obscene bird of prey,
O'er the nest-full of eggs she has managed to lay,
If, as legends relate, and I think we may trust 'em, her
Stars had not brought her another guess customer.—
'Twas Basil himself!—
Come to look for her pelf;
But not, like the Tailor, to dig, delve and grovel,
And grub in the cellar with pickaxe and shovel;
Full well he knew
Such tools would not do,—
Far other the weapons he brought into play,
Viz. a Wax-taper "hallowed on Candlemas-day,"
To light to her ducats,—

obscene: ill-omened; **another-guess:** of another sort; **pelf:** material possessions

Holy Water, two buckets
 Made with salt—half a peck to four gallons—which brews a
 (Strong triple X “strike,”—see Jacobus de Chiusa).³⁶

With these, too, he took
 His bell and his book—
 Not a nerve ever trembled,—his hand never shook
 As he boldly marched up where she sat in her nook,
 Glow’ring round with that wild indescribable look,
 Which *Some* may have read of, perchance, in “Nell Cook,”
All, in “Martha the Gipsy,” by Theodore Hook.³⁷

And now, for the reason I gave you before,
 Of what passed then and there I can tell you no more,
 As no Tailor was near with his ear at the door;

But I’ve always been told,
 With respect to the gold,
 For which she her “jewel eternal” had sold,
 That the old Harridan,
 Who, no doubt, knew her man,
 Made some compromise—hit upon some sort of plan,
 By which Friar and Ghost were both equally pinned—
 Heaven only knows how the “Agreement” got wind;—

But its purport was this,
 That the things done amiss
 By the Hag should not hinder her ultimate bliss:

Provided—*Imprimis*,
 The cash from this time is
 The Church’s—impounded for good pious uses:—
 Father B. shall dispose of it just as he chooses,
 And act as trustee;—
 In the meantime, that She,
 The said Ghostess,—or Ghost,—as the matter may be,—
 From ‘impediment,’ ‘hindrance,’ and ‘let’ shall be free
 To sleep in her grave, or to wander, as he,
 The said Friar, with said Ghost may hereafter agree.

strike: a measure of malt in ale or beer; the strength of the beer; **jewel eternal:** immortal soul; **harridan:** a haggard old woman, a vixen; **imprimis:** in the first place

Moreover—The whole
Of the said cash, or ‘cole,’
Shall be spent for the good of said Old Woman’s soul!

“It is further agreed—while said cash is so spending,
Said Ghost shall be fully absolved from attending,
And shall quiet remain
In the grave, her domain,
To have, and enjoy, and uphold, and maintain,
Without molestation, or trouble, or pain,
Hindrance, let, or impediment (over again)
From Old Nick, or from any one else of his train,
Whether Pow’r,—Domination,—or Princedom,—or Throne,³⁸
Or by what name soever the same may be known,
Howsoe’er called by Poets, or styled by Divines,
Himself,—his executors, heirs, and assigns.

“Provided that,—nevertheless,—notwithstanding
All herein contained,—if whoever’s a hand in
Dispensing said cash,—or said ‘cole,’—shall dare venture
To misapply money, note, bill or debenture
To uses not named in this present Indenture,
Then that such sum, or sums, shall revert, and come home again
Back to said Ghost,—who thenceforward shall roam again,
Until such time, or times, as the said Ghost produces
Some good man and true, who no longer refuses
To put sum, or sums, aforesaid, to said uses;
Which duly performed, the said Ghost shall have rest,
The full term of her natural death, of the best,
In full consideration of this, her bequest,
In manner and form aforesaid,—as exprest.—
In witness whereof, we, the parties aforesaid,
Hereunto set our hands and our seals—and no more said,
Being all that these presents intend to express,
Whereas—notwithstanding—and nevertheless.

cole: money (usually in “post the cole”: pay the money); **debenture:** a voucher or certificate of money owed to the designee named; **indenture:** contract between two or more parties; **these presents:** the present document [legal jargon]

“Signed, sealed, and delivered, this 20th of May,
Anno Domini, blank (though I’ve mentioned the day),
 (Signed)

BASIL.

OLD WOMAN (late) CLOTHED IN GREY.”

Basil now, I am told,
 Walking off with the gold,
 Went and straight got the document duly enrolled,
 And left the testatrix to mildew and mould
 In her sepulchre, cosy, cool,—not to say cold.
 But somehow—though how I can hardly divine,—
 A runlet of fine
 Rich Malvoisie wine
 Found its way to the Convent that night before nine,
 With custards, and “flawns,” and a “fayre florentine,”
 Peach, apricot, nectarine, melon, and pine;
 And some half a score Nuns of the rule Bridgetine,
 Abbess and all, were invited to dine
 At a very late hour,—that is after Compline.
 Father Hilary’s rubies began soon to shine
 With fresh lustre, as though newly dug from the mine;
 Through all the next year,
 Indeed, ’twould appear
 That the Convent was much better off, as to cheer.
 Even Basil himself, as I very much fear,
 No longer addicted himself to small-beer;
 His complexion grew clear,
 While in front and in rear
 He enlarged so, his shape seemed approaching a sphere.

No wonder at all, then, one cold winter’s night,
 That a servant-girl going down stairs with a light
 To the cellar we’ve spoken of, saw with affright
 An Old Woman, astride on a barrel, invite

enroll (v): enter upon the records (rolls) of a court; **runlet** (**rundlet**): a cask or vessel of varying capacity [archaic]; **malvoisie** (**malsey**): a strong, sweet white wine; **flawn**: a type of custard or cheesecake; **Florentine**: a meat pastry pie; **pine**: pineapple; **compline**: the last prayer service of the day; **small-beer**: weak or inferior beer

Her to take, in a manner extremely polite,
With her left hand, a bag she had got in her right;—
For tradition asserts that the Old Woman's purse
Had come back to her *scarcely one penny the worse!*

The girl, as they say,
Ran screaming away,
Quite scared by the Old Woman clothed in grey.
But there came down a Knight, at no distant day,
Sprightly and gay
As the bird on the spray,
One Sir Rufus Mountfardington, Lord of Foot's-cray,³⁹
Whose estate, not unlike those of most of our "Swell" beaux,
Was, what's, by a metaphor, termed "out at elbows";
And, the fact was, said Knight was now merely delayed
From crossing the water to join the Crusade
For converting the Pagans with bill, bow and blade,
By the want of a little pecuniary aid
To buy arms and horses, the tools of his trade,
And enable his troop to appear on parade.

The unquiet Shade
Thought Sir Rufus, 'tis said,
Just the man for her money,—she readily paid
For the articles named, and with pleasure conveyed
To his hands every farthing she ever had made.
But alas! I'm afraid
Most unwisely she laid
Out her cash—the *beaux yeux* of a Saracen maid
(Truth compels me to say a most pestilent jade)
Converted the gallant converter—betrayed
Him to do everything which a Knight could degrade,
—E'en to worship Mahound! She required—he obeyed.—⁴⁰
The consequence was, all the money was wasted
On Infidel pleasures he should not have tasted;
So that, after a very short respite, the Hag
Was seen down in her cellar again with her bag.

spray: twig; **swell:** stylish; **bill:** halberd, a long-handled axe-headed weapon
beaux yeux: beautiful eyes [French]; **jade:** vicious, ill-tempered horse (or woman)

Don't fancy, dear Reader, I mean to go on
Seriatim through so many ages bygone,
 And to bore you with names
 Of the Squires and the Dames,
 Who have managed, at times, to get hold of the sack,
 But spent the cash so that it always came back;
 The list is too long
 To be given in my song,—
 There are reasons beside would perhaps make it wrong.
 I shall merely observe, in those orthodox days,
 When Mary set Smithfield all o'er in a blaze,⁴¹
 And showed herself very se-
 vere against heresy,
 While many a wretch scorned to flinch, or to scream, as he
 Burnt for denying the Papal supremacy,
 Bishop Bonner the bag got,
 And all thought the Hag got
 Released, as he spent all in fuel and faggot.
 But somehow—though how
 I can't tell you, I vow—
 I suppose by mismanagement—ere the next reign
 The Spectre had got all her money again.

 The last time, I'm told,
 That the Old Woman's gold
 Was obtained,—as before, for the asking—'twas had
 By a Mr. O—Something—from Ballinafad;
 And the whole of it, so 'tis reported, was sent
 To John Wright's, in account for the Catholic Rent,⁴²
 And thus—like a great deal more money—"it went!"
 So 'tis said at Maynooth,
 But I can't think it's truth;
 Though I know it was boldly asserted last season,
 Still I can *not* believe it; and that for this reason,
 It's certain *the cash has got back to its owner!*—
 Now no part of the Rent to do *so* e'er was known,—or,
 In any shape, ever come home to the donor.

seriatim: one after another

GENTLE READER!—you must know the proverb, I think—
 “To a blind horse a Nod is a good as a Wink!”

Which some learned Chap,
 In a square College cap,
 Perhaps, would translate by the words “*Verbum Sap!*”
 —Now, should it so chance
 That you’re going to France
 In the course of next Spring, as you probably may,
 Do pull up, and stay,
 Pray,
 If but for a day,

At Dover, through which you must pass on your way,
 At the York,—or the Ship,—where, as all people say,
 You’ll get good wine yourself, and your horses good hay;
 Perhaps, my good friend, you may find it will *pay*,
 And you cannot lose much by so short a delay.

First DINE!—you can do
 That on joint or *ragoût*—
 Then say to the waiter,—“I’m just passing through,—
 Pray,—where can I find out the old *Maison Dieu?*”—
 He’ll show you the street—(the French call it a *Rue*,
 But you won’t have to give here a *petit écu*).⁴³

Well,—when you’ve got there,—never mind how you’re taunted,—
 Ask boldly, “Pray, which is the house here that’s haunted?”
 —I’d tell you myself, but I can’t recollect
 The proprietor’s name; but he’s one of that sect
 Who call themselves “Friends” and whom others call “Quakers,”
 You’ll be sure to find out if you ask at the Baker’s.—
 Then go down, with a light,
 To the cellar at night!
 And as soon as you see her don’t be in a fright!
 But ask the old Hag,
 At once, for the bag!—
 If you find that she’s shy, or your senses would dazzle,

verbum sap: enough said, from the Latin *verbum sapienti satis est* (a word to the wise is sufficient); **ragoût:** a spicy stew; **shy:** suspicious, distrustful

Say, “Ma’am, I insist!—in the name of St. Basil!”

If she gives it you, seize

It, and—do as you please—

But there is not a person I’ve asked but agrees,

You should spend—part at least—for the Old Woman’s ease!

—For the rest—if it *must* go back some day—why—let it!—

Meanwhile, if you’re poor, and in love, or in debt, it

May do you some good, and—

I WISH YOU MAY GET IT!!!



I wish you may get it: roughly, “fat chance you’ve got”: a current catchphrase expressing mocking doubt of someone’s prospects for achievement

NOTES

¹ **Author's Preamble:** The pious and long-lived Father John Ingoldsby (see vol. 1, p. 191) is usually cited as the source for the "Golden Legends" of saints and miracles. "Mr. Fector's abbey" was the pretentiously and misleadingly named Kearnsey Abbey, a faux Gothic mansion near Dover, erected in the early 1820s by John Minet Fector, a banker.

Editor's Headnote: First published in: *Bentley's Miscellany*, vol. IX, in two parts: canto I (May, 1841), pp. 521–526; canto II (June, 1841), pp. 574–582. The legend is one of Barham's most direct (and funny) satiric broadsides at the expanding influence of Roman Catholic thought in the Church of England, focusing on Catholic belief in the efficacy of intercessory prayer and the existence of purgatory. The idea of purgatory has scant biblical authority and was objected to by Protestant Reformers. However, the doctrine had solved a practical issue for medieval Christians: what will be the eternal fate of those who are neither entirely good nor entirely evil—will they be saved or damned? The doctrine of purgatory was also a primary impetus for the accumulation of immense wealth by the Catholic Church. Having first posited the existence of a third place where the dead purged themselves of their sins by means of unpleasant or near-hellish torments, the medieval church applied the concept of intercessory prayer for the dead (*suffrages*) to elaborate the doctrine that an individual's time in purgatory could be lessened by prayers and alms given on behalf of the deceased. Put in crude terms, an individual could buy his or her way out of purgatory by bequests to endow chapels and support priests who undertook these suffrages. The rhymed legal document drawn up between the ghost of the old woman and Father Basil strikes just such a bargain. The occasion for Barham's mockery was the publication in January of 1841 of John Henry Newman's famous "Tract 90" critiquing the Thirty-Nine Articles of Anglican orthodoxy. In it, he expressed the view that it was possible to believe in purgatory without adhering to "the Romish doctrine of Purgatory." Interestingly, the *reductio ad absurdum* ridicule that Barham directs at the idea of purgatory arguably mocks the conventional representation of hell as well.

According to Charles Harper in his *Ingoldsby Country* (1904), the legend actually hails from Boxworth, near St. Ives, Cambridgeshire. The title itself alludes to the opening line of a bawdy broadside ballad, "The Worcestershire Wedding":

An old woman all clothed in grey
Had a daughter both charming and young
That Roger deluded away
With his false flattering tongue.

With him she so often had lain
Abroad in the meadows and fields,
Till her belly grew up to her chin
And her spirits right down to her heels.

Cries her mother, "That's what you expect
When you play the hey ding-a-ding!
Why didn't you follow my rule
And tie your two toes in a string?"

"It was Roger," the daughter replied,
"Called me his dear pretty bird.
He said he would make me his bride
But he wasn't as good as his word."

"Go fetch me my crutches," she cried,
"And bring me my spectacles too.
For if he will not make you his bride
I'll sure split his head into two!"

She come to him there at the mill,
At him with her crutches she fly,
Cries, "Why don't you marry my daughter
And make her as honest as I?"

"Oh what will you give," he cries,
 "If I take her now off your hands?
 You must make me the lord of your store,
 Your money your building and land."

Cries she, "You shall have all you wish,
 My cattle, my silver and gold."

Says he, "I've been looking for this,
 It'll keep out the wind and the cold."

Then hey for a girl or a boy,
 Young missus looked fine as a duchess.
 Mother danced and she capered for joy
 And she danced a fine jig on her crutches.

²In "The Black Mousquetaire," first lines of canto II:

I abominate physic—I care not who knows
 That there's nothing on earth I detest like "a dose"—
 That yellowish-green-looking fluid, whose hue
 I consider extremely unpleasant to view ...

³Alack for poor William Linley to settle the point! His elucidation of Macbeth's "Hurleyburley" casts a halo around his memory. In him the world lost one of its kindest spirits, and the Garrick Club its acutest commentator. —T.I. [The allusion in the text is to *Hamlet* I.v.77: "Unhousel'd, disappointed, unannealed." The reference to Linley and *Macbeth* I.i.3, "When the hurly-burly's done," is an in-joke. Barham once hoaxed Linley into believing that the "Second Folio" had the correct reading for the line as "When the early purl is done." Early purl is hot beer mixed with gin and spice, served as a wake-me-up.]

⁴All who are familiar with the Police Reports, and other records of our Courts of Justice, will recollect that every gentleman of this particular profession invariably thus describes himself, in contradistinction to the Bricklayer, whom he probably presumes to be indigenous, and to the Shoemaker, *born* a Snob. —T.I.

⁵"An ancient and most pugnacious family," says our Bath Friend. One of their descendants, George Rose, Esq., late M.P. for Christchurch (an elderly gentleman now defunct), was equally celebrated for his vocal abilities and his wanton destruction of furniture when in a state of excitement.—"Sing, old Rose, and burn the bellows!" has grown into a proverb. —T.I. ["Our Bath Friend" is Mr. Simpkinson, introduced in "The Spectre of Tappington," whose many inaccuracies and anachronisms parody a contemporary antiquarian, John Britton—see vol. 1, p. 28, note 21. The obscure "Sing Old Rose" phrase predates the Right Honorable George Rose (1744–1818) by more than a century, but some readers nonetheless took this mock scholarship seriously.]

⁶The dating of the story as pre-Tudor (since when saints are few) is a hit at the Oxford Movement and the claim that the medieval church represented a purer, more Apostolic entity. Richard Hurrell Froude (1803–1836) and Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800–1882) were both prominent in the Oxford Movement. "Worth a Jew's eye" is semi-proverbial for something of great value; here with the ironic implication that these two are the closest modern approximation to a saint.

⁷The worthy Jesuit's polemical publisher.—I am not quite sure as to the orthography; it's *idem sonans*, at all events. —T.I. [*Idem sonans* refers to a legal doctrine that recognizes the intended word or proper name despite a sound-alike misspelling. *Dullman* is Barham's joke on Charles Dolman (1807–1863), bookseller and publisher of Anglo-Catholic

books and periodicals. Nicholas Wiseman (1802–1855) was a distinguished Roman Catholic scholar and co-founder of the *Dublin Review* (published, despite its name, in London), a quarterly journal to present and advocate the views of educated Anglo-Irish Catholics. His lectures and writings, aimed at achieving a revival of English Catholicism, greatly influenced the Oxford Movement and the eventual conversion of Newman and others of the Tractarians to Catholicism.]

⁸The Nulli Secundus [Second to None] Club of the Coldstream Guards had a dress code for their dinners that included a dark blue coat with ten engraved silver buttons set at specified positions on the coat. Any member with his buttons out of order would be fined a guinea. According to the OED, *mutton* is a deprecatory, mostly Scottish expression for fellow (probably with an implication of simpleton or fool).

⁹The rhyme is “lousy,” meant in the literal sense.

¹⁰Effodiuntur Opes Irritamenta Malorum. –LILLY’s *Grammar*. –T.I.
[Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I.140: Riches, the incitement to evil, are dug out of the earth. Here and elsewhere Barham pretends to extract his Latin quotations from the venerable Latin grammar of William Lily (d. 1522).]

¹¹A nice medley of slang words for money: the OED’s earliest example of *stumpy* is from 1828; *rhino* has a long history from the seventeenth century to the present; the earliest use of *Spanish* is 1788; the OED’s earliest record for *blunt* is 1819.

¹²According to a note in the 1894 edition:

Jemmy Wood, “the miser,” died April 20, 1836. He was a banker of Gloucester, and a man of very recluse habits. His will, by which property to the value of about a million sterling was disposed of, gave rise to prolonged litigation, which was terminated only by appeal to the Privy Council. In 1842 a decision was given by Lord Lyndhurst in favour of Sir Matthew Wood and others, who claimed under different papers of a very informal kind. The expenses of the suit were said to be enormous.

¹³Mortmain is the condition of property being granted in perpetuity to the church or another corporate body by the will of the deceased. The Statutes of Mortmain were two thirteenth-century statutes enacted under Edward I to protect royal revenues by preventing land from passing into the possession of the church without a royal license.

¹⁴“Oh, it’s a snug little island! A right little, tight little island” from “The Snug Little Island,” a patriotic song by Thomas Dibdin (1771–1841).

¹⁵St. Patrick’s Purgatory, on an island on Lough Derg in the county of Donegal, was a destination for pilgrims from the twelfth century on to modern times. According to legend, Christ appeared to St. Patrick here to show him a cave that led downwards to purgatory.

¹⁶*Pisentry* is meant as the Irish pronunciation of *peasantry*; the doubtful compliment to the Irish rural poor of being “the finest peasantry on earth” probably originated with Daniel O’Connell (see note 42 below).

¹⁷Signs on country inns often promised “good entertainment for man and horse”—where entertainment signifies food and lodging.

¹⁸ According to a note in the 1894 edition:

An enterprising merchant of Scotland Yard, on the strength of having supplied the Mansion House with a few tons of exceedingly cheap coals, advertised them as “Lord Mayor’s coals,” under which name they became notorious for their decidedly antiphlogistic properties.

¹⁹ Sloe (blackthorn) leaves were used by unscrupulous merchants to adulterate tea. Souchong is a superior variety of black tea.

²⁰ Barham presumably credits Pope Gregory I (Gregory the Great, c. 540–604) with the invention of purgatory, although the development of the doctrine had numerous contributors over several centuries.

²¹ “Hell is paved with good intentions” is a familiar English proverb dating back to at least the early eighteenth century. In 1839 the City of London began experimenting with wood-block pavement as a cheaper and quieter alternative to granite blocks. Wood did not prove to be a satisfactory paving material: the blocks would shift too much under heavy wagon loads or heavy rains. Asphalt (“asphaltic bitumen”) was also in use, though poorly suited to horse-drawn vehicles.

²² Jeremiah and Charles Chubb were well-known makers of locks (the “Detector Lock,” patented in 1818) and a “burglar-resistant” safe (patented in 1835). The inventor Joseph Bramah (1748–1814) held a patent on a “Challenge Lock,” advertised with a sign on his London shop proclaiming “The artist who can make an instrument that will pick or open this lock shall receive 200 guineas the moment it is opened.” The prize was finally claimed in 1851 by an American locksmith, Alfred Charles Hobb, who required 51 hours over 16 days to get the job done. He also succeeded in picking the Chubb Detector lock. These two feats, performed in conjunction with the Great Exhibition, were excellent marketing for his company’s “Parautoptic Lock.”

²³ For Nicholas Wiseman, see note 7, above.

²⁴ The “Mill” found in purgatory is presumably the same as the one found in contemporary English prisons. The prison treadmill (developed by Sir William Cubitt in 1817) was considered to be a useful means of teaching “habits of industry” to offenders.

²⁵ Going on the basis of *The Magic Flute* (Mozart and his librettist were both Masons), the Masonic ritual presumably included a symbolic trial by fire. Or it may not have been entirely symbolic: a letter from Barham to Mary Anne Hughes, dated January 5, 1830, tells of a mutual acquaintance suspected of freemasonry whose friends, under the influence of whisky toddy, seized and stripped him to see if he had been branded with an F. One of the oldest of the London Lodges, which met at the Goose and Gridiron Alehouse in St. Paul’s Churchyard in the early eighteenth century, was known as the Lodge of Antiquity No. 1.

²⁶ Traditional Roman Catholic theology maintained that only those within “the pale of the church” could attain salvation.

²⁷ *Hamlet* I.v.4.

²⁸ *To be nowhere* is sporting slang for losing. William “Crocky” Crockford (1775–1844)

started out as a small-time fishmonger; after winning a large sum, he launched a tony and immensely successful gambling house run as an exclusive club. According to a note in the 1894 edition, Jem Bland (known as “Facetious Jemmy”) was an illiterate race course bookmaker who nonetheless kept perfect accounts by memory.

²⁹ Freely paraphrased from Oliver Goldsmith, “The Deserted Village” (1770) ll. 93–96:

And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last.

³⁰ “E’en in our ashes live their wonted fires!”—GRAY. “A position at which Experience revolts, Credulity hesitates, and even Fancy stares!”—JOHNSON. —T.I. [The line is from Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (1751). In his *Lives of the Poets*, Samuel Johnson was critical of Gray’s poetry except for this ode, which he praises; the quote is in fact from John Young’s *A Criticism on the Elegy written in a Country Church-yard. Being a Continuation of Dr. Johnson’s Criticism on the Poems of Gray* (1783).]

³¹ *Macbeth* III.iv.94.

³² Two American authors of frontier fiction: Robert Montgomery Bird (1806–1854), whose folksy characters do say “tarnation,” and James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851).

³³ Robert Keeley (1793–1869), a popular actor who mostly played stock comic parts written expressly for his talents.

³⁴ Cicero, *Second Oration against Catiline: Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit* (he has left, absconded, escaped, broke forth).

³⁵ William Cobbett (1763–1835), radical pamphleteer and journalist; “vile yellow clay” is gold, but I cannot trace the phrase to Cobbett.

³⁶ Note in 1894 edition:

Jacobus de Chiusa, or Clusa, a Carthusian monk, in his *Tractatus de apparitionibus animarum post exitum earum a corporibus, etc.*, gives full and very valuable directions for holding intercourse with ghosts, etc. “Examples,” says he, “teach us that prayers and fasting ought always to precede the interrogation of spirits; that a fast of three days, with a certain number of masses, etc., are highly important.” He recommends that after confession and mass four or five devout priests should be sent for, and that they should go to the place where the spirit is wont to show itself, observing certain ceremonies. “They should take,” he says, “a candle which has been lit on the holy day of Purification, holy water—this is essential—the symbol of the Cross, and a thurible with incense, and as they approach the place recite the seven psalms or St. John’s Gospel. The holy stole also,” he adds, “is of some use.”

³⁷ “Nell Cook” is of course one of *The Ingoldsby Legends* (pp. 130–137 above). “Martha, The Gypsy” is a story in *Sayings and Doings* (1824–1828) by Theodore Hook.

³⁸ “Thrones! Dominations! Princedoms! Virtues! Powers!”—MILTON. —T.I. [*Paradise Lost* V.601.]

³⁹ Some topical allusion is likely intended. Fooks Cray Place in Kent was a magnificent neo-Palladian mansion owned by Nicholas Vansittart, 1st Lord Bexley (1766–1851) and Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1812–1823, whose fiscal policies were very unpopular.

⁴⁰ Medieval Christians believed that Muslims worshipped a false deity variously named Mahound, Mammet, and Mahomet, all being corruptions of the name Mohammed.

⁴¹ Nearly three hundred Protestants martyrs were burned at the stake in Smithfield in London during the reign (1553–1558) of Catholic Queen Mary. Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, a former reformer who returned to the Roman Catholic Church, presided over most of the trials for heresy.

⁴² According to a note supplied in the 1894 edition:

The *rent* was originally a general yearly subscription of a penny a month raised throughout Ireland towards a fund calculated to attain the amount of £50,000, for carrying out an agitation for “Catholic Emancipation,” in the year 1825, and of which Daniel O’Connell had the handling. It was continued, at the rate of about £14,000 a year, as an annuity for his support during the “Repeal” agitation. He was reproached for levying this tax on the Irish peasantry by his special friend and supporter the Catholic nobleman, Lord Shrewsbury, in the year 1842.

Daniel O’Connell (1775–1847) was a political leader and campaigner for Catholic and Irish rights. Ballinacorney is a village and castle in County Sligo, Ireland. Maynooth (mentioned further on in this stanza) alludes to the seminary, St. Patrick’s College, Maynooth, in County Kildare, near Dublin. The seminary received funding from the “Catholic rent,” which was disbursed by the Catholic Association. John Wright’s may be the private bank called Wrights & Co., which failed in 1840.

⁴³ The Maison Dieu, originally a medieval accommodation for pilgrims to the shrine of Thomas à Becket, was taken over and converted to be the Dover Town Hall in the 1830s. A petit écu is a French silver coin valued at about three francs at this time.