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A FAMILY LEGEND



The main incident recorded in the following excerpts from our family papers has but too solid a foundation. The portrait of Roger Ingoldsby is not among those in the Gallery, but I have some recollection of having seen, when a boy, a picture answering the description here given of him, much injured, and lying without a frame in one of the attics.

The Wedding-Day

OR, THE BUCCANEER'S CURSE

IT HAS A jocund sound,¹
That gleeful marriage chime,
As from the old and ivied tower
It peals, at the early matin hour,
Its merry, merry round;
And the Spring is in its prime,
And the song-bird, on the spray,
Trills from his throat, in varied note,
An emulative lay—
It has a joyous sound!!

And the Vicar is there with his wig and his book,
And the Clerk with his grave, *quasi*-sanctified look;
And there stand the village maids all with their posies,
Their lilies, and daffy-down-dillies, and roses,
 Dight in white,
 A comely sight,
Fringing the path to the left and the right;
—From our nursery days we all of us know
Ne'er doth "Our Ladye's garden grow"
So fair for a "Grand Horticultural Show"
As when bordered with "pretty maids all on a row."
And the urchins are there, escaped from the rule
Of that "Limbo of Infants," the National School,²

spray: twig; **dight:** clothed; **limbo:** the infernal abode of pagans and unbaptized infants

Whooping and bawling,
 And squalling, and calling,
 And crawling, and creeping,
 And jumping, and leaping,
 Bo-peeping 'midst "many a mouldering heap," in
 Whose bosom their own "rude forefathers" are sleeping;³
 —Young rascals!—instead of lamenting and weeping,
 Laughing and gay,
 A gorge déployée—
 Only now and then pausing—and checking their play,
 To "wonder what 'tis makes the gentlefolks stay."
 Ah, well a-day!
 Little deem they,
 Poor ignorant dears! the bells, ringing away,
 Are anything else
 Than mere parish bells,
 Or that each of them, should we go into its history,
 Is but a "Symbol" of some deeper mystery;—
 That the clappers and ropes
 Are mere practical tropes
 Of "trumpets" and "tongues," and of "preachers" and popes;
 Unless Clement the Fourth's worthy Chaplin, *Durand*, err,
 See the "*Rationale*" of that goosey-gander.⁴

Gently! gently, Miss Muse!
 Mind your P's and your Q's!
 Don't be malapert—laugh, Miss, but never abuse!
 Calling names, whether done to attack or to back a schism,
 Is, Miss, believe me, a great piece of jack-ass-ism,
 And as, on the whole,
 You're a good-natured soul,
 You must never enact such a pitiful *rôle*.
 No, no, Miss, pull up, and go back to your boys
 In the churchyard, who're making this hubbub and noise:—
 But hush! there's an end to their romping and mumming,
 For voices are heard—here's the company coming!

[**rire**] à **gorge déployée**: roar with laughter [French]; **trope**: figurative or ironic usage
goosey-gander: blockhead, fool; **mum** (v): to perform in a dumbshow or mime

And see;—the avenue gates unfold,
And forth they pace, that bridal train,
The grave, the gay, the young, the old,
They cross the green and grassy lane,
Bridesman, Bridesmaid, Bridegroom, Bride,
Two by two, and side by side,
Uncles, and aunts, friends tried and proved,
And cousins, a great many times removed.
 A fairer or a gentler she,
 A lovelier maid, in her degree,
 Man's eye might never hope to see,
Than darling, bonnie Maud Ingoldsby,
The flow'r of that goodly company;
While whispering low, with bated voice,
Close by her side, her heart's dear choice,
Walks Fredville's hope, young Valentine Boys.⁵
 —But where, oh, where,
 Is Ingoldsby's heir?
Little Jack Ingoldsby?—where, oh, where?
 Why he's here,—and he's there,
 And he's everywhere;—
 He's there, and he's here,
 In the front—in the rear,—
Now this side, now that side,—now far, and now near—
The Puck of the party, the darling “pet” boy,
Full of mischief, and fun, and good-humour and joy;
With his laughing blue eye and his cheek like a rose,
And his long curly locks and his little snub nose;
In his tunic, and trousers, and cap—there he goes!
Now pinching the bridesmen,—now teasing his sister,
And telling the bridesmaids how “Valentine kissed her”;
The torment, the plague, the delight of them all,
See, he's into the churchyard!—he's over the wall—
Gambolling, frolicking, capering away,
He's the first in the church, be the second who may!

* * *

bate (v): to lessen in force or intensity, diminish

'Tis o'er;—the holy rite is done,
 The rite that “incorporates two in one,”
 —And now for the feasting, and frolic, and fun!
 Spare we to tell of the smiling and sighing,
 The shaking of hands, the embracing and crying,
 The “toot—toot—toot”
 Of the tabour and flute,
 Of the white-wigged Vicar’s prolonged salute,
 Or of how the blithe “College *Youths*,”—rather old stagers,
 Accustomed, for years, to pull bell-ropes for wagers—
 Rang, faster than ever, their “triple-bob-MAJORS”;⁶
 (So loud as to charm ye,
 At once and alarm ye;
 —“*Symbolic*,” of course, of that rank in the army.)

Spare we to tell of the fees and the dues
 To the “little old woman that opened the pews,”
 Of the largesse bestowed on the Sexton and Clerk,
 Of the four-year-old sheep roasted whole in the park,
 Of the laughing and joking,
 The quaffing and smoking,
 And chaffing, and broaching—that is to say, poking
 A hole in a mighty magnificent tub
 Of what men, in our hemisphere, term “Humming-Bub,”
 But which gods,—who, it seems, use a different lingo
 From mortals,—are wont to denominate “Stingo.”

Spare we to tell of the horse-collar grinning;⁷
 The cheese! the reward of the ugly one winning;—
 Of the young ladies racing for Dutch body-linen,—
 The soapy-tailed sow,—a rich prize when you’ve caught her,—
 Of little boys bobbing for pippins in water;
 The smacks and the whacks,
 And the jumpers in sacks,
 These down on their noses and those on their backs;
 Nor skills it to speak of those darling old ditties,

salute: salutation (here a formal liturgical greeting); **old stager:** seasoned veteran, old hand; **humming-bub:** a strong brew; **stingo:** strong ale or beer; **pippin:** an apple
skills not: make no difference

Sung rarely in hamlets now—never in cities,
 The “*King and the Miller*,” the “*Bold Robin Hood*,”
 “*Chevy Chase*,” “*Gilderoy*,” and the “*Babes in the Wood!*”

You’ll say that my taste
 Is sadly misplaced,

But I can’t help confessing these simple old tunes,
 The “*Auld Robin Grays*,” and the “*Aileen Aroons*,”
 The “*Gramachree Mollys*,” and the “*Sweet Bonnie Doons*,”
 Are dearer to me,
 In a tenfold degree,

Than a fine *fantasia* from over the sea;
 And, for sweetness, compared with a Beethoven fugue, are
 As “best-refined loaf” to the coarsest “brown sugar”;⁸
 —Alack, for the Bard’s want of science! to which he owes
 All this misliking of foreign *capricios!*

Not that he’d say
 One word, by the way,

To disparage our new Idol, Monsieur Duprez;⁹
 But he grudges, he owns, his departed half-guinea
 Each Saturday night when, devoured by chagrin, he
 Sits listening to singers whose names end in *ini*.

But enough of the rustics—let’s leave them pursuing
 Their out-of-door gambols, and just take a view in
 The inside the hall, and see what *they* are doing.

And first there’s the Squire,

The hale, hearty sire
 Of the bride,—with his coat-tails subducted and higher,
 A thought, than they’re commonly wont to aspire;
 His back and his buckskins exposed to the fire;
 —Bright, bright are his buttons,—and bright is the hue
 Of his squarely-cut coat of fine Saxony blue;
 And bright the shalloon of his little quilled *queue*;
 —White, white as “Young England’s,” the dimity vest¹⁰
 Which descends like an *avalanche* o’er his broad breast,

capriccio: a free, lively musical composition; **subduct (v):** to draw up, lift; **Saxony blue:** an indigo solution that yields a violet-blue dye; **shalloon:** a wig-tie made of shalloon, a closely woven woolen fabric; **quilled:** narrow, shaped like a quill; **queue:** a hanging tail of hair; **dimity:** cotton fabric woven with a pattern of raised stripes or checks

Till its further progression is put in arrest
 By the portly projection that springs from his chest,
 Overhanging the garment—that can't be express;
 —White, white are his locks,—which, had Nature fair play,
 Had appeared a clear brown slightly sprinkled with grey,
 But they're white as the peaks of Plinlimmon to-day,
 Or Ben Nevis, his pate is *si bien poudré!*
 Bright, bright are the boots that envelope his heels;
 —Bright, bright is the gold chain suspending his seals;
 And still brighter yet may the gazer descry
 The tear-drop that spangles the fond father's eye
 As it lights on the bride—
 His beloved one—the pride
 And delight of his heart,—severed now from his side;—
 But brighter than all,
 Arresting its fall,
 Is the smile, that rebukes it for spangling at all,
 —A clear case, in short, of what old poets tell, as
 Blind Homer, for instance, *en dakresi gelas*.

Then, there are the Bride and the Bridegroom withdrawn
 To the deep Gothic window that looks on the lawn,
 Enconced on a squab of maroon-coloured leather,
 And talking—and *thinking*, no doubt—of the weather.

But here comes the party—Room! room for the guests!¹¹
 In their Pompadour coats, and laced ruffles and vests,
 —First, Sir Charles Grandison
 Baronet, and his son,
 Charles,—the mamma does not venture to “show”—
 Miss Byron, you know,
 She was called long ago;
 For that lady, 'twas *said*, had been playing the d——l,
 Last season, in town, with her old beau, Squire Greville,
 Which very much shocked, and chagrined, as may well be

si bien poudré: so well powdered [French]; **en dakresi gelas:** ἐν δάκρυσι γέλας, in reference to Andromache in the *Iliad* (VI.484) who “laughed tearfully”; **squab:** sofa or ottoman; **pompadour:** rose-pink in color or, more generally, in the style of the circle of the Marquise de Pompadour (1721–1764)

Supposed, “Doctor Bartlett,” and “Good Uncle Selby.”
 Sir Charles, of course, could not give Greville his gruel, in
 Order to prove his abhorrence of duelling,
 Nor try for, deterred by the serious expense, a
 Complete separation, *a thoro et mensâ*,
 So he “kept a calm sough,” and, when asked to a party,
 A dance, or a dinner, or tea and *écarté*,
 He went with his son, and said, looking demurely,
 He’d “left her at home, as she found herself poorly.”

Two Foreigners near,
 “Of distinction,” appear;

A pair more illustrious you ne’er heard of, or saw,—
 Count Ferdinand Fathom,—Count Thaddeus of Warsaw,
 All covered with glitt’ring *bijouterie* and hair—Poles,
 Whom Lord Dudley Stuart calls “Patriot,”—Hook “Bare Poles”;¹²
 Such rings and such brooches, such studs and such pins!

’Twere hard to say which

Were more gorgeous and rich,

Or more truly Mosaic, their chains or their chins!
 Next Sir Roger de Coverley,—Mr. Will Ramble,
 With Dame Lismahago, (*née* Tabitha Bramble),—
 Mr. Random and Spouse,—Mrs. Pamela Booby,
 (Whose nose was acquiring a tinge of the ruby,
 And “people *did say*”—but no matter for that,—
 Folks were not then enlightened by good Father Mat.)—¹³

Three friends from “the Colonies” near them were seen,
 The great Massachusetts man, General Muff Green,—

Mr. Jonathan W. Doubikins,—men

“Influential *some*,”—and their “smart” Uncle Ben;—

Rev. Abraham Adams (preferred to a stall),—

Mr. Jones and his Lady, from Allworthy Hall;

Our friend Tom, by the way,

Had turned out rather gay

For a married man—certainly “people *did say*”

He was shrewdly suspected of using his wife ill,

give someone their gruel: to punish or kill; **a mensa et thoro:** from board and bed (Law Latin for a marital separation); **keep a calm sough:** keep quiet, say little [Scots]
poorly (adj): unwell; **écarté:** a card game for two players; **bijouterie:** jewelry, trinkets
stall: the endowed office of a clergyman who occupies a cathedral stall, a canonry

And being as sly as his half-brother Blifil.—
 (Miss Seagrim, 'tis well known, was now in high feather,
 And “people *did say*” they'd been seen out together,—
 A fact, the “Boy Jones,” who, in our days, with malice
 Aforethought, so often got into the Palace,¹⁴
 Would seem to confirm, as, 'tis whispered he owns, he's
 The son of a natural son of Tom Jones's.)
 Lady Bellaston (*mem.* she had not been invited!),
 Sir Peregrine Pickle, now recently knighted,—
 All joyous, all happy, all looking delighted!
 —It would bore you to death should I pause to describe,
 Or enumerate, half of the elegant tribe
 Who filled the background,
 And among whom were found
 The *élite* of the old county families round,
 Such as Honeywood, Oxenden, Knatchbull and Norton,
 Matthew Robinson, too, with his beard, from Monk's Horton,¹⁵
 The Faggs, and Finch-Hattons, Tokes, Derings, and Deedses,
 And Fairfax (who then called the castle of Leeds his);¹⁶
 Esquires, Knights and Lords,
 In bag-wigs and swords;
 And the troops, and the groups
 Of fine ladies in hoops;
 The *pompons*, the *toupées*, and the diamonds and feathers;
 The flowered-silk *sacques*
 Which they wore on their backs,—
 How?—*sacques* and *pompons*, with the Squire's boots and leathers?—
 Stay! stay!—I suspect,
 Here's a trifling neglect
 On your part, Madame Muse—though you're commonly accurate,
 As to costume, as brown Quaker, or black Curate;
 For once, I confess,
 Here you're out, as to dress;—
 You've been fairly caught napping, which gives me distress,
 For I can't but acknowledge it is not the thing,

mem.: memorandum, noted; **bag-wig:** 18th-century style wig with the queue enclosed in a silk sack; **pompom:** a tuft of ribbon, feathers, flowers, etc., worn as a hair ornament
toupee: topknot on an 18th-century wig; **saque:** a train attached at the shoulders to the back of a gown; **out:** in error or at a loss from failure of memory

Sir Roger de Coverley's laced suit to bring
 Into contact with square-cut coats,—such as George Byng,
 And poor dear Sir Francis appeared in, last spring;—¹⁷
 So, having for once been compelled to acknowledge, I
 Have made a small hole in our mutual chronology,
 Canter on, Miss, without farther apology,—

Only don't make
 Such another mistake,

Or you'll get in a scrape, of which I shall partake;—
 Enough!—you are sorry for what you have done,
 So dry your eyes, Miss, blow your nose, and go on!

Well—the party are met, all radiant and gay,
 And how every person is dressed—we won't say;
 Suffice it, they all come glad homage to pay
 To our dear “bonnie Maud” on her own wedding-day,
 To dance at her bridal, and help “throw the stocking,”¹⁸
 —A practice that's now discontinued as shocking.

There's a breakfast, they know—
 There always is so

On occasions like these, wheresoever you go.
 Of course there are “lots” of beef, potted and hung,
 Prawns, lobsters, cold fowl, and cold ham, and cold tongue,
 Hot tea, and hot coffee, hot rolls, and hot toast,
 Cold pigeon-pie (rook?), and cold boiled and cold roast,¹⁹
 Scotch marmalade, jellies, cold creams, colder ices,—
Blancmange, which young ladies say so very nice is,—
 Rock-melons in thick, pines in much thinner slices,—
 Char, potted with clarified butter and spices,
 Renewing an appetite long past its crisis—
 Refined barley-sugar in various devices,
 Such as bridges, and baskets, and temples, and grottoes,—
 And nasty French lucifer snappers with mottoes.
 —In short, all those gimcracks together were met
 Which people of fashion tell Gunter to get²⁰

blancmange: a jellied, custard-like dessert; **rock-melon:** cantaloupe; **pine:** pineapple
char: species of trout; **barley-sugar:** a hard candy made of sugar boiled with barley water,
 shaped into a twist or molded

When they give a *grand déjeuner à la fourchette*—
 (A phrase which, though French, in our language still lingers,
 Intending a breakfast with forks and not fingers.)
 And see! what a mountainous bridecake!—a thing
 By itself—with small pieces to pass through the ring!

Now as to the wines!—"Ay, the wine!" cries the Squire,
 Letting fall both his coat-tails,—which nearly take fire.
 Rubbing his hands,
 He calls out, as he stands,
 To the serving-men waiting "his Honour's" commands,
 "The wine!—to be sure—here, you Harry—Bob—Dick—
 The wine, don't you hear?—bring us lights—come, be quick!—
 And a crowbar to knock down the mortar and brick.
 Say what they may,
 'Fore George, we'll make way
 Into old Roger Ingoldsby's cellar to-day;
 And let loose his captives, imprisoned so long,
 His flasks, and his casks, that he bricked up so strong!"—
 "Oh dear! oh dear! Squire Ingoldsby, bethink you what you do!"
 Exclaims old Mrs. Botherby,—she is in *such* a stew!—²¹
 "Oh dear! oh dear! what do I hear?—full oft you've heard me tell
 Of the curse 'Wild Roger' left upon who'er should break his cell!

"Full five-and-twenty years are gone since Roger went away,
 As I bethink me, too, it was upon this very day!
 And I was then a comely dame, and you, a springald gay,
 Were up and down to London town, at opera, ball and play;
 Your locks were nut-brown then, Squire—you grow a little grey!—

"'Wild Roger,' so we called him then, your grandsire's youngest son,
 He was in truth
 A wayward youth,
 We feared him, every one.

In everything he had his will, he would be stayed by none,
 And when he did a naughty thing, he laughed and called it fun!

déjeuner à la fourchette: a meal of cold meats and wine (lit., breakfast with a fork)
springald: young man

One day his father chid him sore—I know not what he'd done,
But he scorned reproof,
And from this roof
Away that night he run!

“Seven years were gone and over—‘Wild Roger’ came again,
He spoke of forays and of frays upon the Spanish Main;
And he had store of gold galore, and silks and satins fine,
And flasks and casks of Malvoisie, and precious Gascon wine!
Rich booties he had brought, he said, across the western wave,
And came, in penitence and shame, now of his sire to crave
Forgiveness and a welcome home—his sire was in his grave!

“Your Father was a kindly man—he played a brother’s part;
He pressed his brother to his breast—he had a kindly heart;
Fain would he have him tarry here, their common hearth to share,
But Roger was the same man still,—he scorned his brother’s pray’r!
He called his crew,—away he flew, and on those foreign shores
Got killed in some outlandish place—they call it the Eyesores.²²
But ere he went,
And quitted Kent,
—I well recall the day,—
His flasks and casks of Gascon wine he safely ‘stowed away’;
Within the cellar’s deepest nook, he safely stowed them all,
And Mason Jones brought bricks and stones, and they built up the wall.

“Oh! then it was a fearful thing to hear ‘Wild Roger’s’ ban!
Good gracious me! I never heard the like from mortal man.
‘Here’s that,’ quoth he, ‘shall serve me well, when I return at last,
A battered hulk, to quaff and laugh at toils and dangers past;
Accurst be he, whoe’er he be, lays hand on gear of mine,
Till I come back again from sea, to broach my Gascon wine!’
And more he said, which filled with dread all those who listened there;
In sooth my very blood ran cold, it lifted up my hair
With very fear, to stand and hear ‘Wild Roger’ curse and swear!!
He saw my fright, as well he might, but still he made his game,
He called me ‘Mother Bounce-about,’ my Gracious, what a name!

fray: skirmish, fight; **Spanish main:** the Caribbean coasts of the Americas; **ban:** curse

Nay, more ‘an old’ —some ‘boat-woman,’—I may not say for shame!—²³
 Then, gentle Master, pause awhile, give heed to what I tell,
 Nor break, on such a day as this, ‘Wild Roger’s’ secret cell!”

“Pooh! pooh!” quoth the Squire,
 As he moved from the fire,
 And bade the old Housekeeper quickly retire,
 “Pooh!—never tell me!
 Nonsense—fiddle-de-dee!
 What!—wait Uncle Roger’s return back from sea?—
 Why he may, as you say,
 Have been somewhat too gay,
 And, no doubt, was a broth of a boy in his way;
 But what’s that to us, now, at this time of day?—
 What, if some quarrel
 With Dering or Darrell—
 I hardly know which, but I think it was Dering,—
 Sent him back in a huff to his old privateering,
 Or what his unfriends chose to call Buccaneering?
 It’s twenty years since, as we very well know,
 He was knocked on the head in a skirmish, and so
 Why rake up ‘auld warld’ tales of deeds long ago?—
 Foul befall him who would touch the deposit
 Of living man, whether in cellar or closet!
 But since, as I’ve said,
 Knocked on the head,
 Uncle Roger has now been some twenty years dead,
 As for his wine,
 I’m his heir, and it’s mine!
 And I’d long ago worked it well, but that I tarried
 For this very day—
 And I’m sure you’ll all say
 I was right—when my own darling Maud should get married.
 So lights and a crowbar!—The only thing lies
 On my conscience, at all, with respect to this prize
 Is some little compunction anent the Excise.—

broth of a boy: one who is high-spirited, passionate [Irish]; **auld warld:** old world (with the sense of old-time, old-fashioned) [Scots]; **anent (prep):** towards, as regards

Come—you, Master Jack,
Be the first, and bring back
Whate'er comes to hand—Claret, Burgundy, Sack—
Head the party, and mind that you're back in a crack!"



Away go the clan,
With cup and with can,
Little Jack Ingoldsby leading the van.
Little reck they of the Buccaneer's ban;
Hope whispers, "Perchance we'll fall in with strong beer too here!"
Blest thought! which sets them all grinning from ear to ear!
Through cellar one, through cellar two,
Through cellar three they passed!
And their way they took
To the farthest nook
Of cellar four—the last!
Blithe and gay, they batter away,
On this wedding-day of Maud's,
With all their might, to bring to light
"Wild Roger's" "Custom-house frauds!"

in a crack: instantly; **can:** a container for liquids, a drinking vessel of variable size

And though stone and brick
 Be never so thick,
 When stoutly assailed, they are no bar
 To the powerful charm
 Of a Yeoman's arm
 When wielding a decentish crowbar!
 Down comes brick and down comes stone,
 One by one—
 The job's half done!—
 "Where is he?—now come—where's Master John?"
 There's a breach in the wall three feet by two,
 And Little Jack Ingoldsby soon pops through!

Hark!—what sound's that?—a sob?—a sigh?—
 The choking gasp of a stifled cry?—
 "What can it be?—
 Let's see!—let's see!
 It *can't* be little Jack Ingoldsby?
 The candle—quick!"—
 Through stone and through brick,
 They poke in the light on a long split stick;
 But ere he who holds it can wave it about,
 He gasps and he sneezes—the LIGHT GOES OUT.

Yet were there those, in after days,
 Who said that pale light's flickering blaze
 For a moment gleamed on a dark Form there,
 Seemed as bodied of foul black air!—
 In Mariner's dress,—with cutlass braced
 By buckle and broad black belt to its waist,—
 On a cocked-hat laced
 With gold, and placed
 With a *dégagé*, devil-may-care, kind of taste,
 O'er a *balafre* brow by a scar defaced!—
 That Form, they said, so foul and so black
 Grinned as it pointed at poor little Jack.
 I know not, I, how the truth may be,

dégagé: casual, unconstrained; **balafre:** scarred [both French]



But the pent-up vapour, at length set free,
Set them all sneezing,
And coughing and wheezing,
As, working its way
To the regions of day,
It, at last, let a purer and healthier breeze in!

Of their senses bereft,
 To the right and the left,
 Those varlets so lately courageous and stout,
 There they lay kicking and sprawling about,
 Like Billingsgate fresh fish, unconscious of ice,
 Or those which, the newspapers give us advice,
 Mr. Taylor, of Lombard Street, sells at half-price!
 Nearer the door, some half dozen or more
 Scramble away
 To the *rez de chaussée*,
 (As our Frenchified friend always calls his ground-floor),
 And they call, and they bawl, and they bellow and roar
 For lights, vinegar, brandy, and fifty things more.
 At length, after no little clamour and din,
 The foul air let out and the fresh air let in,
 They drag one and all
 Up into the hall,
 Where a medical Quaker, the great Dr. Lettsom,
 Who's one of the party, "bleeds, physics, and sweats 'em."²⁴
 All?—all—save One—
 —"But He!—my Son?—
 Merciful Heaven!—where—WHERE IS JOHN?"

* * *

Within that cell, so dark and deep,
 Lies One, as in a tranquil sleep,
 A sight to make the sternest weep!—
 That little heart is pulseless now,
 And cold that fair and open brow,
 And closed that eye that beamed with joy
 And hope—"Oh, God! my Boy!—my Boy!"

Enough!—I may not,—dare not,—show
 The wretched Father's frantic woe,
 The Mother's tearless, speechless—No!
 I may not such a theme essay:—
 Too bitter thoughts crowd in and stay

Billingsgate: a London fish market; **physic (v):** dose with medicine, apply a remedy

My pen—sad memory will have way!²⁵
 Enough!—at once I close the lay,
 Of Fair Maud's fatal wedding-day!

It has a mournful sound,
 That single, solemn Bell,
 As to the hills and woods around
 It flings its deep-toned knell!
 That measured toll!—alone—apart,
 It strikes upon the human heart!
 —It has a mournful sound!—

Moral

Come, come, Mrs. Muse, we can't part in this way,
 Or you'll leave me as dull as ditch-water all day.
 Try and squeeze out a Moral or two from your lay!
 And let us part cheerful, at least, if not gay!

First and foremost, then, Gentlefolks, learn from my song,
 Not to lock up your wine, or malt-liquor, too long!
 Though Port should have age,
 Yet I don't think it sage
 To entomb it as some of your *connoisseurs* do,
 Till it's losing in flavour, and body, and hue;
 —I question if keeping it does it much good
 After ten years in bottle and three in the wood.

If any young man, though a snubbed younger brother,
 When told of his faults by his father and mother,
 Runs restive and goes off to sea in a huff,
 Depend on't, my friends, that young man is a Muff!

Next—ill-gotten gains
 Are not worth the pains!—
 They prosper with no one!—so, whether cheroots,
 Or Havana cigars,—or French gloves, or French boots—

muff: an incompetent or foolish person; **cheroot:** cigar with square, untapered ends

Whatever you want, pay the duty!—nor when you
Buy any such articles cheat the revenue!

And “now to conclude,”—
For it’s high time I should,—
When you *do* rejoice, mind, whatsoever you do,
That the hearts of the lowly rejoice with you too!
Don’t grudge them their jigs,
And their frolics and “rigs,”
And don’t interfere with their soapy-tailed pigs;
Nor “because thou art virtuous,” rail, and exhale
An *anathema*, breathing of vengeance and wail,
Upon every complexion less pale than sea-kail!²⁶
Nor dismiss the poor man to his pump and his pail,
With “Drink *there!*—we’ll have henceforth no more cakes and ale!”²⁷



rig: a joke, frolic or game; **anathema:** a formal curse or excommunication

NOTES

¹**Editor's Headnote:** First published in: *New Monthly Magazine*, vol. LXX (April, 1844), pp. 465–476. In this legend Barham achieves some of his most dramatic shifts in tone, from lyric/pastoral to Gothic/tragic, as well as one of his most brilliant digressions with his society-column-style catalog of the famous literary guests in attendance at the wedding. The gossipy account of Tom Jones, Roderick Random *et alia* accomplishes a tonal shift into a more obviously fictional realm that eases the transition into the Gothic portion of the tale. The two portions of the narrative are constructed to mirror each other, framed by the stanzas on the church bells, first ringing changes to celebrate a wedding, then tolling for a funeral. At the outset little Jack Ingoldsby runs ahead of the wedding party, climbing the churchyard wall to be first to the church; later, he runs ahead of the servants and is the first to reach the pirate's long-concealed hoard of wine. The narrative sophistication of the story is again evident when the reader is offered, without intrusive commentary, two alternative explanations for the tragedy: nasty ghost versus noxious gases.

²"Pretty maids all in a row" is from the nursery rhyme, "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary," which may (or may not) allude to Queen Mary. A National School was one run by the National Society for Promoting Religious Education, founded in 1811 with the goal of providing an elementary education to poor children in England and Wales.

³Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751) stanza 4:

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

⁴William Durand (1230–1296), Bishop of Mende, wrote a treatise on the symbolic character of church ritual and architecture, including church bells. Barham's uncharacteristic name-calling here (for which he chides his muse in the following stanza) is not aimed at a thirteenth-century bishop but is indeed an attack on a "schism." A translation of the first book of Durand's *Rationale* had been published in 1843 by two Cambridge divines with suspected Roman Catholic sympathies, John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb. Their lengthy introduction to the work exemplifies the naïve idealization of medieval piety that Barham mocks throughout his "Golden Legends." Neale and Webb were prominent in the Cambridge Camden Society, whose members were largely antiquarians with an interest in church architecture. However, the society leadership had a private agenda to support liturgical and doctrinal counter-reforms that would move the Anglican Church towards their medieval ideal of perfection. In effect, theirs was a Cambridge Movement that paralleled the Oxford Movement of Newman and Pusey. Barham clearly felt the publication of Durand's theory of church symbolism was another ludicrous or obnoxious indication of the influence of Catholicism and the Tractarians.

⁵Fredville Park is in the village of Nonington, Kent, not far from Canterbury. Fredville, originally part of the manor of Essewelle, was held by the Boys family from at least the fourteenth century until the late seventeenth century, when it changed hands

around the time of the Restoration (see the informative www.nonington.org.uk).

⁶In the arcane art of bell-ringing, changes rung upon seven bells are called a *bob triple*, on eight bells, a *bob major*. Barham may have meant *treble bob major*, which is a method of producing long peals of changes with a dodging or zigzagging course in the treble (as opposed to a regular descending or ascending order of chimes). In the last line of this stanza Barham works in another job at the recently translated *Rationale* of Durand.

⁷The wedding day celebration is enlarged into a holiday fair with all the usual contests and amusements: competing to make the most grotesque face through a horse collar, a woman's race to win a chemise, the race to catch a greased pig, bobbing for apples in a tub and sack races.

⁸*Ad Amicum, Servientem ad legem*—

This rhyme, if, when scanned by your critical ear, it
Is not *quite* legitimate, comes pretty near it. —T.I.

[The Latin translates as “to a friend devoted to law,” with the law here referring to the rules of prosody. The songs named are all traditional tunes.]

⁹A note in the 1894 edition identifies Duprez as “a popular composer and conductor of promenade concerts at Covent Garden Theatre.” I cannot find any confirmation: more likely is an allusion to Gilbert Duprez (1806–1896), famed operatic tenor and pioneer of the high C, who appeared at the Drury Lane Theatre in the 1843–1844 season.

¹⁰The Young England movement, led by Benjamin Disraeli, was a conservative, primarily aristocratic and Etonian group of young men who took an idealized feudal tradition as their model for dealing with contemporary social problems. Many contemporaries considered them, in their white waistcoats and cravats, to be out-of-touch and effete.

¹¹Most of these guests are characters from famous eighteenth-century novels, with a few time-traveling interlopers sneaking in: Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753–1754); Tobias Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), *Adventures of Count Ferdinand Fathom* (1753), and *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771); Henry Fielding's *Shamela* (1741), *Joseph Andrews* (1742), and *Tom Jones* (1749). The obscure, anonymous picaresque novel *The History of Will Ramble* (1754) is probably tossed into the mix to puzzle Barham's readers. In this early instance of fan fiction Barham portrays the imagined after-lives of the characters, which are not nearly so happily ever after as their original authors concluded—although in many instances quite true to character. Sir Roger de Coverley is a character from *The Spectator* (1711–1712), a daily miscellany written and published by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. Jonathan W. Doubikins was a satiric Yankee role created by the actor Charles Mathews (1776–1835); he is an ignorant and crass American who arrives in London with his bullied and mistreated slave Agamemnon and with a letter of introduction from his Uncle Ben. *Thaddeus of Warsaw* is an 1803 historical novel by Jane Porter (1776–1850).

¹²Lord Dudley Stuart (1803–1854) was a Whig politician and an enthusiastic supporter of the cause of Polish independence from Russia. Lady Katharine, a garrulous character in Theodore Hook's 1842 novel *The Widow and the Marquess*, uses the phrase “bare Poles.”

- ¹³Theobald Mathew (1790–1856), known as “Father Mathew” and the “Apostle of Temperance,” was an Irish Catholic priest who established an influential Total Abstinence Society in 1838 that went to the true teetotaling extreme of urging audiences to sign “the pledge” to abstain from alcohol consumption in any form. He successfully recruited hundreds of thousands of signatures to “the pledge” in Ireland; in 1843 he extended his campaign into England, pledging a reported 600,000 total abstainers.
- ¹⁴Edward Jones (1824–1893), “the Boy Jones,” managed to sneak into Buckingham Palace on three occasions to help himself to memorabilia; on the second occasion (in 1840) he was discovered under a sofa in the queen’s dressing room. Having been let off for his first offense, he was sentenced to three months at a “House of Correction” for rogues and vagabonds when caught at it again. Once released, he again made his way into the Palace in March of 1841.
- ¹⁵A worthy and eccentric country gentleman, afterwards the second Lord Rokeby, being cousin (“a great many times removed”) and successor in the barony to Richard, Archbishop of Armagh, who first bore that title.—His beard was truly patriarchal.—Mr. Muntz’s—pooh! —T. I. [Matthew Robinson (1712–1800), 2nd Baron Rokeby, of Hythe, Kent, was reclusive and eccentric, with an enormous beard and a passion for sea-bathing and for all thing aqueous. George Frederick Muntz (1794–1857), a radical MP from Birmingham, sported an enormous beard in an era when most men were clean shaven.]
- ¹⁶A roll call of the best families of East Kent: The Honeywoods (or Honywoods) were an old Kentish family, dating back to the twelfth century. The Oxendens of Dene were baronets who inherited Broome Park (see vol. 1, p. 26, note 5) in the mid-eighteenth century. The Knatchbulls, also baronets, resided at Mersham-le-Hatch, near Ashford. There were at one time gentry named Norton in Faversham, but the nearby village and manor of Norton are unconnected to that family; the name is so common that it is difficult to know what family is meant. The Fagge family lived at Mystole, near Chartham. (The family name of Fagg is very common in this region of Kent.) The Finch-Hatton family of Eastwell Park possessed the earldoms of Winchilsea and Nottingham. The Toke family resided at Godinton House near Ashford. The Derings (of Surrenden Dering Manor, in Pluckley near Ashford) were baronets. The Deedes family of Hythe held the Manor of Aldington near Ashford in the eighteenth century. From 1690 to 1793 Leeds Castle, near Maidstone, was in the possession of the Fairfax family, who owned enormous estates in Virginia, forfeited at the Revolution. I thank Clive Webb of the Old Nonnington website for his assistance in identifying these family names.
- ¹⁷A note in the 1894 edition comments:
George Byng, Esq., member for Middlesex since 1790, and Sir Francis Burdett [1770–1844], both conspicuous by their adherence to the traditional costume of the old English gentleman—blue coat with gilt buttons, breeches, and top-boots.
- ¹⁸Throwing the stocking was one of the rowdy traditions of “bedding” the newly married couple. The grooms and bridesmaids took possession (respectively) of one of the groom’s stockings and one of the bride’s; then, sitting at the foot of the bed, they took turns at tossing the stockings over the shoulder at the couple in bed; scoring a direct hit predicted that the winner would be the next to marry.

- ¹⁹Rook was an inferior substitute for pigeon in a pie.
- ²⁰Gunter's Tea Shop in Berkeley Square, London, in existence from 1799 to 1956. The nasty French snappers are cracker bonbons, a party favor that gave off a spark and a loud pop when the wrapper was pulled at both ends—a novelty in the early 1840s.
- ²¹Great-grandmamma, by the father's side, to the excellent lady of the same name who yet "keeps the keys" at Tappington. —T.I.
[See "The Spectre of Tappington," vol. 1, pp. 1–25.]
- ²²Azores?—Mrs. Botherby's orthography, like that of her distinguished contemporary Baron Duberly, was "a little loose."—T.I.
[Daniel Dowlas, an illiterate shopkeeper, is raised to the peerage as Baron Duberly in *The Heir at Law* (1797), a farce by George Colman the Younger.]
- ²³Bounce-about is an old-fashioned game of marbles. Mrs. Botherby is offended to be called a *bumboat* woman, i.e., one who sells goods to sailors on ships riding at anchor.
- ²⁴Paraphrased from a well-known epigram on the signature (I. Lettsom) of the eminent physician John Lettsom (1744–1815), founder of the Medical Society of London:
When any sick to me apply,
I physics, bleeds, and sweats 'em;
If, after that, they choose to die,
What's that to me? —I. Lettsom.
- ²⁵Two of Barham's daughters and three of his sons died in childhood; his youngest son Ned (age 13) died in June of 1840.
- ²⁶Sea-kale (*Crambe maritima*) grows wild on European coasts and when cultivated was usually blanched (resulting in a pale color and more delicate flavor).
- ²⁷The last lines allude to contemporary temperance societies while paraphrasing Sir Toby Belch's gibe at Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, II.iii.114–116: "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" The concluding moral thus interprets the catastrophe figuratively, *à la* Durand, as a life- and pleasure-denying "anathema" that is "exhaled" on innocent rural pastimes.



*The Saxon Saint, Romwold,
who forms the subject of the following "Lay,"
must not be confounded with his Gallican brother St. Romwald.*

*The former was the son of a King of the Northumbrians,
his mother being the daughter of Penda,
King of the Mercians.*

*Like so many youthful prodigies,
he died young.*

