

EARL OF HERM.

A Story Written for This Paper by James Payn.

CHAPTER I.

"See Naples," say its inhabitants, "and then die." People of other towns have the same exaggerated idea of their picturesque surroundings, and I know, too, that the folks of Louche may think very highly of their dwelling place and its environment. In that case I can't say I agree with them, but I was only a resident for a few summer months there. Like the individuals of whom it is said "you must know them well before you like them," perhaps Louche demands a long acquaintance before you get to appreciate it. There is nothing attractive in it on the surface; indeed, there is nothing at all, for the surface is always deep with every revolution. Progress when unaccompanied by noise is pleasant, but three miles an hour (the Louche rate of speed) can hardly be called progression. When the wind blows which it does, it is always there, the sand is everywhere in our hair, in our eyes, in our mouth, on the dinner table and even between the snow-white sheets of its little beds. It is only, however, to be found in the case of visitors in their shoes, because the natives don't wear shoes.

There are no trees to shelter one from the continual sandstorm, only long rows of poplars which can shelter one even from a shower—and not good specimens of poplars either—the perfectly straight ones. The landscape hardly resembles nature's handiwork, but looks like the first essay in landscape drawing by a child who has no natural gift for it, and has seen no trees but in its Noah's Ark. But, for all that, Louche is intensely enjoyable, though at the same time highly select. If you look in the guide book you will see it so described, and, for a wonder, truly.

It is a mere village (provisioned from the nearest town ten miles away), but possesses two really first-rate and well-furnished hotels and one gigantic hospital (for consumption); the highest circles of society here meet the lowest upon the common ground of health. Louche air, notwithstanding its ailments, is of sand, is supposed to be the healthiest in France, so every body who can afford it—and their name is by no means legion, for it is very dear—and wants bracing, and does not want excitement (which greatly limits our visitors), comes to the Lion of Gold or the Grand Hotel.

I was at the Lion, and did not find it very dear; because I was its head waiter.

"What, an Englishman a head waiter at a French hotel?" somebody will say,

rocks, our one amusement at Louche, in what he confidently believed to be the French language, had brought him a warning-pan.

"I am demost glad to be going from your picturesque surroundings, and I know, too, that the folks of Louche may think very highly of their dwelling place and its environment. In that case I can't say I agree with them, but I was only a resident for a few summer months there. Like the individuals of whom it is said 'you must know them well before you like them,' perhaps Louche demands a long acquaintance before you get to appreciate it. There is nothing attractive in it on the surface; indeed, there is nothing at all, for the surface is always deep with every revolution. Progress when unaccompanied by noise is pleasant, but three miles an hour (the Louche rate of speed) can hardly be called progression. When the wind blows which it does, it is always there, the sand is everywhere in our hair, in our eyes, in our mouth, on the dinner table and even between the snow-white sheets of its little beds. It is only, however, to be found in the case of visitors in their shoes, because the natives don't wear shoes.

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THIS POLITENESS... THE EARL RETURNED.

lated to be unable to oblige Monsieur, but on receiving his notice he had instantly telegraphed to Lord Herm to say that the third sitting-room which he required would be at his service. It would now be impossible to withdraw that offer.

Mr. Grogam swore at large, and scornfully increased his indignation by flying into a furious passion, but that by no means altered the landlord's view, but rather the contrary; only instead of leaving Louche, Mr. Grogam ordered his luggage to be taken once to the Lion of Gold, which he imagined would annoy his landlord above everything, instead of which Mr. Noir only laughed in his sleeve at the idea of a most disagreeable guest, while at the same time his money would still grow accustomed to the presence of Mr. Gules who had been informed of the whole matter, and effusively sympathized with the wrongs he had received in the opposition establishment.



HAD BROUGHT HIM A WARNING PAN.

"How came that about?" Perhaps I may tell you some day, but as a brother of the pen has observed (superior to myself, no doubt, in some ways, but not, I'll wager, with account books), that is another story; this one is about an Earl, and will therefore be much more attractive to the general public. At the Grand, with which the Lion of Gold was on the best of terms, because (though few knew the fact but myself) they were really carried on by the same company, there was, among other visitors, Mr. Grogam, the only Englishman except me in the place. This fact, but still more because he spoke the French tongue very imperfectly and often needed my assistance, made us more intimate than our respective positions could otherwise have permitted. He had made a great deal of money by a patent medicine, but having parted with it to a limited company, had a great dislike to be supposed to have been connected with trade. His ambition in life was to mix with the best society, and become an aristocrat; with this object he adopted an air of indifference which would have become a North American Indian, only occasionally interfered with by rather violent outbursts of temper, caused by his indigestion, a malady which (added to what he had heard of the exclusiveness of the place) had brought him to Louche.

He was full of anecdotes of the British aristocracy, which he sometimes had the assurance to narrate to me as though I were a member of the aristocracy. Thus, having heard that when, after a fortnight's stay at the Grand—during which no English visitors of distinction happened to have arrived, and his indignation was not appeased—Mr. Grogam gave notice to quit his apartments, it gave satisfaction to Mr. Noir, his host, rather than otherwise.

Mr. Grogam came over to me to tell me what he had done and the assigned cause for it, which was the impertinence of a waiter, who, when he had asked for a bowl (to put some sea anemones on a table) collected from the

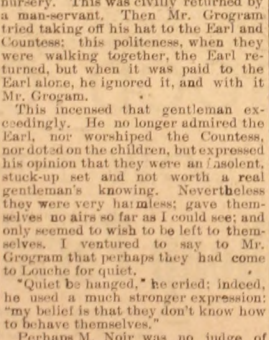
CHAPTER II.

On the morrow the Earl and Countess and family, with a numerous suite, took up their quarters at the Grand, an arrival which, notwithstanding we were accustomed to the presence of distinguished persons, caused no little sensation. Mr. Grogam was greatly excited. He admired the Earl, he worshipped the Countess, he doted on the dear children (the little Lords and Ladies Sark) playing on the sands with their aboriginal toys, but he yet displaying in every motion their lofty lineage; but he could find no opportunity of making their acquaintance. The children seemed his best chance; they were always accompanied by their attendants, so that he could not get speech with them, but he hit on the device of sending them a basin of sea anemones for their acceptance in the nursery. This was civilly returned by a man-servant. Then Mr. Grogam tried taking off his hat to the Earl and Countess; this politeness, when they were walking together, the Earl returned, but when it was paid to the Earl alone, he ignored it, and with it Mr. Grogam.

This incensed that gentleman exceedingly. He no longer admired the Earl, he worshipped the Countess, nor doted on the children, but expressed his opinion that they were an insolent, stuck-up set and not worth a real gentleman's knowing. Nevertheless they were very handsome; gave themselves no airs so far as I could see; and only seemed to wish to be left to themselves. I ventured to say to Mr. Grogam that perhaps they had come to Louche for quiet.

"Quiet be hanged," he cried; indeed, he used a much stronger expression: "My belief is that they don't know how to behave themselves."

Perhaps Mr. Noir was no judge of



TOKE OPEN THE WRAPPERS FROM THE BOOK.

manner, but he liked his new guests, who gave him much less trouble than Mr. Grogam had done, and kept their tempers. They seemed to have an attraction for that gentleman, notwithstanding that he despised them so. For they stayed on at the Lion of Gold, whence he could watch their movements (which he did unobscuringly at the other hotel, and hear every rumor of their proceedings. He had been also watching for the post for a day or two with much anxiety, and at last what he wanted, which was apparently a large book parcel, arrived.

He had come down to the inn door

meet the mail, and to my astonishment to open the wrappers from the book—for there was only one—and opened it, then and there with feverish haste. The saying out: "I thought so, I thought so," he hurried up to his room.

Had he not been an Englishman, all who stood by, and there were many, would have thought him mad, but the good folks of Louche were used to the eccentricities of our countrymen, and only murmured.

"Ces Anglais! Ces Anglais!"

In a few minutes a waiter told me that Mr. Grogam wished to see me in his room. I found him in a wild state of excitement and exhilaration.

"Sit down, sit down, and hear my news," he cried. "Only for the present keep it a secret. It will spread fast enough, all in good time. You doubt yourself, I think, of my knowledge of the world—especially of the great world—but now you will see I was right enough."

I hastened to assure him that so far as any opinion of mine to his detriment was concerned, he was mistaken. For, as I have said, I was a hundred times enough, and knew at all events, if not the ways of the great world, if not the ways of a guest in first-floor apartments, to recompense a head waiter after meals.

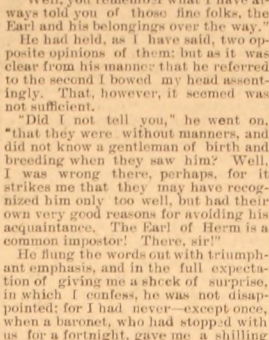
"Now, you remember what I have always told you of those fine folks, the Earl and his belongings over the way."

He had held, as I have said, two opposite opinions of them; but as it was clear from his manner that he referred to the second I bowed my head assentingly. That, however, it seemed was not sufficient.

"Did I not tell you," he went on, "that they were without manners, and did not know a gentleman of birth and breeding when they saw him? Well, I was wrong there, perhaps, for it strikes me that they may have recognized him only too well, but had their own very good reasons for avoiding his acquaintance. The Earl of Herm is a common impostor! There, sir!"

He hung the words out with triumph and emphasis, and in the full expectation of giving me a shock of surprise, in which I confess, he was not disappointed; for I had never—except once, when a baronet, who had stopped with us for a fortnight, gave me a shilling when parting, been more astonished in my life. The Earl had been, so affable, the Countess so gentle, the children (as I had thought) such true little gentlemen and ladies, that the news that they were all impostors took my breath away.

"Yes," he repeated; "a common impostor, and when the time comes to settle his bill, will turn out to be a swindler also, no doubt. The proof is in my hand," and he looked at the great book he held in it with such a joyful reverence that it might have been a family Bible. "I had my doubts about them from the first," he went on, "because I did not remember any such title as they pretend to bear, and my acquaintance with the best circles makes me exultant of such matters, and at last it struck me to send to London for a British Peerage, and here it is, with neither Herm nor Sark in it, from cover to cover. That fellow, Noir, is a very unskillful fellow, and I can't say I'm sorry for him, but he will now bitterly repent the taking John Grogam's room away from him to accommodate a



"GLACIOUS HEAVENS!" CRIED MR. GROGAM.

leaving Louche at once, and never, as you say, breathing a syllable of what has happened. By this means you are even laying their royal highnesses under an obligation. It is probable," I added, "with mysterious significance, that you will hear of them at a future time."

I did not say he would hear from them, and it was not my fault that he so translated my words.

Order me a carriage, I am off at once," he said, and away he went to pack his things. In twenty minutes Mr. Grogam had left Louche. "You will not forget me, if any opportunity should occur to call me to the remembrance of—ahem—the Earl."

"Indeed, Mr. Grogam, I will not forget you."

He pressed something into my hand that sounded musically—like a bank-note—which showed that on his part had not "forgotten" the head-waiter.

[THE END.]

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"THE PROOF IS IN MY HAND."

company of impostors, and a pretty bill they will have to pay by this time, which will never, I'll be sworn, have 'settled' at the bottom of it."

Much as I regretted this news, that was no doubt about the truth of it, for I examined the "Peerage" for myself, and no Earl of Herm was to be found in it. And it was doubted, that a very serious matter for Mr. Noir, and also for the double hotel company.

"Your employer will be pleased, and small blame to him," continued Mr. Grogam, divining my thoughts, or rather half of them, "for his rival at the Grand will be hit dead. I can't resist telling him what has happened, but he needn't tell Noir unless he likes until he's been hit a bit harder."

"Indeed," I said, reprovingly, "that would be very dishonorable, and for that reason I will not do it, for I thought that suggestion very sharp practice."

"That is as Gules may think," returned Mr. Grogam drily; "and now let us go to him, and you shall act as interpreter between us."

So we went, and Mr. Grogam told his story, through me, to my employer. The hotel-keeper looked very grave, as he well might, but when he was asked why, replied that what he was sorry about was not his rival's loss, but the injury to his business. The two landlords would do Louche itself. "We shall have the reputation of harboring sham nobility."

"Well, of course," said Mr. Grogam slyly, "it ought to be an innkeeper's business to know a gentleman when he sees him."

As I knew he would do, M. Gules went across to the Grand at once (with the "British Peerage" in his hand) and looked with him for the better explanation of matters. The two landlords were really on excellent terms, but in order to keep up the delusion that their hotels were in opposition they seldom met or called on one another, so that our coming caused quite a stir.

Upon Mr. Noir himself, however, we by no means made the impression we expected to make. When I had told him the story in such French as I could command, and M. Gules had corroborated the facts with a "Mille, Mille!" "All you tell me is very true, and Mr. Grogam is quite right."

That was astonishing enough, but when he added very gravely, in a whisper, that he was a member of the royal family of England, and that, indeed, you might have knocked me down with a feather—"I am sorry to

have been obliged to keep this secret," he continued, "even from you, M. Gules, but the orders of our Chairman were imperative. I was to reveal the matter to nobody—now I suppose," he added, turning angrily to me, "it must all come out, thanks to the idiocy of your fellow-countryman."

"I think I can answer to keep him quiet, and even of getting him out of the way," I said.

"If you do so, it will be to your advantage," said M. Noir significantly.

I went back to Mr. Grogam—almost frightened him to death by telling him what a dreadful mistake he had made in stigmatizing royal highnesses as impostors. His behavior was abject in the extreme. Not a syllable, he averred, would he breathe upon the subject again so long as he lived; if the devotion of a loyal subject would atone for so hideous an error, it would be seen in his future conduct, and so on. Then I saw that he intended to crawl upon his hands and knees before these royalties, and destroy their incognito by humility.

"Mr. Grogam," I said, "it is too late; their royal highnesses know all."

"Gracious heavens!" cried Mr. Grogam, and burst into tears. "What an opportunity I have missed by my inattention!"

"Not altogether," said I, encouragingly. "You can still make amends by



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Nollekens. The English sculptor, and miser also, by the way, was born the year before George III., and died three years later than that long-lived monarch. If niggardly in money matters, he was generous as an artist, and had a kindly heart. He was employed much by King George, and, with all his familiarity with the court, seemed incapable of comprehending the abstract idea of distinction in rank.

He would take the Duke of York or the Prince of Wales familiarly by the button, ask for their father, the King, and express great pleasure at hearing he was well, saying, "When he is gone we shall never get such another."

Once, when the old King was sitting to him for his bust, Nollekens stuck a pair of compasses into the royal nose, to measure the distance from the upper lip to the forehead, as if he had been measuring a block of marble. The King laughed heartily, and was much amused to find a person who was ignorant of the interval supposed to separate royalty from plain, every-day mortals.

Nollekens had a rare generosity, however, which more than made up for his eccentricities. When Chantrey, afterward so famous, sent his bust of Horace to the exhibition he was young and unfriended, Nollekens said to those who were arranging the works for the exhibition: "There's a fine—a very fine—work. Let the man who made it be known. Remove one of my busts and put this one in its place."

Often afterward, when he was requested to make a bust, he would say, in his persuasive, well-nigh irresistible way, "Go to Chantrey; he's the man for a bust. He'll make a good bust of you. I always recommend him."

Yet this same man was penurious to a fault, and by absolute frugality accumulated a fortune of a million dollars.—Youth's Companion.

Premiums for Speed.

A tidy little sum has been paid out by the Government in premiums to the builders of naval vessels during the present year. By exceeding the speed required the Bancroft netted her contractors \$45,000, the Detroit \$150,000, the New York \$200,000, and the Machias \$45,000, a total of \$440,000. This amount is likely to be increased after the speed trial of the Columbia next month. The money may be regarded as well invested if it does no more than call attention to the high standard of excellence attainable by American shipbuilders.—Boston Transcript.

Honor the Pigeon.

"It would have been a great calamity to the newspapers if there had been no such bird as the pigeon."

"How is that?"

"Why, in reporting a thunder-storm, accompanied by hail, they could not say: 'Hail-stones fell as large as pigeon's eggs.'—New York Press.

BIG FIRES IN THE SUN.

Disturbances Which Materially Affected the Weather on This Planet Recently.

The tremendous fires on the sun's surface, exceeding in size and intensity anything measurable by human unaided eyes, recently drew the attention of all astronomers. This description of the wonderful solar disturbances was given to a Philadelphia Record man by Astronomer Garrett P. Serviss:

"A stupendous group of black spots, easily visible to the naked eye when the latter is protected by a dark glass, was on the meridian of the sun. No less than twelve smaller groups of spots were visible on the disk at the same time, so that the appearance of the sun's face was most extraordinary, recently drawn the attention of all astronomers. This description of the wonderful solar disturbances was given to a Philadelphia Record man by Astronomer Garrett P. Serviss:

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The Rabbi's Clever Daughter.

In one of the many and varied incidents on the creation of women in the Talmud, the Emperor Hadrian is introduced as conversing with Rabbi Gamaliel on several religious questions. With the object of casting ridicule on the Bible, Hadrian exclaimed: "Why, your God is represented therein as a thief! He surprised Adam in his sleep and robbed him of one of his ribs!"

The rabbi's daughter, who was present, craves permission to reply to the Emperor. This is granted her. "But first let me implore thy imperial protection, puissant Sir!" she exclaims. "A grave outrage has perpetrated on our house."

"Who has dared to inflict any harm on the abode of a friend?" asked the sovereign.

"Under cover of the night an audacious thief broke into our house, took a silver flask from our chest, and left a golden one in its stead."

"What a welcome thief!" cries Hadrian, "would that such robbers might visit my palace every day!"

"And was not the Creator even such a thief as this," archly rejoins the blushing damsel, "who deprived Adam of a rib, and in lieu thereof gave him a loving, lovely bride?"—Nineteenth Century.

Diphtheria from Rags.

The absolute necessity for disinfection in this procedure alone can be found humanly from the propagation and transmission of contagious diseases, is again well illustrated by the case recently reported by Dr. L. J. Rhea of Carey, Iowa. He was called to see a child 8 years old and found a fully developed case of diphtheria, followed in the course of ten days by five others. There were no cases in the neighborhood, but upon investigation it was found that the father three days previously had bought a sack of old rags from a neighbor, who, nine years before had taken them from a house where diphtheria prevailed, and of a very malignant type. The sack was opened by the children, and the rags were found with which the children amused themselves. During this time the rags had remained undisturbed in an old out-house.—Annals of Hygiene.

Couldn't Help It.

Readers who have never expressed themselves by slamming a door will hardly appreciate the following:

Mr. Bliffers and Mr. Whiffers have desks in the same office. The other day Bliffers was trying to straighten an intricate account.

"I say, Whiffers," he broke out, "can't you run that type-writing machine without making such an infernal racket?"

"No," said Whiffers, "not when I'm writing to a man who has called me a fool."—New York Weekly.

The Hardest Thing in the World to

do is a hot temper.

ILLINOIS INCIDENTS.

SOBER OR STARTLING, FAITHFULLY RECORDED.

Illinois' Great Corn Crop—Exceeding Out the Trusts—Child-Labor Increasing in Factories—Found a Dead Farmer in a Well—Returned to Claim Her Own.

From Far and Near.

ON the big Chicago drainage canal nearly 2,500 idle men are given employment by the Sanitary Trustees.

WILLIAM MANDSON, of Roschill, applied at a Chicago police station for a wife. He wants his children cared for.

LOUIS SIMMONS, a white resident of Mascoutah, 41 years old, was ducked in a pond for presuming to want to marry Mrs. Emma Jackson, colored, who weighs 100 pounds.

THE State Board of Equalization adopted a resolution declaring that real and personal property in this State was assessed this year by local assessors at an average rate of 25 per cent of its cash value.

MRS. ANNA M. FISCHER, a widow, aged 63, was found dead at her home in Mascoutah. It is thought she committed suicide. Her husband died a few years ago. She had recently committed suicide a year later, and recently Mrs. Fischer lost all her money by the failure of a bank.

ATTORNEY GENERAL MOLONEY, in answer to an inquiry from Chairman Gore, of the State Board of Agriculture, gave an opinion that the State could not issue a letter directing to each of the corporations doing business in Illinois, between 25,000 and 35,000 in number. The last Legislature passed an act directing the Secretary to send out on or about the first day of September a letter of inquiry to each corporation doing business in Illinois requiring them to make an affidavit as to their connection with trusts.

THE largest mail ever sent to the Postoffice from the Secretary of State office consisted of a letter directed to each of the corporations doing business in Illinois, between 25,000 and 35,000 in number. The last Legislature passed an act directing the Secretary to send out on or about the first day of September a letter of inquiry to each corporation doing business in Illinois requiring them to make an affidavit as to their connection with trusts.

AT Alton, a very peculiar legal case was developed by the sudden appearance of a woman who had been mourned as dead for thirty years. Matthew Schaub, of North Alton, died in 1877, leaving a property of about \$100,000 to his two daughters, Mary and Susan. Nothing was heard of the lost sister until Thursday, when she identified herself and fled her claim to the estate, which was outlawed by her non-appearance thirteen years ago.

C. P. STEVENS, Assistant Inspector of Illinois child labor, is increasing in spite of statutory enactments intended to check the employment of children. The census of 1890 gave the number of wage-earning children in the country as 1,118,258—one child out of every sixteen robbed of its birthright and its opportunity for growth and mental training. "It is probable," he said, "that at the present time not less than 2,000,000 children under 16 are employed in workshops or factories."

TWO TRAVELERS stopped at a well for water Thursday in an isolated place west of Mavis. The pulley worked hard, and the required six combined strength of both men to draw the bucket. When it reached the top the men were horrified to find the corpse of a man clinging to the bucket with a death grip. It turned out to be the remains of Ernest Tillack, a well-known farmer of the community, who had been mysteriously missing several days.

THE rumors that the Illinois corn crop was short this year are utterly without foundation, according to D. W. Vitum, who has charge of the Department of Agriculture in the Illinois State Building, and who has received some remarkable specimens of this year's growth. President Lafayette Funk said his corn would run fully one-third better. Col. Judy said the same, while Mr. Vitum said he had 400 acres of Illinois corn in a recent fight with Illinois would beat Iowa on the corn crop this year.

LEBANON burglars used too much dynamite wrecking a building and arousing the town. Three are arrested on suspicion.

J. H. GRAY, a druggist of Greenfield, by mistake took a large dose of acetone as a cough medicine and is in a critical condition.

ONE hundred and four indictments for crimes ranging from murder to illegal liquor selling have been returned by the Sangamon County grand jury.

GEORGE KRESS, of Woodside, was shot by C. I. Widup. Kress offended Widup's sister and Widup drew a revolver and shot him. His injuries are not thought to be fatal.

WILLIAM KING, blacksmith of Brownstown, was found dead on the depot platform at that place. The skull was crushed and the supposition is that he was murdered.

CHARLES, alias "Chick" McMullan, a tough who has caused infinite trouble for the Chicago police, is dead from a bullet in a recent fight with two officers, both of whom were seriously hurt.

EX-ALD. FRED SOMMER, an old Springfield resident, was killed by an electric street car. He had just alighted from a car and was caught by one going in an opposite direction. He was killed by the children.

THE One Hundred and First Illinois Regiment had its reunion, and a large number of gray-haired veterans met to shake hands, many of them for the first time in several years. The scenes were affecting, especially when they recalled the brave old captain, J. H. Seymour, of Irving Park, who may never meet with them again.

THE Central Illinois conferences of the Methodist Episcopal and Free Methodist churches adjourned, after the announcement of appointments.

THOMAS BEARD, aged 21 years, was arrested on the charge of abducting Rosalie Burnett, the 14-year-old daughter of Mrs. Frances Burnett, Belleville. At the same time Aloysius Gleber, aged 23, took Nora Finn, aged 16, to St. Louis. Nora was arrested and held in the Grand Jury building. She admits that she took the girl from home, but claims he wanted to marry her, and had no evil intentions toward her.