

toilet Shop" and the "Palace of Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey."

GET RICH OFF AMERICANS.

The so-called "palace" is a tolerably good huddling establishment, the "Old Curiosity Shop" carries on a fair trade in waste paper, and the "Cheshire Cheese" really is more than 200 years old and a first-rate place to go to imagine oneself back in the London of Queen Anne and to get a real English chop, a mug of "bitter" and some of the "pudding" which is the place's specialty. Probably all three of these establishments would be prosperous in any event, but it is simply food for thought because of the Americans who patronize them under the fond delusion that they are what they pretend to be that each is a little Kentucky to its owner.

Only the shop proprietor—one Carter—knew how many American men have got shaved and how many more American women had things done to their hair at No. 17 Fleet street just because they believed the immense sign which tops the place. This distinctly states that the place was "formerly the palace of Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey."

Probably, however, the number of folk who have been duped by the claims of the "Palace" is nothing to that of those whom the "Old Curiosity Shop" has taken in. On the strength of its claim—also made in big letters on its outer walls—this shop does a roaring business with Americans who visit it on the strength of its "associations." They buy post-cards bearing pictures of the place, photographs and paintings of it (most of the latter showing Little Nell and her grandfather in the doorway) and Dickens' works in all sorts of editions and at highly advanced prices.

PROOF THAT THEY ARE "FAKES."

It has been said so emphatically that "Woolsey's Palace" and the "Old Curiosity Shop" are "buntings" that the statement should be substantiated without delay. Regarding the first, it was some question as to the desirability of acquiring its "rehold." They had just been the city officials to investigate its history. Then it was shown that, far from ever having been a royal palace, the building began its career as an office of the Duchy of Cornwall in the reign of Charles I, who, of course, came a long time after Henry VIII. It remained a government office for many years, but finally was turned into a "coffee-house" and as "Mandor" became rather famous, especially as the scene of a rather picturesque little incident which started on his career the young lawyer who finally became Chancellor. Thence, some years later, however, the place degenerated still further—becoming the home of a wax-works show at the beginning of the last century—and after that its vicissitudes were many. It has been a barber shop for twenty-five years, during which time it has been described systematically as "formerly the Palace," et cetera.

So far as the "Old Curiosity Shop" is concerned, inquiry proves that it has not even the shadow of a claim to be a Dickens relic. Concerning this point the writer was told by a grandson of the late novelist that not only was the Lincoln's Inn shop spurious, but that no exact original of the home of Little Nell ever existed. And this informant called my attention to a definite statement by Charles Dickens the younger which settles the matter for all time. This was once made in the course of an English magazine article and runs as follows:

"With mere unintelligent and unsupported fable I do not intend to trouble myself—with the absurd credulity, for instance, which induces some travelers to believe that the house in Portsmouth street, Lincoln's Inn, which has in some inexplicable way come to be labeled as the Old Curiosity Shop, has anything in the remotest degree to do with the story."

Perhaps it is only just to add that the shop, though in no way connected with Dickens, is really quite old, there being reason, in fact, to believe that it dates back to the reign of Charles II.

"WHERE JOHNSON SAT."

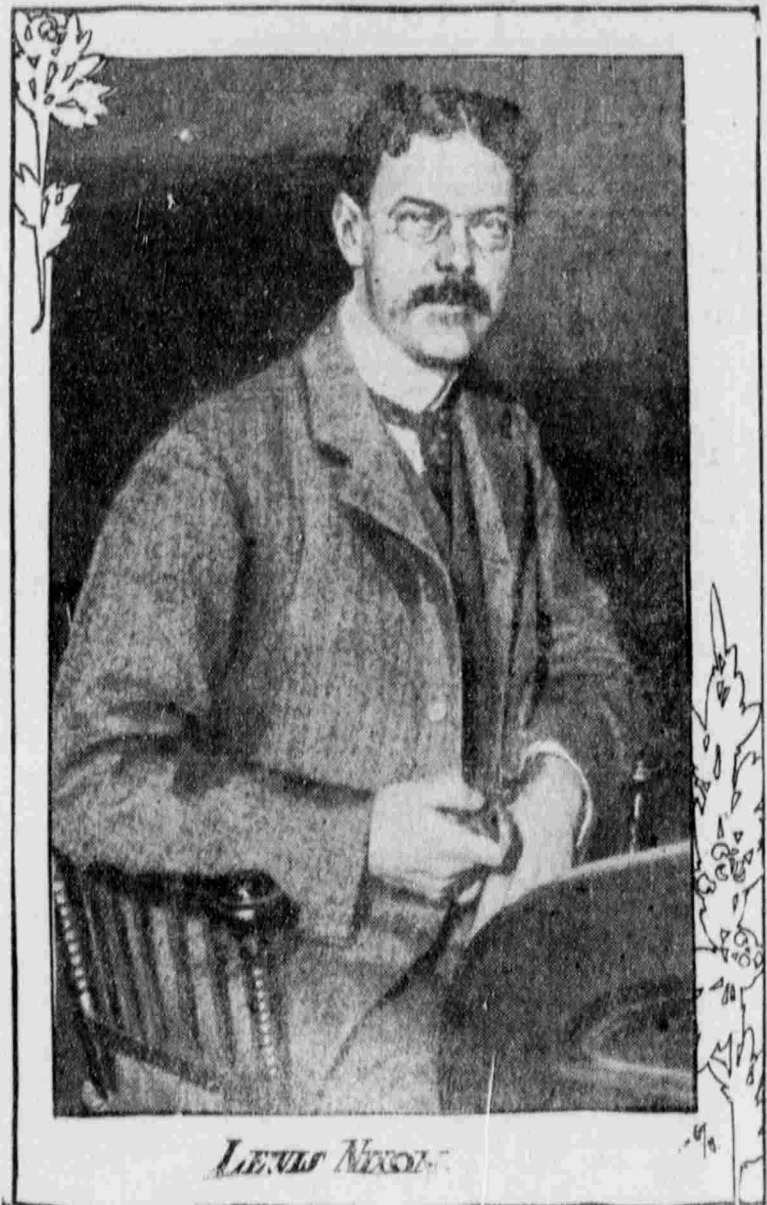
The Americans who burrow through the little Fleet street alley known as "Wine Office Court," in which the "Cheshire Cheese" stands, and, enclosed in its old-fashioned, paneled seats, partake of the time-honored dishes, are shown not only "Dr. Johnson's former chair" but his "favorite corner," with a smudge on the wall behind it produced, supposedly, by the grease from the great lexicographer's wig. The corner seat is marked with a brass tablet which distinctly states that Dr. Samuel Johnson was in the habit of sitting there, and as every one knows, the old legend is to the effect that he, with his faithful satellites, Goldsmith and Boswell, used to be among the best customers of the place.

In the summer months the "Cheshire Cheese" hardly can accommodate all the transatlantic folk who want to eat "where Dr. Johnson did." Moreover, few such customers escape without investing rather heavily in the many "souvenirs" of the place which are on sale, and which include books giving its "history," postcards, beer mugs—which cost less than five cents and are sold for sixty cents—pipes, match safes and several other things; all, of course, bearing pictures of the "Cheese." The present writer does not pretend to know what this tavern makes every year out of its American patrons, but when its present proprietor acquired the place some thirty years ago it cost him \$100,000, and the valuation which he now puts upon it is said to be \$200,000.

NOT MENTIONED BY BOSWELL.

To folk who have thrilled at the sight of "Johnson's" chair and corner at the "Cheshire Cheese" it may seem almost like sacrilege to question the genuineness of these "relics." But the fact re-

SERVING TWO MASTERS.



Lewis Nixon, Jr., who has been shipping torpedoes to Russia, is going to rebuild the Russian navy. Mr. Nixon also is said to be supplying torpedoes to Japan. If proved to be a fact there will undoubtedly be some trouble. Russia may demand that he refuse all contracts from Japan.

main that while there is only one reason for believing that Dr. Johnson may have visited the "Cheese" occasionally, there are quite a number of them for assuming that he was not one of its steady customers and that it was not the scene of his causeries with Boswell and Goldsmith. The burly philosopher did for several years live only a short distance from the tavern, which had a house in Gough square, which is at the end of another of the queer little alleys leading out of Fleet street, of which Wine Office court, which is the "Cheese" stands, is another. Consequently he may have gone there sometimes.

But if he went there so often and sat in the same place so regularly that his wig smudged the wall, why is it that Boswell, who recorded almost every movement of his idolized patron (and who is supposed to have gone there with him), makes no mention of the fact? "Bozzy" goes into details about the Fleet street tavern which he and Johnson—and occasionally Goldsmith—visited, but he says nothing about the "Cheshire Cheese." And what is rather striking, neither do the doctor's two other biographers—Hawkins and Crocker.

From Boswell one would gather that the Queen's Bench churchyard, which used to stand in St. Paul's churchyard; the Cook Tavern in Fleet street and the Essex Head, close by, were steady haunts of Samuel Johnson, and that his favorite "hang-out" was the old "Miter," also in the street of newspapers. For here it was that, as his indefatigable biographer says, "he loved to sit up late, and often made my head ache with pot." The "Miter" was, in fact, the scene of Boswell's first supper with Johnson, at which, as the disciple says: "He called out to me with warmth, 'Give me your hand, I was late to you.' And Boswell's account leaves little or no doubt that it was at the "Miter" that Goldsmith and Sir Joshua Reynolds so often joined them.

SOME CONTRADICTIONS.

In this connection, it is rather natural to turn to the somewhat laudatory volume about the "Cheshire Cheese" which the visitors thereto have the privilege of buying and to see what it has to say. The reason is, of course, that the tavern's "press agent" has to admit, of course, that Boswell doesn't mention the "Cheese," but he gets around it by declaring that his biographer did not meet Johnson until the latter was an old man, or in other words, until after he had left off visiting the "Cheese." But, a few pages on, Sir Walter Besant, another believer in the legend, is quoted to the effect that Dr. Johnson spent the evenings of his last years wholly at the tavern! And if it is true that Boswell fails to mention the "Cheese," because he never went there with Johnson, what of the following paragraph which is to be found in the introduction to this entertaining volume?

"We can see Johnson in his favorite seat, munching and talking as who should say, 'I am Sir Oracle, and when I open my mouth let no dog bark,' and there Boswell may be seen, with eyes fixed reverently on the sage, drinking in every one of his words to serve as material for that undying life of his."

Perhaps it is rather significant, too, that despite all the diary writing that was done in those days and the frequency with which Johnson is supposed to have visited the "Cheshire Cheese," only one witness—and that a rather discreditable one—can be found to connect the lexicographer with the place. This is one Cyrus Jay who perpetrated a small volume of reminiscences in 1815, or a quarter of a century after the death of Johnson. And Jay merely claims to have known several old gentlemen who used to meet Johnson at the "Cheshire Cheese." His value as a witness, however, can be guessed when it is said that his last years seem to have been devoted to the consumption of gin and water, which finally killed him.

Even Haudeker refers to Johnson's "alleged" chair at the "Cheshire Cheese." Although the Johnson club, which is composed of admirers of the lexicographer, holds its annual dinner at the "Cheese," it is, so the club's secretary states, because the place really is the last of the ancient London taverns, and not because of its supposed connection with Johnson.

Whether or not, however, Dr. Johnson was a visitor to the "Cheshire Cheese," there is one particularly ironic circumstance in connection with American patronage of the tavern, and that is the fact Dr. Johnson hated Americans. "I am willing to love all mankind except an American," Boswell makes him say in conversation with Miss Seward. And when the lady replied, "Sir, this is an instance that we are always most violent against those whom we have injured," the lexicographer

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WHY J. P. MORGAN COULD NOT BUY IT.

(Continued from page eleven.)

lage Innkeeper he has learned all about the oldest dwellings and once in their little dwellings his sharp eyes have noted everything that would be interesting to the collector. A curious old dresser here, a rare old fire-place there, a quaint metal pot or pitcher, valuable old china on account of its age, etc. Nothing escapes the agent and it is with great tactfulness that he leads up to a suggestion that they should part with their old grandfather's clock, chair or whatever it may be. It is no easy task. There are old folks who cannot be induced to part with the pots and pans that belonged to their grandfather's grandfather. Old carved chests and settees are to venerable dames like their own children. So the agent goes away, but only to come again time after time to see that the rare old things have not been secured by some one else and to test again the owners' objection to selling them. When distress in any form comes to the villager the agent is very keen, for under such circumstances he often has been able to secure what in good times would have been withheld from his grasp.

Some of the aristocratic collectors of art treasures in England, even keep shops where they can display and resell their discoveries. Herbert Kitchen, whose father was the dean of Winchester and is now the dean of Durham, is one of these. Of a little cottage just out of Winchester he has made a perfect treasure house of beautiful and rare antiquities, nothing whatever within its walls suggesting modern times. And in Winchester itself, Mr. Kitchen has a small shop where old pewter, oak, china, silver and rarities of all descriptions are on sale.

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