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STRANGE LEGISLATORS

BRITISH COMMONS HAS HAD SOME QUEER MEMBERS.

Among the Human Curiosities Who Have Penetrated to Westminster None Were More Remarkable Than James O'Kelly and J. F. X. O'Brien, Gentlemen of Fortune, and Many Times Near Death.

The British House of Commons has, at one time or another, numbered among its members some very remarkable men, whose presence there is almost as inexplicable as that of the fly in the amber, and two at least of whom would, if the law had had its way, have been numbered among the dead long years before they sat at Westminster.

One of this singular and romantic pair was Mr. James O'Kelly, member for Roscommon, the story of whose adventures before he became a legislator is more thrilling than fiction. To give but a few examples: When Mr. O'Kelly was a young man he was correspondent of a Cuban paper at a time when that country was in the throes of civil war. He was arrested as a spy, sentenced to death, and was actually facing the rifles of the firing party when the United States consul arrived on the scene for his rescue. A few seconds before the fatal command to fire would have been given, he fought gallantly with the French against the Prussians, saved the life of the Empress of Brazil, had a hundred hairbreadth escapes from death in Canada, Mexico, and Algeria, and was lost for a whole year in the Southern Sea.

Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, the second of this adventurous pair, was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered for the part he took in a Pagan rising; and it was only his gallantry during a fire, when all great risks are taken, that saved him from the gallows. His life was rescued some years ago, and he was commuted to one of penal servitude for life, which after years of duration was remitted.

Thrice at least the House of Commons has included men of color, of whom Mr. Dabhi Koorji was the most notable. Mr. John Stewart, who sat for the borough of Leamington in four successive Parliaments, was a full-blooded negro; and Mr. David Ochterlony Dyce-Sombre, who was elected for the Suffolk borough of Sudbury and afterwards lost his seat in bribery, was a grandson of the Begum of Sirdhana, from whom he inherited a fortune of \$2,500,000.

Within recent years Parliament has had at least three blind members. One of them was, of course, Mr. Fawcett, who was the first blind member of the House of Commons. The second was the Hon. Mr. Gladstone's second Administration; the second was knighted for his services on the Commission on the Blind, Deaf and Dumb; and the third, who for a long time represented the Ossory division of the Queen's County, had, in spite of his blindness, won high honors at Trinity College, Dublin.

But probably the most remarkable man who ever sat in the British Commons was Mr. Arthur Kavanagh, who, legless and armless, a mere trunk of a man, had to be carried into the House on the back of an attendant. Mr. Kavanagh was a hard worker and an excellent speaker, and made so light of his physical disqualifications that he was an ardent huntsman, a skilful shot and angler, and a daring explorer, who, among other wonderful feats, made his way, by Russia and Persia, to Bombay.

The House of Commons has had many men of great stature, but the tallest of them all was probably Sir Frederick Milner, of whom the following story is told: When he and Sir Frank Lockwood once met at a dinner, the baronet warned his hearers that Sir Frank was going to caricature him. "It is perfectly true," answered Lockwood, himself a man of six feet two inches, "that I contemplated issuing a portrait of my worthy friend, but, owing to his great length, it would have to come out in parts, and I had misgivings as to getting subscribers."

It seems almost an impossible thing for a man to be elected to Parliament without having the slightest knowledge of the honor that was being done him, but this seemingly impossible thing has happened more than once. Captain Suter graduated as M.P. while fighting, 6,000 miles away, in South Africa; Sir James Ferguson, while lying at death's door from wounds received in the Crimea; Sir E. F. Evans, while absent in America; and O'Donovan Rossa, who in prison for treason-felony, Mr. John Daly was returned for Limerick while a resident in Portland Prison; and Mr. Michael Davitt was the elect of Meath in 1882, when he went back to prison to complete an unexpired sentence. In 1882 Mr. Powell, the Tory member for Malmesbury, ascended in a balloon and vanished completely from human ken; and Mr. Douglas Pym, member for West Waterford, made an equally mysterious and dramatic exit from the world. He was even on the steamboat crossing from Dublin to Holyhead, but on its arrival no trace of him was visible beyond a handbag and a few letters.

King's Glove Hand. It is not generally known that King George's custom of appearing with his right hand gloved and the other bare has its origin in something more than a mere whim of fashion. The wearing of a glove on the right hand by a monarch is a distinct survival of the days when the sovereign's touch was held to be a certain cure for all kinds of disease, especially scrofula.

In the days when at certain dates it was customary for hundreds of sick men and mendicants of all kinds to be laid out in the courtyard of royal palaces awaiting the healing touch of the "anointed of the Lord," monarchs found it necessary to wear a glove in order to escape infection. This was the habit which during modern times has passed into a mere fad of fashion, the significance of which has long been forgotten by the majority of people.—M.A.P.

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NOBLE BREADWINNERS.

Titled Sailors Before the Mast and Aristocrats In the Goldfields.

The romantic story just disclosed of Sir Claude Robert Campbell, who after serving before the mast on a sailing ship, met his death while heroically trying to save his shipmates in a shipwreck, calls to mind the extraordinary career of the Earl of Cromartie, who died a short time ago. His was an astonishing life of adventure, and amongst other experiences, he could boast of having sailed before the mast, although he had passed his examinations and secured a second mate's certificate.

Lord Graham, too, has served before the mast. The late Lord Cromartie was among the first to peg out claims in the goldfields of Western Australia. Afterwards he qualified as a mining engineer, went to the United States, and there got a job as a miner in a big gold-mine at Montana, and worked for twelve months at wages at rock-drilling ten hours a day.

A short time ago it was reported that Sir Arthur Currie, who went to the Klondike goldfields in 1896 and mysteriously disappeared, had been discovered living as a hermit trapper near that gold-mining region. Proof of this story, however, has not yet been found, but it reminds one of the return of Sir Genlle Cave-Brown-Cave in 1908, who came into the title after a most adventurous and exciting career, having in his time been a naval officer, a big game hunter, cowboy, and riding master of a crack dragon corps. In addition, he tried his luck in the Mysore goldfields.

Although he has independent means, the Hon. Francis Patrick Clements, brother and heir of Lord Letrim, prefers to earn his own living, and some time ago worked on a ranch in America working on a ranch. Mention might also be made of Lord Lyveden, who has, amongst other experiences, run a nursery garden in North Carolina, owned a fishing boat at Charleston, and become in turn a ship's steward, an innkeeper, and a dragoon.

With the possible exception of Lord Orford, he has had the most diversified career of any living member of the peerage.

Bags of Rupees Crusted With Mould.

The hoarded wealth of India is traditional, and all sorts of suggestions have been made to bring about the utilization of this wealth which lies fallow. A few years ago Sir Ernest Cable had a good deal to say on the subject, and a few months back Mr. T. H. S. Bidolph, financial adviser to a native state in Northern India, in the course of a speech at home, suggested that all existing railway lines should be converted into companies for the purpose of "unearthing India's hoarded millions." In his opinion, the reason why Indians are unwilling to invest their money in commercial undertakings is, that they have no ready means of selling out in times of need. But all attempts to unearth "India's hoarded millions" had failed until the co-operative credit society came into operation. We find the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab stating, in his review of the working of the co-operative credit societies in his province during the past year, that "bags of rupees, crusted with mould" have been deposited in the banks which have been established in connection with these societies. Sir Lewis Duns says that the restoration of these mould-crusted rupees into circulation shows that "the co-operative movement is beginning to tap the hoarded wealth of the provinces. He even looks forward to the movement as "one means of securing the erection of elevators in the great wheat-exporting tract." The co-operative credit system results in India, and may help in developing the industrial resources of India in a manner undreamt of by the Government.

Birds Without Nests.

There are scores of different kinds of birds in and around the city of Britain which never dream of building nests. These either steal nests or do without them altogether. The kingfishers and the woodpeckers, as well as the cuckoos, never build, but dump their eggs into the nest of any other bird that comes handy. Our commonest little hawk, the kestrel, has a fancy for the disused nest of a carrion crow or magpie if she can find one at a sufficient height above the ground to suit her.

That odd-looking bird, the night-jar, makes no nest, but chooses some hollow on the bare ground sheltered by bracken, there lays its two mottled, lead-colored eggs. Game birds, mostly have no nests, and lay their eggs in a hollow on the ground. None of the plover family take much trouble about nest-building. The stone-curlew, or Norfolk plover, neglects even the few benches which the plover generally places below her eggs. That rare member of the plover family, the dotterel, lays its four pear-shaped eggs in a depression of the sand or shingle on the summit of a hill or mountain.

Must Have a Tunnel.

An interesting story of the construction of the Canterbury and Whitstable line in 1824 is told by the writer of that part of "Our Home Railways" devoted to the Southeastern and Chatham line. John Dixon, the engineer sent down by George Stephenson, made a survey and chose an easy route through Blean. The Canterbury committee was then called to consider his plans. "What! no tunnel?" asked one of these intelligent men. "No sir," said Dixon; "I am pleased to say no tunnelling is necessary, and the line is practically level." "Oh," said some of the others, "we must have a tunnel." They insisted, and Stephenson journeyed to Canterbury to choose a route with a nice tunnel in it. There was, of course, no difficulty, and the site for a tunnel was found at Tyler Hill.

Five-Toed Fowl.

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