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Charles Hindley
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History of the Catnach Press

Charles Hindley (d.1893) wrote several books on British popular literature including *Curiosities of Street Literature* and a history of the cries of London. This book, first published in a limited edition in 1869 but here reprinted from the 1886 edition, tells the colourful story of John (1769–1813) and James (1792–1842) Catnach, the father-and-son printers who were leaders in the expanding market for cheap publications for the masses. John's contribution was to start using real paper and printer's ink instead of the cheap substitutes current at the time. He was also noted for embellishing his work with great technical skill. James later developed a successful business printing cheap song-sheets, ballads and sensationalist accounts of crimes, conspiracies and scandals, and was able to support his widowed mother and his sisters on the proceeds. This lively biography is illustrated with numerous woodcuts, many from Catnach's publications.

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*At Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick and
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in Northumberland,
and Seven Dials, London*

CHARLES HINDLEY



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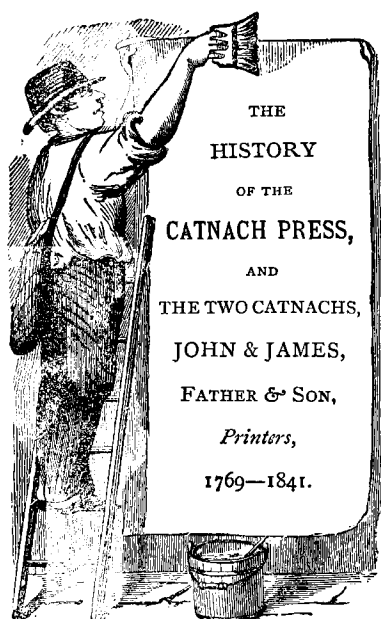
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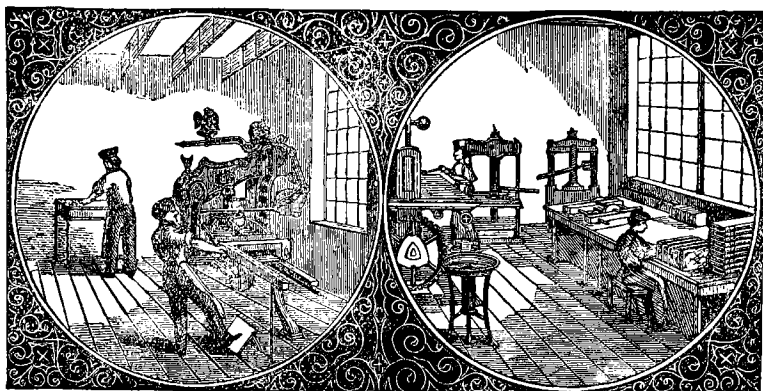
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THE CATNACH PRESS.

“ ‘Tis education forms the common mind ;
 Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.”—*Pope*.

—There can be little doubt that Jemmy Catnach, the printer, justly earned the distinction of being one of the great pioneers in the cause of promoting cheap literature—he was for a long time the great Mæcenas and Elzevir of the Seven Dials district. We do not pretend to say that the productions which emanated from his establishment contained much that was likely to enlighten the intellect, or sharpen the taste of the ordinary reader ; but, to a great extent, they served well in creating an impetus in the minds of many to soar after things of a higher and more ennobling character. Whilst for the little folk his store was like the conjuror's bag—inexhaustible. He could cater to the taste and fancies of all, and it is marvellous, even in these days of a cheap press, to look back upon the time when this enterprising man was by a steady course of action, so paving the way for that bright day in the annals of Britain's history, when every child in the land should be educated.

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THE
 HISTORY
 OF THE
 CATNACH PRESS,
 AT
 BERWICK-UPON-TWEED,
 ALNWICK AND NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,
 IN NORTHUMBERLAND,
 AND
 SEVEN DIALS, LONDON.

BY
 CHARLES HINDLEY, Esq.,

*Editor of "The Old Book Collector's Miscellany; or, a Collection of Readable Reprints
 of Literary Rarities," "Works of John Taylor—the Water Poet," "The
 Roxburghe Ballads," "The Catnach Press," "The Curiosities of
 Street Literature," The Book of Ready Made Speeches,"
 "Life and Times of James Catnach, late of the
 Seven Dials, Ballad Monger," "Tavern
 Anecdotes and Sayings," "A History
 of the Cries of London—Ancient
 and Modern," etc.*

London :
 CHARLES HINDLEY
 [THE YOUNGER,]
 BOOKSELLERS' ROW, ST. CLEMENT DANES,
 STRAND, W. C.

1886.

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TO
MR. GEORGE SKELLY,
OF
THE MARKET PLACE,
AND
MR. GEORGE H. THOMPSON,
OF
BAILIFFGATE, ALNWICK,
In the County of
NORTHUMBERLAND,
THE
HISTORY OF THE CATNACH PRESS.
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR

Charles Hindley

*St. James' Street, Brighton.
Lady Day, 1886.*

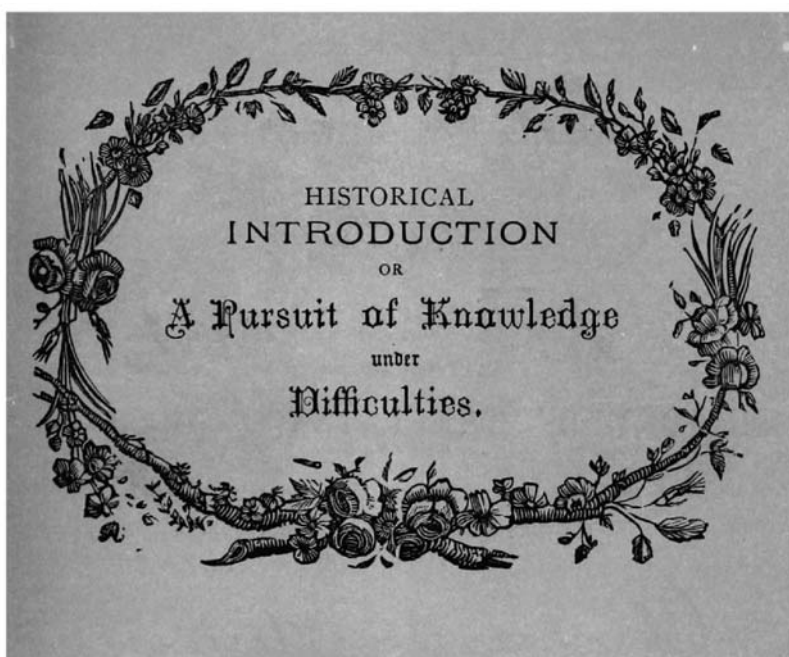
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HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION
 OR
 A PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

———KNOWLEDGE is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.—BOSWELL, *Life of Johnson*.

THAT history repeats itself is fairly and fully exemplified by the reproduction of “THE CATNACH PRESS,” the *first* edition of which was published in 1869, and “GUARANTEED ONLY TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY COPIES PRINTED.”—Namely: 175 on fine, and 75 on extra-thick paper. *Each copy numbered*. The outer and descriptive title set forth that the work contained:—

“A COLLECTION of Books and Wood-cuts of James Catnach, late of Seven Dials, Printer, consisting of Twenty Books of the Cock Robin-Class, from, ‘This is the House that Jack Built,’ to ‘Old Mother Hubbard,’ (printed with great care) *specialite* at THE CATNACH PRESS, from the old plates and woodcuts, prior to their final destruction, to which is added a selection of Catnachian wood-cuts, many by Bewick, and many of the most anti-Bewickian character it is possible to conceive.”

The announcement of the publication of the work was first made known through the medium of the metropolitan press, some few days prior to the copies being delivered by the book-

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binders, and so great was the demand of the London and American trade, that every copy was disposed of on the day of issue.

The work is now eagerly sought after by book collectors who indulge in literary rarities.

While engaged in collecting information for "The Catnach Press," and interviewing the producers of ballads, broadsides and chap-books, we met with a vast assemblage of street-papers and of a very varied character, which we proposed to publish in quarto form under the title of "The Curiosities of Street Literature," and when in London in 1869, still seeking for information on the subject, met by mere chance in the Strand with the street ballad singer of our youth, one Samuel Milnes, who used between the years of 1835 and 1842 to visit Fetter Lane every Thursday with the newest and most popular ballad of the day. We so often met with him at other times and places in and about London in after years that a peculiar kind of a friendly feeling grew up towards him in preference to all other street ballad singers of the time, so much so that at our meetings—and friendly greetings, we invariably purchased the ballad he was singing, or, gave him a few halfpence as a fee for having detained him from his calling—or shall we say bawling, for to tell the truth, Samuel Milnes was but a very indifferent vocalist.

Time rolled on—"still on it creeps, each little moment at another's heels"—and we continued to meet our old ballad singer either in London or Brighton. The meeting with him on this particular occasion was most opportune for we wanted him. First we obtained from him "Wait for the Turn of the Tide," and "Call her back and kiss her," then the following information:—

"Oh, yes, I remember you, remember you well; particularly when I see you down at Brighton: when you treated me to that hot rum and water;

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when I was so wet and cold, at a little snug public-house in one of the streets that leads off the main street. I don't remember the name on it now, but I remembers the rum and water well enough; it was good. You said it would be, and so it was, and no mistake. How old am I now? Why, 59. How long have I been at it? Why, hard on fifty years. I was about nine or ten year old—no, perhaps I might have been 12 year old, when I come to think on it. Yes, about 12 year old; my mother was a widow with five children, and there was a boy in our street as used to go out singing ballads, and his mother said to my mother, 'Why don't you let your boy (that's me) go out and sing ballads like my boy.' And I said I didn't mind, and I did go out, and I've been at it ever since, so you see aint far short of 50 year. How many do I sell in a day? Well, not so many as I used to do, by a long way. I've sold me four and five quires a-day, but I don't sell above two and three dozen a-day now. That's all the difference you see, sir—dozens against quires. How do I live then? Why, you see I am so well-known in different parts of London, that lots and lots of people comes up to me like you always do—and say's—'How do you do, old fellow? I remember you when I was a boy, if it's a man, and when I was a girl, if it's a woman.' And says, 'So you are still selling songs, eh?' Then they give me a few coppers; some more and some less than others, and says they don't want the songs. Some days—very often—I've had more money given me than I've took for the ballads. Yes, I have travelled all over England—all over it I think—but the North's the best—Manchester, Liverpool, and them towns; but down Bath and Cheltenham way I was nearly starved. I was coming back from that way, I now remember, when I met you, sir, at Brighton that time. I buy my ballads at various places—but now mostly over the water, because I live there now and it's handiest. Mr. Such, the printer, in Union-street in the Borough. Oh! yes, some at Catnach's—leastways, it ain't Catnach's now, it's Fortey's. Yes, I remember 'old Jemmy Catnach' very well; he wa'n't a bad sort, as you say; leastways, I've heard so, but I never had anything of him. I always paid for what I had, and did not say much to him, or he to me—Writing the life of him, are you indeed? No, I can't give you no more information about him than that, because, as I said before, I bought my goods as I wanted them, and paid for them, then away on my own account and business. Well he was a man something like you—a little wider across the shoulders, perhaps, but about such a man as you are. I did know a man as could have told you a lot about "old Jemmy," but he's dead now; he was one of his authors, that is, he wrote some of the street-ballads for him,

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and very good ones they used to be, that is, for selling. Want some old 'Dying Speeches' and 'Cocks,' do you indeed; well, I a'nt got any—I don't often 'work' them things, although I have done so sometimes, but I mostly keep to the old game—'Ballads on a Subject.' You see them other things are no use only just for the day, then they are no use at all, so we don't keep them—I've often given them away. You'd give sixpence a piece for them, would you, indeed, sir; then I wish I had some of them. Now I come to think of it I know a man that did have a lot of them bye him, and I know he'd be glad to sell them, I don't know where he lives, but I sometimes see him. Oh! yes, a letter would find me. My name is Samuel Milnes, and I live at No. 81, Mint-street, that's in the Borough; you know, Guagar is the name at the house. Thank you, sir, I'm much obliged. Good day sir."

Our next adventure—in pursuit of knowledge under difficulties—occured at Brighton in the month of August, 1869, and when we were winding our way through a maze of small streets lying between Richmond and Albion Hills, in the Northern part of the town, our ears voluntarily "pricked up," on hearing the old familiar sounds of a 'street, or running patterer' with the stereotyped sentences of "Horrible."—"Dreadful."—"Remarkable letters found on his person."—"Cut down by a labouring man."—"Quite dead."—"Well-known in the town."—"Hanging."—"Coroner's Inquest."—"Verdict."—"Full particulars."—"Most determined suicide."—"Brutal conduct."—&c., &c., *Only a ha'penny!*—*Only a ha'penny!* Presently we saw the man turn into a wide court-like place, which was designated by the high-sounded name of "SQUARE," and dedicted to RICHMOND; hither we followed him, and heard him repeat the same detached sentences, and became a purchaser for—'*only a ha'penny!*' when to our astonishment we discovered a somewhat new phrase in cock or catchpenny selling. Inasmuch as our purchase consisted of the current number (253) of the *Brighton Daily News*—a very respectable looking and well printed Halfpenny Local Newspaper, and of that day's publication, and did

in reality contain an account of a most determined suicide of an old and highly respected inhabitant of Brighton and set forth under the heading of:—

THE DETERMINED SUICIDE OF AN AGED ARTIST.
 REMARKABLE LETTERS OF DECEASED.

Calling the man aside, we ventured upon a conversation with him in the following form:—

——“Well, governor, *how does the cock fight?*” “Oh, pretty well, sir; but it ain’t a cock; its a genuine thing—the days for cocks, sir, is gone bye—cheap newspapers ’as done ’em up.” “Yes; we see this is a Brighton Newspaper of to-day.” “Oh, yes, that’s right enough—but its all true.” “Yes; we are aware of that and knew the unfortunate man and his family; but you are vending them after the old manner.” That’s all right enough, sir,—you see I can sell ’em better in that form than as a newspaper—its more natural like for me: I’ve sold between ten and twelve dozen of ’em to-day.” “Yes; but how about to-morrow?” “Oh, then it will be all bottled up—and I must look for a new game, I’m on my way to London, but a hearing of this suicide job, I thought I’d work ’em just to keep my hand in and make a bob or two.” To our question of “Have you got any real old ‘cocks’ by you?” He replied, “No, not a bit of a one; I’ve worked ’em for a good many years, but it ’aint much of a go now. Oh, yes, I know’d ‘old Jemmy Catnach’ fast enough—bought many hundreds, if not thousands of quires of him. Not old enough? Oh, ’aint I though; why I’m turned fifty, and I’ve been a ‘street-paper’ seller all my life. I knows Muster Fortey very well; him as is got the business now in the Dials—he knows his way about, let him alone for that; and he’s a rare good business man let me tell you, and always been good and fair to me; that I will say of him.”

Having rewarded the man with a few half-pence to make him some recompense for having detained him during his business progress, we parted company.

While still prosecuting our enquiries for information on the literature of the streets, we often read of, and heard mention made of, a Mr. John Morgan, as one of the “Seven Bards of the

Seven Dials” and his being best able to assist us in the matter we had in hand. The first glimpse we obtained of the Poet ! in print was in an article entitled “The Bards of the Seven Dials and their Effusion” and published in “THE TOWN,” of 1839, a weekly journal, conducted by the late Mr. Renton Nicholson, better known as “Baron Nicholson,” of Judge and Jury notoriety :—

REVIEW.

The Life and Death of John William Marchant, who suffered the extreme penalty of the law, in front of the Debtor's door, Newgate, on Monday, July 8th, 1839, for the murder of Elizabeth Paynton, his fellow servant, on the seventeenth of May last, in Cadogan Place, Chelsea. By John Morgan. London: J. Catnach, 2 and 3, Monmouth Court, 7 Dials.

The work is a quarto page, surrounded with a handsome black border. “Take no thought for to-morrow, what thou shalt eat, or what thou shalt put on,” says a certain writer, whose wisdom we all reverence, and then he adds “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”—a remark particularly applicable to the bards of Seven Dials, whose pens are kept in constant employment by the fires, rapes, robberies, and murders, which, from one year's end to the other, present them with a daily allowance of evil sufficient for their subsistence. But, at present, it is only one of these poets, “John Morgan,” as he modestly signs himself, whom we are about to notice; and as some of our readers may be curious to see a specimen of the poetry of Seven Dials, we shall lay certain portions of John Morgan's last effusion before them, pointing out the beauties and peculiarities of the compositions as we go along. After almost lawyer-like particularity as to dates and places, the poem begins with an invocation from the murderer in *propria personâ*.

“Oh ! give attention awhile to me,
 All you good people of each degree ;
 In Newgate's dismal and dreary cell,
 I bid all people on earth farewell.”

Heaven forbid, say we, that *all* the people on earth should ever get in Newgate, to receive the farewell of such a blood-thirsty miscreant.

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“John William Marchant is my name,
I do confess I have *been to blame*.”

And here we must observe that the poet makes his hero speak of his offence rather too lightly, as if, indeed, it had been nothing more than a common misdemeanour.

“I little thought, my dear parents kind,
I should leave this earth with a troubled mind.”

Now this *is* modest; he is actually surprised that his parents are at all grieved at the idea of getting rid of such a scoundrel, and well he might be.

“I lived as servant in Cadogan Place,
And never thought this would be my case,
To end my days on the fatal tree:
Good people, pray drop a tear for me.”

There is a playfulness about the word “drop,” introducing just here after “the fatal tree,” which, in our mind, somewhat diminishes the plaintiveness of the entreaty; but we must not be hypocritical.

* * * * *
* * * * *

Then comes his trial and condemnation, the account of which is most remarkable precise and pithy.

“At the Old Bailey I was tried and cast,
And the dreadful sentence on me was past
On a Monday morning, alas! to die,
And on the eight of this month of July.”

A marvellous particularity as to dates, intended, doubtless, to show the convicts anxiety that, although he died young, his name should live long in the minds of posterity. Then follows his farewell to father and mother, and an impudent expression of confidence that his crime will be forgiven in heaven, an idea, by-the-by, which is reported to have been confirmed by the Ordinary of Newgate, who told him that the angels would receive him with great affection; and this it was, perhaps, which induced our bard of Seven Dials to represent his hero as coolly writing poetry up to the very last moment of his existence; taking his farewell of the public in these words:—

“Adieu, good people of each degree,
And take a warning, I pray, by me;
The bell is tolling, and I must go,
And leave this world of misery and woe.”

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But we cannot exactly see what business the fellow—"a pampered menial," had to speak ill of the world, when he was very comfortably off in it, and might have lived long and happily if it had not been for his own wickedness; a hint which we throw out for the benefit of Mr. John Morgan, in his future effusions, trusting he will not make his heroes die grumby, when poetic justices does not require it.

But we must now take our leave, with a hearty wish to the whole fraternity of Seven Dials' bards, that they may never go without a dinner for want of the means of earning it, or that, in other words, though they seem somewhat contradictory, "Sufficient unto the day may be the evil thereof."

Again, the writer of an article on "Street Ballads," in the "National Review," for October, 1861, makes the following remarks :—

"This Ballad—'Little Lord John out of Service'—is one of the few which bear a signature—it is signed 'John Morgan' in the copy which we possess. For a long time we believed this name to be a mere *nom-de-plume*; but the other day in Monmouth Court, we were informed, in answer to a casual question that this is the real name of the author of some of the best comic ballads. Our informant added that he is an elderly, we may say old, gentleman, living somewhere in Westminster; but the exact whereabouts we could not discover. Mr. Morgan followed no particular visible calling, so far as our informant knew, except writing ballads, by which he could not earn much of a livelihood, as the price of an original ballad, in these buying-cheap days, has been screwed down by the publishers to somewhere about a shilling sterling. Something more like bread-and-butter might be made, perhaps, by poets who were in the habit of singing their own ballads, as some of them do, but not Mr. Morgan. Should this ever meet the eye of that gentleman (a not very probable event, we fear), we beg to apologise for the liberty we have taken in using his verses and name, and hope he will excuse us, having regard to the subject in which we are humble fellow-labourers. We could scarcely avoid naming him, the fact being that he is the only living author of street-ballads whose name we know. That self-denying mind, indifferent to worldly fame, which characterised the architects of our cathedrals and abbeys, would seem to have descended on our ballad-writers; and we must be thankful, therefore, to be able to embalm and hand down to posterity a name here and there, such as William of Wyke-

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ham, and John Morgan. In answer to our inquiries in this matter, generally, we have been told, 'Oh, anybody writes them,' and with that answer we have had to rest satisfied. But in presence of that answer, we walk about the streets with a new sense of wonder, peering into the faces of those of our fellow-lieges who do not carry about with them the external evidence of overflowing exchequers, and saying to ourselves That man may be a writer of ballads.' "

At every enquiry we made for information in regard to street-literature, we still continued to be referred to Mr. John Morgan as the most likely person living to supply what we needed on the subject.

But the grave question arose in our own minds of the How, When, and Where: could we find out and interview this said Mr. John Morgan, Poet! First we made enquiry at the office of Mr. Taylor, Printer of Ballads, &c., 92 and 93, Brick Lane, Spitalfields, but, they "had not the least idea where we could find him. In fact they had only heard of him as a ballad-writer, and knew nothing about where he lived, never having employed him: had perhaps printed some of his ballads. Thought Mr. Such, of the Borough, might give some information, but, sure to find out all about him in the Seven Dials district."

Mr. H. Such, Machine Printer and Publisher, 177, Union Street, Borough, S.E., on being applied to could give us no positive information as to the whereabouts of Mr. John Morgan—he knew him, but where he lived he could not tell. Mr. Fortey or Mr. Disley, in the Dials-way, would be most likely to know.

Mr. William S. Fortey, (late A. Ryle, successor to the late J. Catnach), Printer, Publisher, and Wholesale Stationer, 2 and 3, Monmouth Court, Seven Dials, London, W., on being applied to could not exactly tell where Mr. John Morgan did live, it was

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somewhere Westminster-way: it was very uncertain when he should next see him, because he did not sometimes call in for weeks together, yet he might by chance see him to-morrow, or the next day. Anyway, we felt that we had no right to press the question any further, more particularly so because Mr. Fortey had been very civil and obliging to us on other occasions—in fact we have been under great and lasting obligations to him, so changed the conversation.

Mr. Henry Disley, Printer, 57, High Street, St. Giles', London, who we found to be a very genial sort of a man, and that he had formerly been in the service of James Catnach; he was working in his front shop at a small hand-press on some cards relative to a forthcoming FRIENDLY LEAD,* to be held at a public-house in the immediate neighbourhood, while Mrs. Disley was hard at work colouring some Christmas Carols, and which she did with a rapidity that was somewhat astonishing. In answer to our inquiry whether he knew of one John Morgan—who was—as we described him, “something of a song writer.” Well! both Mr. and Mrs. Disley together—“did know him—should think they did.” But when we came to enquire about his private address they knew nothing about that. He (Mr. Morgan) wrote ballads for them at times: often called on them—whenever he did it was always to sell a *good* ballad he had on hand, or to tell them what *bad* times it was with him: but as to where he lived, beyond that it was somewhere Westminster-way, they did not know—in fact, had not the least idea. But, most likely, Mr. Fortey, him in Monmouth Court, did. Yes! come to think of it, he would be sure to know.

* FRIENDLY LEAD, a gathering at a low public-house, for the purpose of assisting some one who is “in trouble,” *i.e.*, in prison, or who has just “come out of trouble,” or who is in want of a “mouthpiece” to defend him, and so forth.

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The very unsatisfactory and evasive answers received in reference to the address of Mr. John Morgan gave a zest to our zeal in the matter—so much so, that we then determined “to work the oracle” out in our way.

At this time we had a near relative occupying chambers in Barnard’s Inn, which we held to be a good central and lawyer-like address—one that had the “true ring,” of business and substantiality about it. Yes! Barnard’s Inn, Holborn, London, E.C., looked to our mind to be likely to serve our stratigical purpose to the point we desired. Having made all the preparatory arrangements, we then procured from a neighbouring stationer’s shop a sheet of mourning note-paper and an envelope of large proportions, each having the very blackest and broadest of black borders we could find in stock. Then we wrote in a law-like hand :—

*No. 6, Barnard’s Inn,
Holborn, London, E.C.,
February 26, 1870.*

THIS IS TO GIVE NOTICE:—If Mr. John Morgan, ballad-writer, &c., will call at the above address on or after Wednesday next. He will hear something greatly to his advantage.

(Signed)

Charles Hindley

*Mr. John Morgan,
care of.....
.....London.*

The above document having been duly intrusted to Her Majesty’s Post Master General for delivery, we had to abide

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our time for the result. We had not to wait long, for although we had appointed the next following Wednesday to communicate "*something greatly to the advantage of Mr. John Morgan*," he turned up a little sooner than we expected, or desired, by reason of his putting in an appearance at Barnard's Inn on Tuesday evening, where he arrived "happy and glorious," and made earnest enquiries for "the gentleman who had sent him a letter to say he had got a something to his advantage—perhaps a fortune! For sometimes he thought somebody would die and leave him one. Where was the gentleman who wrote him the letter? He says that I am to call here. He sent it in a black-bordered envelope for him. Where is the gentleman? See here is the letter, and all in black—black as your hat—look for yourself, sir."

All the above was spoken to a friend of ours who lived on the ground-floor at the particular house in Barnard's Inn, where Mr. John Morgan had been requested to call on Wednesday. It was then only Tuesday, and that fact had to be explained; also, that the gentleman in question was not at present in his chambers on the third-floor, but would be in the morning up to 10 o'clock. Our friend on the first-floor—who had received instructions from us in the event of Mr. John Morgan turning-up while we were not at home—informed us of all that had taken place when we arrived a little later on in the evening.

On the next morning preparations were made for the reception of our expectant friend—a good fire, a good breakfast, and a half-pint of "Old Tom" from Carr's well-known Establishment, St. Clement Danes, Strand.

Very soon after the old clock of the ancient hall of Barnard's Inn, and all the public clocks in the surrounding neighbourhood had proclaimed aloud that the hour of 10 a.m. of that Wednesday

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morning had arrived, there was heard a knock at the outer door of our chamber-rooms, and on the same being opened, Mr. John Morgan announced himself as the party to whom the gentleman had sent a black-bordered letter and envelope for him to say there was a something to his advantage to be had. Then Mr. John Morgan, full of bows and scrapes, was ushered into our presence.—He was the party who had received the letter. Oh ! yes, Mr. Morgan we added : take a seat sir. Yes, sir, and thank you to, he replied, at the same time sitting down and then very carefully despositing his somewhat delapidated hat under—far under—the chair. We then enquired whether he would have anything to eat, or have a cup of coffee. No ! it was a little too early in the morning for eating, and coffee did not always agree with him. Or, a drop of good “Old Tom,” we somewhat significantly suggested. Mr. John Morgan would very much like to have a little drop of gin, for it was a nasty raw cold morning : In answer to our enquiry whether he would prefer hot or cold water, elected to have it neat if it made no difference to us.

Mr. John Morgan at our suggestion having “wet the other eye,” *i.e.*, taken the second glass, the real business part of the question we had met upon commenced thus :—“We have been informed that you were acquainted with, and used to write for the late James Catnach, who formerly lived in the Seven Dials, and that you can give us much of the information that we require towards perfecting a work we have in hand treating on Street Literature. If you are willing to do so, we are prepared to treat with you in a liberal manner, and that, please to at once to understand is the ‘*Something greatly to your advantage*’ that is mentioned in the note we addressed to you.” Here Mr. John Morgan hinted that he thought it was—or he had hoped it was, a little fortune some one had been kind enough to leave him, he

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always expected that old Jemmy Catnach would—after what he had done for him, have left him a bit, however small, but no such luck.

Mr. Morgan expressed his willingness to give all the information he could on the subject and leave it to our generosity to pay him what we pleased, and adding that he had no doubt that we should not fall out on that score. And so we proceeded, we talked and took notes. Mr. Morgan talked and took gin. Mr. Morgan got warm—warmer and warmer—and very entertaining, his conversational powers increased wonderfully, he became very witty and laughed *ha! hah!!* he joked and made merry at some old reminiscences in connection with old Jemmy Catnach—and admitted, that after all old Jemmy wasn't a particular bad sort—that is, when you knew him, and could handle him properly—then old Jemmy was as right as my leg! Still we continued to talk and take notes, still Mr. Morgan talked and took gin, until he emulated the little old woman who sold “Hot Codlings,” for of her it is related that—“the glass she filled and the bottle she shrunk and that this little old woman in the end got——.”

At length it became very manifest that we should not be able to get any more information out of Mr. John Morgan on that day, so proposed for him to call again on the morrow morning and at the same time and place to pursue the thread of our narrative. Then having presented him with a portrait of Her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, set in gold, we volunteered to see him down stairs which we observed were very crooked—Mr. Morgan thought they were very old and funny ones: up and down like—in fact what old Charley Dibdin would have called regular “whopping old stairs!” Being safely landed from the last stone step on to the stone-paved way, we thought it advisable, for appearance sake, to conduct our friend out of Barnard's

Inn by a sideways leading into Fetter-lane. After that it occurred to us that it would perhaps be better to see him to the Fleet-street end of the lane and then to put him into a Westminster omnibus, but we had reached Somerset House before one going that way came in sight. Then it was Mr. John Morgan suddenly recollected that he could not pass his old friend Short—who was Short? why surely you know Short—old Short, him as sells the wine so good and so cheap, there over the way—that's Short's—"WINES FROM THE WOOD," that's out of the cask you know, you remind me to-morrow, sir, and I'll tell you a good tale about old Short before he made such a lot of money as he has got now.—Capital chap old Short, he knows me—it's all about a song I wrote—but I'll tell you all about it to-morrow. Besides I must have change ye know for there's no one got any at my home—my landlord—There's no change about him, Oh! dear no—He's never got any change but he's always got an old account, do you see? an old account—but no matter let's go in!

Respectfully, but firmly declining the kind and very pressing invitation to have "only just one drop with old Short." We left Mr. John Morgan to take care of himself for the day and to be sure to meet us on the next morning in Barnard's Inn at 10 o'clock—sharp.

At length the wishful morrow came, also ten of the clock, but not so Mr. John Morgan, nor did he call at any hour during the day. But soon after 11 o'clock the next day he made his appearance, but being so stupidly drunk we gave him some money and told him to call again to-morrow. And he did, but still so muddled that we could make nothing out of him, so we somewhat curtly dismissed him and returned to Brighton.

The next day the letter—of which we give a *verbatim et literatim* copy—was received and then forwarded on to us.

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90 Great Peter Street
 Westminster, S.W.

Saturday the 5th of March 1870.

My Dear and Kind Sir:—I return you my most sincere and heartfelt thanks for the Kindness I received from you and deeply I regret if I caused you any displeasure the fact is I have been greatly put about And you having been so kind as to give me refreshments it overpowered me I fell and hurt myself. And I am now destitute without a penny in the world or a friend to help me. I feel as though I offended you I hope not I think by the Little conversation we had I may be able to please you I have been considering in my doleful moments matters of importance if my kind and good friend you can favour me with a Line this Saturday Evening I will be most grateful I shall not go out waiting to hear from you I am placed in a most Sad position accept my thanks write Me a Line in answer to this Befriend me if it is possible And I will make all right and with gratitude.

Anxiously waiting your kind and I trust favourable reply,

Your humble Servant
John Morgan

Charles Hindley, Esq
 6 Barnard's Inn
 Holborn
 W.C.

Having no desire to incur the expense of another journey to London in the matter, and believing that we had obtained sufficient information on the subject, we published, in the year 1871, a limited number of copies of our work under the title of:—

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DYING SPEECHES AND CONFESSIONS,
 TO WHICH IS ATTACHED THE ALL-IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY
 AFFECTIONATE COPY OF VERSES,
 AS
 "Come, all you feeling-hearted Christians, wherever you may be,
 Attention give to these few lines, and listen unto me;
 It's of this cruel murder, to you I will unfold,
 The bare recital of the same will make your blood run cold."

——:O:——

"What hast here? ballads? I love a ballad in print, or a life; for then we are sure they are true."—*Shakespeare*.

"There's nothing beats a stunning good murder, after all."—*Experiences of a Running Patterer*.

——:O:——

LONDON:
 REEVES AND TURNER
 196, STRAND,
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Our work on the Curiosities of Street Literature soon ran out of print. But we continued to gather from time to time fresh information on the subject of the “Two Catnachs—John and James,” and in the early part of 1876 we determined on publishing a work, to be entitled “The Life and Times of James Catnach—late of Seven Dials—Ballad Monger.” And for the purpose of obtaining the verification, amendment, or denial to the several scraps of information we had obtained, we wrote to our old friend, Mr. John Morgan, on the subject, and from him we received the letters that follow :—

No. 1, Model Cottages, Little St. Anne's Lane,
 Great Peter Street, Westminster,
 London, S.W.
 16th February, 1876.

Sir,

I received your Letter this Morning: I have removed to above address two years and seven months, I have been in Bed seven weeks suffering from Bronchitis; but am now recovering and shall get up to-day, but the Doctor will not permit me to go out.

Whatever you may require I am ready and willing to do to the utmost of my abilities, and be happy to serve you, and much regret I have not the strength to venture to———Street. If anything can be done by Letter or otherwise, I will willingly attend to your request, your reply will greatly oblige,

Your I am ^{be} — Love
John Morgan

P.S.—Please excuse the illegible scribble as I write this in Bed.

Charles Hindley, Esq.,
 76, Rose Hill Terrace, Brighton.

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No. 1, Model Cottages, Little St. Ann's Lane,
Great Peter Street, Westminster, London, S.W.

17th February, 1876.

Sir,

I have just received yours, 7 p.m., and in reply I beg to say that when I came to London in 1818 Catnach's Father was not living.

Catnach, his Mother, and Sister Julia the youngest, resided at 2, Monmouth Court, the old woman and Julia worked at a small hand press—I joined him about 1818—his father died before.—I understood Julia went astray—the Mother Died about 1826. Anne Ryle was the widow of an Officer: a Waterloo man—with one child—had a pension.

Catnach had but little type, and no stock to speak of: he had a Sister at Portsea the wife of a mate of a ship in harbour, and kept a song-shop. His Mother lived with him 7 or 8 years.—I understand about the "Horses-heads." Cox and Kean, I forget except the title and chorus:—

COX *versus* KEAN;

OR

LITTLE BREECHES.

"With his ginger tail he did assail, and did the prize obtain,
This Merry Little Wanton Bantam Cock of Drury Lane—

LITTLE BREECHES."

Ann Stanton was tried for cutting the Cock's Head off there was no verses.

As regards the Sausages, Catnach printed a few lines on a quarter-sheet, that caused a great uproar, he was taken to Bow Street. Catnach had six months. There was no verses, it was quickly done. He printed the life of Mother Cummins, of Dyot Street—now, George Street, and that was knocked into "pye" in quick sticks. There was a change after he went to Alnwick in Northumberland, where he carried a small press and printed the state of the poll every day, while there he took up his freedom.* He came home and printed "Cubitt's Treadmill":—

"And we're all treading, tread, tread, treading,
And we're all treading at fam'd Brixton Mill."

and kept going forward—retired and went to Barnet, left the business to James Paul and Ann Ryle. That is many years ago. I seldom go near the Seven Dials, perhaps once in 3, 4, 5, or six months. I remember many occurrences but 56 years is a long time, I have just entered my 77th year. Anything you require as far as I can I will send and remain,

Your humble Servant

John Morgan

Charles Hindley, Esq.,
76, Rose Hill Terrace, Brighton.

* This is an error—See page 76.