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[On this man, see above. The text is nearly 1 Tim vi 6. The fact that this is a French greeting makes me think it may have been written at Metz rather than Heidelberg.]

- (5) Paulus epla posteriori ad Timotheū
cap. 3. Omnis doctrina diuinitus ifpi
rata utilis ad docendū ad cōfutādū, ad
corrīgēdū et iftituēdū, i iustitia ut p-
fectus fit homo dei et ad ōne opus bo-
num iftructus ~. cū ita⁹ diuinę litterę
tātū fecū habeāt utilitatis cōiūctū, noctur
na manu uerfandi funt et diurna ~

Pet^s Martyr Theolo
gię pfflor.

- (7) Vendidit Johānes M.F. } i.e. John, son of Michael [Hortin]
. 2. ducat. Joh Guibaud⁹ } sold [this book] for 2 Ducats
Joh[annes] Guibaudus

- (6) Underneath Peter Martyr's letter can be read

[ε]μοι τὸ ζῆν, χριστό[σ και]	[[]
[τὸ ἀ]ποθανεῖν, κερδοσ	[[]
[Qu]isquis huius seculi more [[]	[[]
[[] Christi miserabilem [[]	[[]
[[]nem, et hanc rerum f[[]	[[]
[me]nte considerat, fer[[]	[[]
[[]afsidueq, meditat[ur [[]	[[]
[[]]. iftud cum Apof[ol[o [[]	[[]
[an]imum inducet fu[um [[]	[[]

Heydelbergæ

P

This piece originally extended to the right-hand margin, but it has been largely torn away and covered up with Peter Martyr's letter.

A VILLAGE TRAGEDY OF FIFTY YEARS AGO.

BY G. WHERRY, M.A., OF DOWNING COLLEGE.

In the Museum at Cambridge is the shattered breast-bone of Abraham Green, who was shot and killed by Mr Nehemiah Perry while entering his house as a burglar at night. Truth

is said to spoil stories, but there is so much that is curious in this tragedy that a plain unvarnished account of it will be found sufficiently remarkable, and well worthy of record as evidence of village life under exciting circumstances about fifty years ago. The event occurred at Stretthall, or, as the country people call it, Strettle, in Essex, four miles from Saffron Walden, a remote village, where, on a rising ground, stands a quaint little old church, shewing remains of its antiquity in the long-and-short stonework of the angles, and the ancient Saxon chancel-arch. In the churchyard are tombstones of the Perrys of the past. Hard by is the Hall, a low brick building, more picturesque than spacious, which you enter from the east side, and thence, through doorways requiring a stoop to pass, you come by way of a dining-room to the foot of a flight of stairs of only nine steps. There is a landing on the top, with a small window looking south, and on either hand a bedroom. Standing on this landing Nehemiah Perry faced his assailants and shot one of them dead upon the stairs.

Perry was a remarkable man in many ways; he kept a certain amount of state, his clothes were always made in Bond Street, a dark blue coat with large roll collar, and light breeches and gaiters.

Dining at a good old oak table, which still remains in the room, he sat at the head of the board, and cut the joint for himself, passing it round with the remark, "Cut where you like"; for his drink he kept a stone bottle of brandy between his knees and could carry more of this liquor than most men.

Nehemiah in his youth had married a good-looking gypsy girl; but later in life they were separated, and he used to keep her at Catmere, one of his farms, about half a mile from the house. His wife's allies gave a great deal of trouble, so much so that the farmer had to order them off his land for continual trespass, and he vowed vengeance on those who visited his wife. Meantime, in revéngé, a valuable horse was killed by poison on the farm. Also there were many lawless deeds done in the neighbourhood, and Mr Gibson's bank at Saffron Walden was broken into. In the midst of these alarms, and especially of the feud with the gypsies, Perry lived in his house rather

expecting an attack. It came one night in March 1849, the snow being on the ground, as a determined and murderous attempt. Abraham Green (alias Little Abel), a noted poacher, with Gooddy, and Palmer, and others of his gang entered the house by the window of a room called the "old parlour," then a pantry. The burglars wore masks made of sacks with holes for the eyes, and their feet were done up in mufflers made of old waistcoats. It was strange that the house-dogs gave no sign. In breaking into the house the burglars disturbed a plate-rack, which roused Perry to face the dangerous crew. With such a desperate gang murder as well as robbery was probable, and it was known that there was a considerable sum of money in the house.

Mr Perry with a loaded gun stood at the top of his stairs, calling to his brother Thomas, who was in the room on the other side, to help. Thomas was rather a feeble-minded man, but he also had a loaded gun. The burglars came up the steps, but only two could approach at a time, and, as they advanced, Perry fired. The charge of slugs wounded the hand of one man who was carrying a pistol and the lantern, and killed the other on the stairs, with a shot through the heart. The men, drawing off their dead a little distance to the next room, made off as they came, through the pantry window. They hesitated for some time, and then came on again with the intention of burning the place down, but Mr Perry was on the alert, and was left in full possession, as master of the house.

In the morning Perry refused to get up to see callers until he had had his sleep out; he then sat at breakfast and interviewed his friends. "No, I'm not hurt myself," said he, "but there's a fellow in the next room has had all he wants," and there was to be seen the stiffened corpse left by his comrades set up in a corner, as if for inspection. Many neighbours now dropped in and were entertained at the house. One of his relatives drew three dozen corks from bottles of wine, all of which was drunk, besides ale and other liquor, on this memorable occasion.

The inquest was held at Strethall, where the body was left in position, and examined by the jury. False keys were found

in the pockets, a stick loaded with lead lay alongside. The top of a large wine glass would have covered the whole of the injury externally visible. Mr Perry was in capital spirits, and said that "if he had known which way the rascals escaped he could have picked off a couple more, as they could only get through the window one at a time." Some of the evidence was extraordinary. Mr *Thomas Perry* was sworn. He said, "I went to bed at 10, in my room opposite my brother's, and was wakened about 1 in the morning by my brother, who said, 'bring your gun, there is some one in the house.' When I got to the stair-head my brother was there and immediately shot the man. Some one cried 'give me my pistol.' I thought there were five or six persons below. I kept guard while my brother re-loaded."

Mr *Nehemiah Perry*—who was not sworn—said: "About one o'clock in the morning I heard a sort of smash which led me to fancy that a door had been broken open. It turned out afterwards that it was the fall of a plate-rack. I jumped out of bed, and before I could get well hold of my gun, I heard the passage-door smashed open. I hurried to the top of the stairs and called out, 'Hallo, Master Thomas, there is something up, jump out.' I heard footsteps of nine or ten people; someone halloed, 'Go it, you devil, we are all right now; go on.' I think they halloed out that to frighten me. I saw a man with a light in one hand and a pistol in the other. He had a covering on his face and his hat on; he looked very horrible. I said to Master Thomas, 'He has his shirt outside his clothes.' He was coming up the stairs, and was just on the turn when I took direct aim and shot him. He fell like a log. Master Thomas then came to the door, and I said, 'Don't be frightened, it's no use being cowed over it, one is all right. I have snuffed his candle out for him' (*laughter*). When the man was shot there was a cry for a pistol, and a scuffling. I heard no more. I am of opinion that they wanted my property and my life; my life more than my property. When I had shot I cried out, 'Ha! ha! ha! there's bits of men; come on.' They giggled and went, he! he! he!, then (quickly and loudly) ha! ha!" (*shouts of laughter*).

The foreman, on behalf of the jury, after a verdict of "justifiable homicide," made his speech. "They would not be justified if they let slip that opportunity of returning thanks to a kind Providence for saving the lives of the Messrs Perry, and they considered it their bounden duty to express their feelings of admiration at the conduct of those gentlemen, and especially that of Mr Nehemiah, upon this trying occasion. The Messrs Perry were not only entitled to the thanks of the jury, but to those of the whole neighbourhood, and the county generally for their intrepidity and coolness, and they rejoiced to see them still in the land of the living, where it was evident they were not intended to be. He and his brother jurymen trusted those gentlemen might long live to enjoy their station and their property." The Coroner added his congratulations to those of the jury. It was afterwards proposed to present Mr Nehemiah with a piece of plate, and to erect a memorial stone in the churchyard over the burglar with a record, as a warning to evil-doers.

As to Abraham Green, there was no difficulty in determining the cause of death—it was much as in the ballad, "the jury on the body sat, and gave their verdict in these terms, 'they found as how that certain slugs had sent him to the worms.'" The body was conveyed to the church, and placed in the belfry, where the sexton exhibited it for threepence a head, and hundreds came to see it from all parts of the country. Foremost and clamorous in the crush, before the inquest was over, was Hannah Burton, a woman from Elmdon, whose great object was to touch a wen on her neck with the dead man's hand.

Casts carefully made by Ward of Saffron Walden were taken of the face. One of the masks is at Walden, another in Cambridge, and Mr Perry himself had a third.

Only two of the accomplices of this burglary were brought to justice, namely Gooddy and Palmer. Superintendent Barns sent for Gooddy, whom he had apprehended, to Stretthall, and placed the body of Green in a corner with his hat on, making him so lifelike that Barns himself would have "thought him still alive if he had not known to the contrary." Gooddy was then confronted with the dressed-up corpse and asked, "Do

you know this man?" Labouring under great emotion, which he tried in vain to suppress, he articulated with difficulty, "No, I never saw him before in my life." Gooddy and Palmer were tried before Chief Baron Pollock, who gave them a light sentence, remarking that he thought "there had been some hard-headedness in the way the body was used for purposes of identification¹."

Nehemiah Perry evidently felt that the body in the church was still to be disposed of. He would have liked "to have nailed it up on his barn with the hawks and hand-saws." But "who knows the fate of his bones or how often he is to be buried?" Mr Perry had been in the habit of sending hamper's of game to Cambridge to his trusted medical adviser, Dr Paget (afterwards Sir George), accordingly the body was doubled up and placed in a large game-hamper, and this heavy consignment was opened by the horrified physician, who found inside the hamper this wonderful letter:

"DEAR DR PAGET,

I have shot a man!

N. PERRY."

From Dr Paget's house the body was sent to the Anatomical School, where the attendant, Mr Sims, took charge of the specimen. Sims was frequently visited by sightseers and associates who wished to see Abraham Green, but he used to put them off with the remark, "Well, he's not quite fit to look at now, but if you come in about a fortnight he shall be ready for you."

Mr Humphry (afterwards Sir George) was then working in the School of Anatomy. The attendant above mentioned was employed there during the day, but occupied his evenings by waiting at dinner-parties. On the day of the arrival of Perry's victim Mr Humphry happened to be dining at a house where Sims was waiting, who, stooping over his chief, said in his ear, "There be another body, Muster 'Umphery."

Mr Perry lived for twelve years "to enjoy his station and his property." He died in 1861, aged 74.

¹ *Life of Lord Brampton.*

It was his habit on market-days to visit the Old Sun at Walden, where he commonly drank two bottles of port, finishing up with an amazing amount of brandy. After these potations he drove himself home with a constable by his side, not because he was unsteady, but for fear of an attack. The famous gun—like Captain Crawley's pistol, "same which I shot Captain Marker"—was kept, ready loaded, standing up in the dog-cart between the driver and the constable.

Perry always kept a loaded gun ready in his house; not only so, he never went out of doors without his gun, not even across his garden. My informant—a doctor who has dined with Perry—tells me that if he had occasion to cross Perry's land near the house he sometimes quaked for fear of being shot at: and mentions the quantity of brandy drunk on one day at the Ancient Inn as eighteen shillings-worth, besides the two bottles of port which preceded the brandy. But village life has altered now with regard to drinking habits. The "three-bottle men" have departed, and the expression "as drunk as a lord" is no longer appropriate to the Peerage.

As far as possible in my narrative Perry has been made to tell his own tale, and some of his phrases are interesting to notice. Thus "that he would like to have nailed up the body to his barn-end with the hawks and hand-saws" reminds one of Hamlet's remark, "I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a hand-saw," hand-saw being used by Perry for hernshaw or heronshaw—a corruption of "heron-sewe," a common heron or perhaps a young heron. One would hardly expect to find a heron—which preys chiefly on fish—gibbeted with other birds commonly destroyed by gamekeepers, but there can be no doubt that such was the custom, and there is a fine woodcut by Bewick in the introduction to his book on Birds which represents a heron with hawks nailed up to a barn-end.

The extraordinary superstition about the dead hand which was to cure by touching the wen (wen = a fleshy tumour, A. S. Leechdoms; acc. pl. wennas) on Hannah Burton's neck is very curious as a piece of folk-lore. An account of this incident was published in the *Cambridge Chronicle* for 1849.

The hand of any victim of a violent death was of great value as a charm. "Finger of birth-strangled babe; Ditch delivered by a drab" says the witch in *Macbeth* in brewing a charm of powerful trouble. The "hand of glory" was of peculiar use to a burglar. It was cut from the corpse of a hanged criminal, anointed with certain unguents, and when lighted at the fingers with suitable incantations it kept the inmates of a house asleep. If a thumb or finger did not light, it meant that one of the household was awake, and not under the influence of the charm. This ghastly torch could only be extinguished by skimmed milk. Dalyell¹ mentions the case of John Neil, who was convicted, in March 1631, of consulting with Satan regarding the destruction of Sir George Home. Neil put a dead hand, enchanted by the devil, in Sir George's yard.

But these are instances of black or malevolent witchcraft. The use of the dead touch in white witchcraft is well known. Thomas Hardy's story of "the withered arm" is founded on fact. A young woman sent by a wizard had an interview with a hangman the night before an execution. The next day she approached the corpse, and having bared her "curst arm" the hangman laid the withered limb "across the dead man's neck upon a line the colour of a ripe blackberry which surrounded it." The woman shrieked; the "turn of the blood" predicted by the wizard had taken place. In this case there were other causes for emotion, and the charm was too powerful, for the patient died.

As a curative agent the touch of the dead was regarded with universal respect. Hunt² says he saw a young woman led on to the scaffold at the Old Bailey for the purpose of having a wen touched with the hand of a man who had just been executed; and at Northampton formerly numbers of sufferers used to congregate round the gallows in order to receive the "dead stroke." The fee demanded for the privilege went to the hangman.

The touch of a suicide's hand is reported to have made a cure in Cornwall. "To heal the king's or queen's evil," says

¹ *Superstitions of Scotland*, 1834.

² *Drolls and Romances*, second series.

Scot in the *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, "first touch the place with the hand of one that died an untimely death." In Storrington, not many years ago, a young woman afflicted with a goitre was taken by her friends to the side of an open coffin that the hand of the dead should touch it twice; and another West Sussex woman who had suffered for years from an enlarged throat, when she heard that a boy had been drowned in Waltham Lock, set off there immediately and had the part affected stroked with the dead hand nine times from east to west, and nine times from west to east¹.

The village life just commented on is now rapidly passing away before our eyes. Black witchcraft has gone, white witchcraft is slowly following. The language, manners, customs, and superstitions are undergoing alterations and repairs: so that even 50 years ago seems remote from our own time, and it is this rapid disappearance which makes a record of such slight scientific value appear worth the attention of the antiquary.

H. D. CATLING, M.A., of St John's College, made the following communication on

LOGGAN'S HABITUS ACADEMICI.

A short time ago I was so fortunate as to purchase a complete set of the plates which, together with a title unfortunately not included in my series, form the volume called *Habitus Academici*, and usually referred to as David Loggan's first work.

The main facts of Loggan's life are to be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and in the Introduction to the reissue of his *Cantabrigia Illustrata*, published by Messrs Macmillan and Bowes in 1905. I need not therefore recapitulate them here, as both works are readily accessible. The two articles were written by Mr J. W. Clark, to whom I take this opportunity of expressing my acknowledgements.

As the *Habitus Academici* is an extremely rare book, I will give a list of the plates, with their titles, and such facts as I have been able to discover respecting the date of publication.

¹ Black's *Folk Medicine*.

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