

"Well, my father's then, if you must be so particular, Miss Franklyn. I live here now."

"You, Mr. Lancaster!" I exclaimed in a silly monotone, wondering in what capacity he occupied it—agent, or friend, or tenant.

"Why not? didn't you know?—but I suppose you could not. My poor brother perished last autumn—he was washed overboard in that gale: the cutter was wrecked on the Devon coast."

"The *Amaranth*?" I whispered, a curious joy filling my heart—a contentment to which it had long been a stranger.

"Yes, the same. Poor Downlip was drowned—poor, dear Leonard, as fine a fellow as ever lived; and so I, unfortunately, succeeded to the title, but I prefer to use the family name still."

I was dumbfounded. Mr. Lancaster not only alive but a viscount! the heir to the peerage of Eyremouth! It was too surprising. I could only murmur, "Yes, I understand something of it all; but how did you escape, Mr.—I mean, Lord Downlip?"

"You must not call me Lord Downlip," he replied gravely. "To you I am unchanged. Oh," he continued lightly, "I climbed up, fell, was found half-dead by a farmer, taken to his place, nursed for a week, and then hurried home to learn of poor

Leonard's death. You perhaps did not associate his fate and mine?"

"Yes, I did; I was dreadfully sorry—quite ill," I said unreflectingly.

"But you did not know him," he replied archly. "Is it possible that you fancied that I was dead?"

I was silent. My silence was sufficient.

"And were sorry?" he continued tenderly as he clasped my hand. "Were you *really* sorry, Hilda?"

I looked up; our eyes met for one second—that was enough. He put his arm round me and whispered—

"My darling, I love you. Is it possible that you care for me?" Jack's joyful barking drowned my reply. The other visitors were returning in search of me. Lord Downlip and I sprang apart.

But not for long. He accompanied us over all the house, and gave us tea. We returned to Reignton full of his praises; and that night I told auntie that Lord Downlip intended to call on her and uncle, and to propose to marry me. Her astonishment may be guessed when she encountered in my aristocratic suitor—Jack's master!

Yes, Jack's master, and my dearly loved husband—as he has been for nearly six happy years. He has just succeeded to the title. Dear old Jack is still alive, and as faithful as ever to Reginald and me.

ABOUT LONDON CABS.

BY F. M. HOLMES.



"HANSOM, SIR?"

ANSOM, sir? hansom?"

"No, thanks."

"'Ave your own kerridge, sir, and be a toff!"

You laugh at the ruddy-faced, merry-eyed Jehu, and strike up a cheery chat with him. You find he pays about fourteen shillings a day for the hire of his vehicle and horses, and makes rarely more than about two pounds a week profit, working thirteen days out of fourteen—that is, taking rest every alternate Sunday.

He seems a jolly sort of fellow. His philosophy of life is pretty sound.

"If you ain't got capital

and can't make a thousand a year, why, you must be content with a hundred."

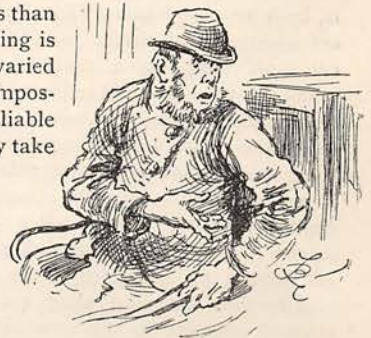
Yes, that is just the point. It is of no use for cabmen or kings to be always crying for the moon. The thousand a year is supposed by the driver to be made by the cab proprietor, from whom he hires. That proprietor is the happy owner of sixty cabs, each having presumably two horses to work it in turns

during a long day of about fifteen or sixteen hours. Now if he make but a shilling a day clear profit on each cab and horses, that is in round numbers twenty pounds a week, or over a thousand pounds a year!

So runs cabby's supposition. But to own sixty cabs, costing from eighty to a hundred pounds apiece, or even more, with one hundred and twenty horses, costing—what? twenty pounds apiece?—means the outlay of a good deal of money, and money from which its possessor is surely entitled to expect a return.

The two pounds a week is, we take it, a rough approximate average of a fortunate London hansom cabman's earnings. Drivers of four-wheelers make somewhat less. Again, some men are more industrious than others; but the calling is so precarious and varied that it is almost impossible to give a reliable estimate. A man may take a couple of pounds one week, thirty-five shillings or only a guinea the next.

He drives gaily out of the yard at eight, nine, or ten in the morning, and



"HI! WHAT'S THIS?"



does not know whether he will take a sovereign or a shilling during the day. Yet all the same he has to pay his fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen shillings for his day's hire and give coppers to the yardmen.

Night cabmen, that is, men who take out cabs at about eight or ten at night and work but one horse, pay six or seven shillings only for the use of their



THE EARLIEST HACKNEY COACH.

vehicle and its fiery quadruped, and this circumstance may perhaps throw some light on the mysterious reason why certain individuals choose this curious and apparently unattractive method of keeping the proverbial wolf from the door.

They get their cabs cheap and yet have a chance of picking up some good fares. At ten o'clock the places of amusement are not closed, the tide of London has by no means ebbed, while even at one or two in the morning prowlers about Fleet Street, for instance, may find some weary journalist desirous of being conveyed to his distant home.

But the long-day men are not off the street at ten or twelve. Far from it; they begin when they like, say at eight or nine in the morning, and, working two horses, they make about fifteen to sixteen hours. It is a long day. But they are their own masters. That, in our opinion, is to cabby one of the great charms of a cabman's life. When he has paid his proprietor in the morning he sallies forth at the beck and call of no master. He can go where he will to pick up fares.

He is supposed to rank, and not to crawl. That is, he is supposed to wait for a passenger on a place set apart for cab-drivers, and called a cab-stand or cab-rank. But, as a matter of fact, we imagine many cab-drivers would tell you that crawling is better than ranking. In other words, cabby is more likely to obtain a fare by walking his horse leisurely along some well-frequented thoroughfare—*i.e.*, in London slang, crawling—than by standing on a cab-rank waiting for hire. But crawling is a heinous offence in the eyes of the police, and many have been the convictions for indulging in this attractive practice. Nearly five thousand were obtained for this and kindred offences in the year 1889 alone; and the numbers show a marked increase on the previous year.

Certainly the presence of loitering cabs in crowded thoroughfares not only impedes traffic but adds to the dangers of crossing streets—already sufficiently dangerous; yet crawling goes on merrily. It pays, and, in fact, it is a convenience to certain of the public also. A man wanting a cab in Fleet Street or Chancery Lane is almost certain to see one pass soon without troubling to walk to the nearest rank—if, indeed, half the persons who throng such thoroughfares know where that delectable spot is to be found.

It is quite conceivable that cabby might find a ready excuse for his crawling: he is walking his tired horse home; he is returning from a heavy job, &c.; but if a smart young barrister wanted him to catch the "Flying Dutchman" or the North Express, and offered him an extra half-crown for doing so, that horse would no doubt have to discover latent energy somehow.

Well, well, we must not be too hard on cabby; his is a hard life: out in all weathers, if he be as industrious as he should be, and perhaps he has to wait long for fares. Ranking, if it rest the horse and permit the driver to visit his shelter or dine at his ease, is not only apt to be unprofitable for many, but some ranks are placed in dull and comparatively little-used streets. Further, so delightful is the inconsistency of some of our rules and regulations that there is not room on the ranks for anything approaching to the number of cabs licenced.

Of course, full provision is not required. In so large a city as London, and with so many holders of a cabman's licence, many may be at a given time off duty or engaged in driving fares. An improvement in the position of some of the ranks, and an increase in their number, appear desirable. On the other hand, some men persistently rank—and stick to the same place for years—and there they may remain for hours at a time and not "turn a wheel."

Cabs are, of course, the most aristocratic means of public conveyance. Even an archbishop would not despise the gondola of London. There was a capital story told by Archdeacon Smith at the Mayor's banquet at Canterbury last November. Two archbishops—we do not say they were the present occupants of those distinguished posts—entered a cab on returning on one occasion from Convocation. Said one prelate to the other—

"Either archbishops have become a great deal bigger or cabs have become a great deal smaller."

"What is size?" returned the other. "Can we not be comely as well as great?"

"But are we?" was the rejoinder. "Anyone seeing us would say, 'There are two prelates, but there's only one hansom.'"

Hansom is, of course, the name given to the familiar two-wheeled vehicle so common in the streets of London, and so called from the first maker or inventor of the style. He was the architect of the Town Hall of Birmingham, and the patent for the Hansom Patent Safety cab was obtained in 1834. Originally the vehicle had a sort of square body with two wheels the same height as the carriage, some seven feet



and a half in diameter. This was soon improved, but it may be said to have inaugurated quite a new development in such conveyances—which may lead us to the natural history of cabs. First of all, they seem to have appeared in England about the year 1605. As we can imagine to have very likely been the case, these were principally disused carriages of wealthy persons, and a considerable number of years elapsed before they were much improved.

Hackney coach or carriage seems to have been their first name, and a name which still abides—officially, at all events. As to the whence and wherefore of that name, it is something like the “buth” of Thackeray’s immortal Jeames Yellowplush—“wropped up in a mistry.” It may have come from the old French *hacquentée*; and that learned authority in things philological, Professor Skeat, is of opinion that it came ultimately from two words hailing from Holland, and meaning “a jolting nag.” That sounds very likely, and reminds us that the delightful Mrs. Brown roundly characterises the “keb” in which she went with Mrs. Simmons to the throat doctor as “the joltingest thing as ever I got into,” which shows that there may not be much difference in that respect between the “kebs” of the past and the present; though with the india-rubber-tired wheels, of which some boast, and asphalted or wood-paved roadways, we ought now to be making some progress.

Once more, however, before we part with the name. Some hold its derivation to be the very simple one, that the first coaches for hire were wont to proceed from the old suburb of Hackney—an explanation that seems very feasible.

As to the term “cabs,” that is, of course, the popular short-clipping of the French words *cabriolet de place*. The famous Lord Tom Noddy, in the immortal Ingoldsby Legend, ordered his “cabriolet.” But who now would think of calling a “cabriolet” from the cabstand? The short and simple first syllable does admirably.

Now these cabriolets originated with our ingenious neighbours across the Channel. A certain Nicholas Sauvage introduced them about the year 1650, and because he lived at the Hôtel St. Fiacre the cabs of the gay city of Paris are called fiacres to this day. These vehicles of Sauvage appear to have been two-wheeled affairs, something like the hansom of our time, and were taken to Florence, where they quickly increased in numbers, and to England, where we know they have also “caught on,” as our American kinsmen might say. They do not seem to have appeared here, however, until 1805, when Messrs. Rotch & Bradshaw had licences for eight of them. Our old friends the vested interests did not like the new cabs, and their numbers were at first very much limited, only a dozen being allowed. Imagine only a dozen hansom in London to-day! How many are there? Well, according to the latest Police Report, there were in 1889 no fewer than 7,409 hansom licensed, and 3,966 four-wheelers, or “growlers,” technically known as Clarences. The latter, by-the-by,

hardly seem to be decreasing, as in 1887 no fewer than 4,027 were licensed.

But the French “cabriolets” were, it is said, the originals of the Neapolitan *calleso*, the Norwegian *carriole*, and even the *volante* of Cuba. The name of Nicholas Sauvage evidently ought to go down to posterity as the ultimate originator of the useful cab.

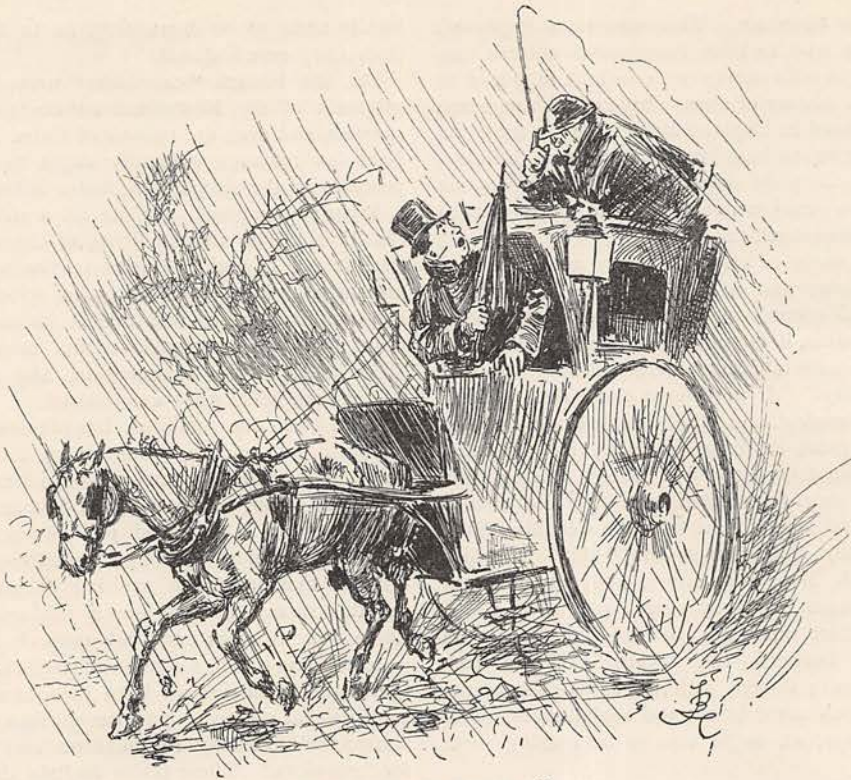
What is the great requisite for a cabman? Why, that he shall be able to drive, of course. Yes; but that is not enough. Cabmen have to pass an examination in knowledge of London streets before they can obtain a licence, and this is far more necessary than might be supposed, for 691 men in the year 1889 failed in the examination, and not a severe one at that, while 1,211 were passed.

Then when our candidate has obtained his licence, he must get his cab. Some men have their own vehicles, but the majority have to hire. It is the old story again of capital and labour. Cabs cost money—about a hundred pounds each and more, and the commoner vehicles something less. It is obvious that many an aspiring cabman could not put this money down to buy a cab and a couple of horses—for to work each cab properly, say twelve to sixteen hours a day, a change of steeds is necessary—therefore cabbies, as we have seen, hire from a cab proprietor at rates varying from thirteen to fifteen and sixteen shillings a day for hansom and ten shillings for “growlers.” These prices include the horses and the nosebag containing the animals’ luncheon; but in addition the men have to pay halfpence to yardmen. A cabby has to make up his hire money, even if he sell some of the bits of things at home to pay it; though if the times are bad and the owner generous, he may reduce his prices by a



A MODERN MIDNIGHT CONVERSATION.





THE "LONDON GONDOLA."

*Fare:* "HI, STOP! WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO? YOU'RE ALL WRONG! THIS IS NEVER THE WAY TO THE KENSINGTON MUSEUM!"

*Cabby:* "KEEP YOUR SEAT, SIR; IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU JES' LEAVE IT TO ME!"

shilling or so. But charges may vary with the time of year. Prices go up as the London season commences. They begin to rise, say, at early spring and culminate on the Derby Day, when, we have been told, as much as twenty-five shillings has been charged. This question of cab-hire, then, seems much like other similar questions: better vehicles command better prices, as also does the increased demand. A capital improvement introduces a folding hood at the top, so that the cab can be used open or closed.

The number of articles left in cabs is astonishing. During 1889 no fewer than 25,179 articles were taken to Scotland Yard as being left in public carriages. There is a Lost Property Office there, and thither cabby or conductor is supposed to take any article he finds in his vehicle. Of this enormous number, 13,791 were given back to their owners. The rewards to men have been prescribed by Act of Parliament. For gold or jewellery under £10, three shillings in the pound goes to the lucky cabman, and for less valuable goods two-and-sixpence in the pound. For over £10 the Commissioner assesses the reward. And strange things indeed are left in cabs.

Cabmen have themselves largely to blame for the reluctance of some persons to engage them and for altercations about fares. For instance, paterfamilias

wishes to convey his family to the seaside. He has not such an amount of luggage as suggested by Mr. Corney Grain when he sings of the children taking their pets—the parrot that squawks, the dog that barks, the beastly little sparrow, and the smelling little mice—but the head of the house has a sufficient cab-load. Like a wise man he bargains with the Jehu to take it to the terminus for, say, four-and-sixpence or five shillings. But on returning, lo and behold! the cabby he thinks of hiring turns up his nose very high at the fare paid before, and loudly demands six or seven shillings! Why? That is a conundrum not easy of answer; yet two explanations may be mentioned: first, that in driving from a suburb to a large railway terminus cabby has a chance of a fare back, while in journeying from a crowded station to a quiet street the reverse is the case. Or it may be that in driving to almost any of the northern suburbs the way lies over rising ground. We do not say these are the reasons, but they suggest an explanation. Also, some cabbies may be able to hold out for higher prices just like other men in different walks of life; but, whatever the reasons, the fact remains that cabmen do vary notably in their charges, or, to put it in another way, in the amounts that will satisfy them.

The legal charges, of course, depend upon whether



the cab is a hansom or four-wheeled, and whether it is hired or discharged inside or outside the "four-mile radius," but a shilling is the minimum fare. There are also certain extras for luggage, &c. ; but, as a matter of fact, the exact legal charges rarely satisfy the London Jehus.

In this matter of paying cabbies, as in some other things, the so-called weakness of ladies is often their strength, and, altercation or no altercation, they have the reputation as a sex of paying remarkably low fares.

An incident occurred the other day in a well-known suburb illustrating this. A lady seated herself in a cab on a rank and demanded to be driven to a certain place for a shilling. Cabby refused. She persisted. Cabby was obdurate. The end was that a couple of policemen had to—conduct her, we will say, out of the cab, and she took her seat in another vehicle, the driver of which accepted her shilling. No doubt the lady felt she had vindicated the "rights" of her sex to have their own way. But how shall we explain the reason of the difference in the cabbies' charges. If a shilling would pay one man sufficiently well, why not another? The lady would probably say her offer was thus proved the right fare. But it was suggested that the man who refused was at the head of the rank, and the man who accepted was at the end. Therefore, in all probability, he would have to wait a much longer time than his colleague for a fare. A shilling in the cab was, he thought, better than two in the dim future.

The "bilker" is the cabman's horror, and a mean rascal he or she is. A bilker enters a cab, tells the Jehu to drive to such-and-such a place, and then calmly refuses to pay. At present cabby's only remedy is to sue for a debt: a roundabout and tedious remedy. But often the bilker disappears in a large shop with two entrances, or an arcade, and vanishes from view. Cabby waits. The person who ought to pay is pursuing his mean way elsewhere. Then it dawns on cabby that he has been bilked! No wonder he is tempted to strong language; and sometimes, no doubt, he yields to that temptation!

To obtain a quicker way of dealing with bilkers is one of the objects of the new Cabmen's Union. For, following the fashion of other folk, the cabdrivers have lately been forming a union. The Metropolitan Cabdrivers' Trade Union it is called, and the primary object, as might be supposed, is to secure a reduction in the hire of cabs to drivers. But there are other grievances to be redressed: as the unlimited issue of drivers' licences by the Scotland Yard authorities, the granting of such licences to raw and inexperienced youths, the competition with omnibuses, the privileged cab system at the railway termini, the ease with which bilkers may cheat cabmen of their fares, and the placing of cab-stands where they are least wanted.

These objects, we take it, very well summarise the cabmen's wishes and position at the present time. Take them altogether they are not a bad set of men. There are, no doubt, black sheep among them, as there are, unhappily, in pretty well every walk of life. But we should not fall into the habit—so prevalent, we fear, to-day—of generalising too much from few and insufficient data. Because one meets with one or two, or even a score, of bad, bullying, blaspheming cabbies, it does not follow that all the fifteen to sixteen thousand licensed hackney drivers of London are the same. Yet they have their little tricks, some of them: one is the long distance which perhaps a stranger may find the road to any given place, and the consequent high charge!

A curious legal decision was given in a cab case last December. Drivers, it appears, may sleep while waiting for their hirers in the streets. A cabby drove a certain gentleman to a bank, who told him to wait until he appeared. Time went on, and at two o'clock of those "wee sma' hours ayont th' twal," Chaplin concluded he had waited a longish time. He rang the bell and discovered that his fare had gone two hours before. A summons followed, and the fare's defence was that cabby was sound asleep and would not wake. Nevertheless, the magistrate decided that cabby should have been made to wake, and the fare lost the case, which, we are bound to say, seems to us to be only in accordance with justice. Cabby had certainly earned a fare.

The Cabmen's Shelters, which were established in 1875, have been of great benefit to the men. Some of these shelters are picturesque little châteaux, and answer the purpose almost of little clubs for the men while on the ranks or stands. Here the drivers can sit and read and have their food while waiting for fares. The shelters are great counter-attractions to the public-houses, and have been largely instrumental in promoting sober habits. There are about forty of these shelters studding the streets of the great metropolis.

Cab-driving is a Bohemian sort of existence. Cabby marches off to his yard in the morning, finds his cab ready, pays down his money, and is off for the rest of the day to get what he can. He has, doubtless, some strange experiences; sometimes you will find him gaily tooling a fare along a pleasant suburban road on a bright afternoon, sometimes he may have a sad accident case for a hospital. Paterfamilias conveys his happy family to the railway station in the dull "growler"; the smart journalist rushes in the flying hansom to the terrible catastrophe or pleasing event he is to describe for to-morrow's issue; the aspiring artist, anxious to be "hung," commits his treasures to the sombre four-wheeler; the gay evening dress often travels in the same way. All, all in turn use the familiar cab, which is such a characteristic feature of London street life.

