

THE GHASTLY CONSEQUENCES OF LIVING IN CHARLES DICKENS' HOUSE.

"Great men," no doubt, have a great deal to answer for. No one will deny that. Their "genius," which brings them to the front, and which causes men, women, and children to worship them for the pleasure their beautiful gifts procure to eyes, ears, and senses, brings them all much responsibility.

But who would ever have imagined that their dwellings may bring grave responsibility and grave trouble to those who take up their abode in a house which the presence of their Genius has hallowed. I live in Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, a dear house, in a nice, quiet, shady garden, where grow fine large old plantains, (out of the Square proper,) and where, in summer, from every window of the house, you may imagine yourself in the country—the real country! That sounds very grand and luxurious in London; and though the mere fact of living in the house has very nearly brought upon me the most terrible fate which can befall a human being now-a-days, namely, *that of a SANE person shut up in a lunatic asylum, put there for the purpose of being slowly or "accidentally" murdered*; I cling to the spot because I have spent the happiest, the most interesting, and the most illumined part of my life there; also days of the most bitter anguish, the most heart-crushing despair, when I was obliged to leave the dear home and husband for some time, because I could not stop crying. The thought of my loss, and the shipwreck of my life was too vivid, too much for me. I went away and returned when I had got calm enough to restrain my tears, but with the sun set for ever on what remained to me of the summer of middle life. I love the dear home too, because my darling puggies are buried in the garden under the mulberry tree, without a tombstone, alas! because, ever

since they died, I have been planning to have a pretty monument made to mark the spot where they lay, and that when I have thought I could afford myself that pleasure, somebody has generally stolen my money . . . and I have to put off ordering the intended *work of art*, which I mean it to be, till I feel "flush" again. I was a slave to my dear Dan for nearly thirteen years, and I think I must have loved that dog as much as anybody ever loved *any* thing in this world.

I must not let you wonder too long what I am driving at, my readers, by telling you that through the mere fact of living in what had been a house where a great man had lived, I nearly got locked up in a lunatic asylum! You must think me insane, I fancy, to say such a thing; and I must confess, that you might guess every mortal and immortal thing under the sun, but you would never guess how this most frightful occurrence all but took place.

Those who have read CHARLES DICKENS' Life by Mr. Forster, will know that he is the "GREAT MAN" who lived at Tavistock House for twelve years.

People from all parts of the world have come to look at the house CHARLES DICKENS lived in. They have gone so far, sometimes, as to ask to come in and see the interior of the house, a request which I have frequently complied with.

One afternoon, in August, 1877, I was sitting in the front room downstairs, with five or six friends, four of the nurses and all my little troop of children. A young man and his wife (who was evidently expecting an increase of her particular tribe) came into our "Drive up" through the large iron gates, accompanied by two of the dearest little "tots" of children that ever were seen. After gazing at the house a little while, "taking it in" in fact, they came up to the window we were sitting at, and asked, "*Is this CHARLES DICKENS' House?*"

They being, what I call "tame," and we being "tame," we could not help saying "what two dear little children you have!" The conversation once started on children, of course, ages, names, &c., were all subjects of most earnest

enquiry. Their children consisted of a little boy and a little girl. The little boy was the most forward child for seventeen months old I had or have ever seen, and a very pretty fair, blue-eyed little chap, as firm on his ten toes as most children three years old. His name was "CADWALLADWR," so something like the following conversation took place between the young father and myself. . . .

"CADWALLADWR!" said I, "why you must be Welsh people?"

"Yes" (replied the young husband, who appeared young enough to be my son)—"of a very excellent family with a capital pedigree!"

"I am Welsh," said I, "and I am supposed to be of an excellent family with a capital pedigree. You seem to think a good deal of such things, but I laugh at them altogether."

"Oh! you should not laugh at such things, they are of the highest importance!"

"Well," said I, "you will never change my opinion; the child that is born in the gutter is made of exactly the same stuff as the child born in the purple! That is my creed!"

"I," said the young father, "am proud to think Royal blood, the blood of the Plantagenets, runs in my veins, and that I have just as much right to the Throne as the Prince of Wales!"

"Well," I laughed, "I have heard a good deal about the blood of the Plantagenets and the white rose of York, and the red rose of Lancaster in *my* family! We are all descended from Adam. That is quite enough for me!"

"Then" (he continued, most seriously), "how do you know you are not the Princess of Wales—what King do you descend from?" We were all laughing at him, so was his wife, who was a little creature who appeared to be about nineteen years old.

"Edward the Fourth, I believe!"

"I am Cadwalladwr Waddy, descended in direct line from the first Prince of Wales, Edward II., barrister-at law. . . . and you are the handsomest woman I ever saw!"

"I am old enough to be your Mother and my hair is getting gray, so it is no use talking nonsense to *me*!"

We all laughed, and a little more conversation took place, always from the window, between ourselves, Mr. and Mrs. Waddy. Then, as he seemed rather silly and tiresome, I went off saying I was busy. They then took themselves off.

Naturally, we thought no more about the Waddys, till, to my great surprise, the next afternoon (I was in the back drawing-room), the servant came to say Mr. Waddy wished to know whether I would receive him.

"Certainly not! say *not at home*," said I.

In the evening he returned to the door, and as I had taken the precaution to give orders to always say *not at home*, if he came, he left with the servant a white rose and a red rose entwined, with a piece of paper for me on which was written: "*From H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, to H. R. H. the Princess of Wales.*" He used to come every day or write the most ridiculous letters to me—one I remember began "*My Mountain Sylph!*"

After he left London he continued writing the same maniacal letters, and at last I got one from Liverpool,* saying his "*vulgar little wife had given birth to another brat*," that, although his little girl was not of the same Royal blood as "Cadwy" (as he called his little boy), he had made up his mind to take pity on her too and not leave her to the tender mercies of her "vulgar mother," but had carried them both off to Liverpool, from whence he wrote; that he intended sailing for America by next steamer, that I was the only woman to whom could be entrusted the education of the future Prince of Wales, that I was to come off at once and bring with me £100. I then made up my mind he was a stark staring lunatic, I packed off all the letters I could find to his poor little wife, telling her where the children were, and saying I fancied the letters he had written me would help her to get rid of him.

* His wife being at Plymouth with her father and mother.—G. W.

To this, the poor little thing replied (a letter I have mislaid) that she was most thankful to me, that she had not the least idea where her husband or the children were till she got my letter, and that his brain had been softening for two or three years. She also begged me to send her any future letters he might send me. At the end of the story, I publish the letters from poor "Cadwalladwr" as well as Mrs. Waddy's, so as to give the idea of the style of them, and how very much at a loss my poor dear husband must have been for an excuse to put me into a Lunatic Asylum. You will think as I do when I tell you that it was because of some of "Cadwalladwr's" letters falling into his hands that, to avoid the *Scandal* of accusing me of Infidelity, he took the most merciful course and made up his mind to hide my guilt by getting me safe into a Lunatic Asylum instead of bringing me into the Divorce Court.

Now was not he very kind, and must not he be a very thoughtful gentleman, and must not any wife feel grateful to him for so much "considerateness," and anxious to live with such a kind husband and never leave him?

I own to, at one time, not having been possessed of these sensible, proper, and wifelike sentiments; but having, by a rather painful experience discovered that Judges, Magistrates and the Government have systematically shown their utmost sympathy for Mr. Weldon's failure, and done their best to ruin me, for my *bad taste* in attempting to resist and make an exposé of what I was silly enough to regard as unjust, insulting and cruel treatment, I have come round to the general opinion, and have made up my mind that nothing shall keep me from the protecting arm and the sacred roof of so generous and anxious a husband. I earnestly wish him to return to me immediately. I have asked him several times to do so since 1875, but he does not respond. The law, which at least protects women thus far, will however certainly oblige him, whether he likes it or no, to *reintegrate the conjugal domicile*.

As Mr. Weldon had left me at Tavistock House, in July,

1875, and that, although on the best of terms with me, he gradually left off his visits, till they became like *Arch-angels* visits, you will wonder how he could have got hold of the letters sent in 1877 and 1878 to his wife. "*Angel's* visits are few and far between." What, therefore, must *Arch-angel's* visits be? That is why I remarked that Mr. Weldon's visits became as *Arch-angels'* visits, because they must be yet fewer and more far between than even angel's, and Mr. Weldon's were of the same kind!

You will wonder again how such a funny thing could happen, when I tell you that a man of the name of Anacharsis Ménier managed to live with his mistress, a girl called Olive Nicholls, of Cambridge, in my house for five months while I was abroad with his wife who was in a very delicate state of health. During that time he caused to disappear all my jewels and trinkets, furniture, books and photographs, &c., to the value of at least £1000, and, of course, many things of value, personal and inestimable, to me, as well as all the letters which came to Tavistock House during those five months. That is the way, therefore, how I account for Mr. Weldon having come into possession of Cadwalladwr's letters to me. On my return to Tavistock House I found the empty envelopes of my letters sprawling all over the place, and saw several in "Cadwalladwrs" handwriting. Of course I never thought of keeping those envelopes, and I do not think any one else would have thought of doing so. I found several letters from "Cadwalladwr" among some papers of Ménier seized by the police at the Solicitors for the Treasury, but I thought nothing of them. I had been told by Sir Henry De Bathe, the gentleman who kindly assisted Mr. Weldon in his attempt to get me locked up (on the very day four doctors thoughtfully discovered I was insane and "dangerous to myself and others"), that Ménier would be "*too much*" for me, that he had most compromising letters of mine, and that it was a great pity I had had him arrested!! I dare say you do not believe it can be true that FOUR English Doctors (*Englishmen!!*!) could have been found

who for the sake of hushing up a terrible family scandal in High Life, would have made out a sane and remarkably healthy lady, mad. . . . I will give you their names, and then you will be able to satisfy yourselves as to whether or not I am telling the truth about those Members of that noble profession.

Dr. Lyttleton Stewart (otherwise Forbes) Winslow, 23, Cavendish Square, W.

Dr. Mitchell Winn (his father-in-law), 73, Harley Street, W.

Dr. John Rudderforth, 6, Air Street, Piccadilly, W., and

• Dr. C. E. Armand Temple, 8, Torrington Square, W.C.

At Ménier's trial, for which he got sentenced to a six months visit to Coldbath Fields, I heard nothing of any compromising letters, and nothing like a compromising letter was produced.

Eight months after Ménier had left Coldbath Fields and—England, his solicitor, Mr. Willoughby Gunston, who had not been paid his bill, came to ask me if I would pay him and enter into possession of Ménier's papers. As they could be of no value to me, I declined with thanks. He assured me that there certainly were some which I certainly ought to have. He pressed this point repeatedly, and one day he came and told me he wanted a guinea very badly, and that he had a letter in his pocket worth more than a guinea to me. As I declined to give a guinea without seeing the letter, he showed it to me; I then burst out laughing, for it was "Cadwalladr's" letter dated 29th January, 1878. What made me laugh still more was, that I had that very morning received a perfect yarn from "Cadwalladr" (the one dated 11th September, 1879!) I told him of this, and said I would give him this one for nothing!—he seemed bewildered at my effrontery! I then told him the story I have just told you, upon which he exclaimed, "I beg your pardon, Ma'am, what an INFERNAL SCOUNDREL!"—The best part of it is, that Ménier was one of the persons present when "Cadwalladr" and his wife spoke to us from the street, and was generally present when these extraordinary effusions of his poor brain

used to be brought to me. It was not therefore surprising that he prevented, "*with a desire to spare me,*" these comprising letters being brought forward against me at his trial!!!! The Recorder in consequence, gave him the lightest possible sentence, *insulted* ME; and, no doubt, vowed internally he would catch me out whenever he had the opportunity.

However, these letters of "Cadwalladwr's" opened my eyes to my dear husband's and Sir Henry De Bathe's real motive.* They had both been gulled by Ménier with these absurd letters, and dreaded to see the noble names of Weldon and Treherne dragged in the mud. They therefore had recourse to that convenient practitioner the Mad Doctor, an office, Dr. Winslow, both father and son, have and do so highly distinguish. The father died about ten years (I believe), before his son made the attempt to "clapper claw" me, so, dear people, do not put the "virtues of the son on to the father." "*Give the old gentleman his due.*" Although three keepers got into Tavistock House and actually laid hold of me, I escaped their delicate intentions, as I consider, by a merciful interposition of Providence, and I am safe and sound as I ever have been without having been "cured" (and pickled) by Dr. Winslow, who was to have had £550 for his pains. I continue to receive letters from "Cadwalladwr." I received one yesterday through my Counsel in the Rivière libel case, who happened to be Mr. Waddy, Q.C. I publish that one as well as the one from the Q.C.

Many of my readers will most likely recognise the letter of the 29th January, 1878, as I have read it so often at my lectures on the Mad Doctors, at Tavistock House. The other, dated 7th April, 1880, I now mean to read also at my lectures, for I think it proves, even better than the one of the 29th January, 1878, the state of poor "Cadwalladwr's"

* I had been told Sir H. de B. had so many illegitimate children (in fact, Mr. Weldon himself had told me so) with different women, that he was most anxious to get his daughter Mary "spliced"—but no! I suppose now, it may not have been that! Only Cadwalladwr's letters!!!! Kind man!!!!—G. W.

intellects. "Katie" is one of my little orphan girls who Mr. and Mrs. Cadwalladr Waddy came with the rest of the public to hear sing and recite at Langham Hall, where I used to give a concert for the benefit of my Orphanage every Monday evening during 1876-77. That is the "Katie" to whom "Cadwalladr" refers, and she was then two years and seven months old.

I could add a great deal more, but I mean to write the HISTORY OF MY LIFE some day, and what I have to say must keep till then. I think I have, however, made it clear to my readers that I narrowly escaped being locked up, and probably murdered, in a Lunatic Asylum, through living in

CHARLES DICKENS' HOUSE.

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

TAVISTOCK SQUARE, LONDON.

10th May, 1880.

GEORGINA WELDON.

(née Treherne.)

LETTERS
FROM
MR. CADWALLADWR WADDY
TO
MRS. WELDON.

(No. 1.) 3, Essex Court, Middle Temple,
 London.
 29th January, 1878.

To Mrs. Weldon,—

Hush!

I wrote you some letters containing some “humbug” about Pedigrees having a bit of “fun” with you. You *treacherously* and *disloyally* “betrayed” *me, your own relative*, as you get your “blood Royal” from the same source I do, *i. e.*, the “Edwards’s.” There’s now a “Writ” out for *both* of us—you as a “witness” against me, and clever lawyers will blacken and damage our reputations, and ruin “you” and myself, to gratify my mother-in-law’s evil temper and my wife’s spite to yourself. I’ve been very unwell from care and anxiety for months, and am now going abroad for *your sake*, and to *save the honour of the only woman* who can cause my pulse to beat a second faster than any one else can in the world.

Should you ever be a “widow,” don’t sign any documents or allow any one to “humbug” your affairs, as I have always found that people who behave to me as you have done always end by coming to me “to protect them,” and I suppose you and “Katie” will be no exception to the rule. I shall change my name, and never come back to this country again.

Adieu.

CADWALLADWR.

coming in, and for months it used to take a bottle of *best* brandy to set me right at the sight of my wife's writing. If you stay there you will go from bad to worse for want of SYMPATHY as I took your measure the first time I saw you. Now if I do not make you happy and you, as Mrs. Waddy says—"regard me with aversion," you may see someone else out here you like better and you may elope "either up or down a ladder of rope" whenever it pleases you. A lady out here just like you had her first infant at 50, and now keeps it up regularly every year. You had much better be "increasing the population" in this country where everything is so cheap and education ditto, than parading your griefs before the public. Come out under an assumed name and never go back except as "Lady Waddy." In fact, you can book yourself in that name and they will think YOU ARE Sir Richard Waddy's wife. This is an awfully dull country and everything is "set in a monotone." You can sit by the sad sea waves in your carriage of an evening and see all the "swells" rolling about in their carriages. Nobody speaks to nobody and nobody entertains nobody. You cannot have a better place for peace and quietness and as much "religion and piety" as you like, as well as "truth and justice."

"Oh! what is the use of reviling

"Oh! why give way to repining

"Come let us be happy TOGETHER?

"For where there's A WILL THERE'S A WAY."

I send you a paper from which you may glean what a nice place Madras is? Do as I did, let nobody know when you leave. If you want money let me know how much and I will send it to you? It is quite true I asked you for some once and you refused. But I conquer all my foes by "LOVE" and perseverance; as one victory gained by persuasion is worth a dozen of your mode of doing business. You are the handsomest woman I ever saw; or, I suppose ever will see, and you are as good as you are good looking. But your "naughty little temper" requires a firm, kind, strong hand, whenever you feel inclined to "kick over the traces" and

display those pretty feet and ankles I KNOW YOU TO HAVE. I think the warm climate will suit you, and it is a curious thing, people with gray hair get new hair, so the "silver threads amongst the gold" you told me you had can be refurbished up new.

I was grieved to hear you had gone on the stage to annoy your "relatives," who, of course, are only TOO GLAD to see you do it, or anything else, and the only person you have annoyed is MYSELF. For MY SAKE? If you have nobody else to "Love"? Do not Georgina go on as you are going. If you never Loved anybody and do not Love anybody better than yourself, TRY AND LOVE ME? and do it FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, and to please YOURSELF. ANYTHING is better than what you are doing. You are wasting your life. And you did me an injury of so serious a nature that the devotion of your life-time can never efface or make atonement.

Yours faithfully,

CADWALLADWR WADDY,

Barrister-at-Law.

You possess no physical incapacity for becoming a mother as I know WHAT IT MAY BE, but I CAN SETTLE THAT.

LETTER FROM SAMUEL DANKS WADDY, Esq., M.P., Q.C.,
ENCLOSING ONE FROM CADWALLADWR WADDY.

My dear Mrs. Weldon,—

1st May, 1880.

That madman (as he really sometimes seems to be) has sent me an absurd, rambling letter, and has enclosed one for you. I have felt great difficulty what to do, because it is quite likely that you would rather not receive it. But I cannot well keep it or return it, so I send it to you, begging you not to be angry with me if it should turn out to be annoying.

I am at present staying at Brighton with my wife and children, but I much want to fulfil my promise to visit your Orphanage and hear your choir sing.

Yours ever, S. D. WADDY.

LETTER FROM CADWALLADWR WADDY.

Negapatam,

7th April, 1880.

(No. 4.)

Envelope { To Mrs. Weldon,
Favoured by S. D. Waddy, Q.C. and M.P.

To Georgina, Princess of Wales,—

My Dearest Love,—I am glad Sam. D. Waddy, Q.C. and M.P., got you out of your “troubles.” I knew you would eventually *fall back on him* when you got “hard up.” *Do not wait for the result of the “civil action,” but come out to me and have a Prince of Wales.*

Let the British Public look after *their own music*, and *entertain themselves*. “The trip” will do you good. There is only one Hotel here, and they are French people. If you want to have any “family” *now is your time. I can marry you afterwards.* The climate is “warm,” but pleasant. Dye your hair a *bright red*, and your eyebrows pink as your cheeks. Come over here, and I’ll get Sam. Waddy to give you the Order of the “Crown of India.”

Answer me *definitely* by return of post.*Fondly thine own,*

CADWALLADWR.

LETTERS OF MRS. CADWALLADER WADDY TO MRS. WELDON.

(No. 1.) (The first one has been lost or mislaid).—G. W.

Lower Compton Villa, Compton, near Plymouth,

(No. 2.)

October, 1877.

My Dear Mrs. Weldon,—

A thousand thanks for your letter and the letters enclosed. There is no doubt but that my husband is mad. My father and mother will not consent to my seeing him until we have had medical advice on the matter. If you hear from him again I shall feel deeply grateful to you if you will send me the letters. My parents say he must either hold an appointment or be placed in an asylum, as they are getting old, and

cannot maintain me and my three children. Again thanking you for your sympathy in my trouble,

Yours truly, FANNY ALBERTINE WADDY.

Lower Compton Villa, Compton, near Plymouth,
(No. 3.) Devon, April, 1878.

My Dear Mrs. Weldon,—

Seeing from a case of yours in the *Times* last week that you have been absent from home, and unfortunately had untrustworthy person or persons in charge of your house and belongings, I fancy my last letter* can not have reached you, as I received no reply. I am still in great trouble about my husband, as he has had no employment, so he says, since he left, consequently I have not had a penny from him, and he will not tell me where he is living or what he is doing, and he persists in saying that unless someone pays his passage to India that he can do nothing for his wife and three little ones. None of our relations on either side are in a position to pay his passage abroad, and I am grieved to say would not if they could, but I thought you might possibly see him, and if you do I shall be most "*deeply grateful*" if you will impress on him the *importance, duty, and necessity* of doing something to *support myself and three little darlings*. My parents are getting very old, and still have to work in their way for a livelihood, and as my husband writes and says such dreadful things, my mother will not take the responsibility of the children without my supervision. My position here like this seems quite dreadful, whilst I have a husband in the prime of life—*healthy, strong, and well*, and everybody says why does not your husband do something? I feel sure, my dear Mrs. Weldon, you will assist me in this matter, IF POSSIBLE. I have tried every possible way to induce my husband to take some settled appointment, but he has always persisted in doing as he likes, and reduced me to a state of "*poverty*." It is not eight months since he left me here with my three darling

* No doubt Ménier kept the one she here speaks of.—G. W.

children, and he still says he is penniless, and sends all his letters unpaid. I must apologise for bothering you thus much, but in my state of great distress, I feel sure with your generous good nature you will assist me if possible, and *urge* my husband to work, if you see him. With kindest regards, believe me, yours sincerely,

FANNY A. WADDY.

[To this I replied I was afraid of him, and would not see him for the world, as he was quite mad, and had sent me some threatening letters, as she knew. I said, of course, a madman could not work, and that he ought not to be at large. —G. W.]

Lower Compton Villa, Compton,

(No. 4, no date.)

Plymouth, Devon.

Dear Mrs. Weldon,—

I must apologise for again troubling you with regard to my husband. I have not heard from him for nearly three weeks, then he said he was in a "starving state and without any clothes;" but I have since been told that he has gone abroad.

Should you know where he has sailed for or his whereabouts, if you have heard from him since your last letter to me, I shall feel deeply obliged to you for any information you may have. With kindest regards,

FANNY ALBERTINE WADDY.

Till the 7th September, 1879, letter, I used to forward all the "Cadwalladwr" epistles to Mrs. Waddy, but, since then, I have kept them with the intention of writing and publishing the present pamphlet as a sequel to my pamphlet, "*How I escaped the Mad Doctors.*" I however received none till the one of the 7th April, 1880, which caps the rest! He really would be happier in a lunatic asylum, but as his relations are poor, doctors are not so easily found as they might be. Their consciences become dreadfully sensitive when the palms of their "*paws are not well greased.*"

THE END.