



Henry Stevens
1860-1924

THE ROSTRUM

BEING THE BUSINESS LIFE OF HENRY STEVENS AND
THE HISTORY OF THIRTY-EIGHT KING STREET, TO-
GETHER WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF FAMOUS SALES
HELD THERE DURING THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS

COMPILED BY
E. G. ALLINGHAM

WITH A PREFACE BY
THE RIGHT HONORABLE LORD ROTHSCHILD, F.R.S.

AND THIRTEEN PLATES FROM
PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENRY STEVENS



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

BECAUSE it is never possible to sever the present from the past it is also impossible to present properly any man's life or work without some reference to those who, or that which, preceded him. Therefore, before describing Mr. Henry Stevens' life-work it is necessary to say something of those who were before him in the business.

Covent Garden in the eighteenth century was famous and fashionable. It can still lay claim to fame if not to fashion, and of its three famous auctioneers—Robins, Langford, and Paterson—the chosen deities of those rooms where the choicest collections of the period were offered—one yet survives as Stevens.

In 1776 Samuel Paterson came to 38 King Street. The address given on his catalogues is No. 6 King Street, which is now the number of The Essex Serpent; either Mr. Paterson moved across the road to No. 38, which is exactly opposite, or the buildings were renumbered. At King Street Mr. Paterson sold many collections of books and prints, but with books his fame is chiefly connected. He was a great bibliographer, and his sale catalogues are famous, he being the first to produce good classified catalogues with proper descriptions of the lots. He both catalogued and sold the valuable collection of manuscripts belong-

ing to Sir Julius Cæsar, which priceless manuscripts were actually on the point of being sold to a cheesemonger, when luckily Paterson discovered and rescued them. Their sale by auction produced £356. He also catalogued and sold the Rowe Mores, Beauclerk, and Croft libraries, all great events in the history of book sales. Of his nine noted catalogues the rest were: *Bibliotheca Anglica Curiosa*, *Bibliotheca Fleetwoodiana*, *Bibliotheca Universalis Selecta*, *Bibliotheca Pinelli*, *Bibliotheca Strangeana*, and *Bibliotheca Fageliana*. Moreover he catalogued the library of James West, Esq., and sold it for Langford's in the Piazza.

At Paterson's sales, for the first time, books were offered singly in lots, starting with bids at sixpence, with threepenny advances, until five shillings was reached, and then the bidding went on by sixpences. An honest and most cultivated man, he was by no means rich. He loved his subject too well to possess the qualities that go with money-making, and preferred reading books to selling them, it being said of him that he had read every book he ever sold, and if when he was making catalogues, he came across a book that he had not seen before, which aroused his interest, he immediately became lost in it, and his assistant might amuse himself as he pleased. In this way his catalogues were often only ready a few hours before the sale commenced. However, they who love their subject have their compensations if much money is not one of them, and Paterson enjoyed the pleasant friendship and esteem of eminent men. Dr. Johnson refers to him as "my friend" and was godfather to his son, an aspiring artist, whom he recommended to the kindly notice of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Just as the name of Stevens has been familiar

to Victorians, and famous folk of the century have passed in and out of the doorway of No. 38, so the name of Paterson was familiar to the Georgians, and many a man of letters and refined connoisseur has handled books and *objets d'art* there. Dr. Johnson must have often chatted to Mr. Paterson here, and here too came elegant Topham Beauclerk, whose library contained so many sermons, though none of his friends knew why, and Boswell, and Garrick who was a collector; Gough, editor of Camden's "Britannia," in top boots, carrying a whip, would stroll in, and Dr. Lort, chaplain to the Duke of Devonshire, in thick worsted stockings and a "Busby" wig, Caleb Whiteford, Dr. Gossett, Mr. Pitt, and Horace Walpole all knew Mr. Paterson well.

Then a corpulent form, clad in smart red coat with gold embroidered buttons, often moved majestically in and out of Paterson's. This was Ratclyffe, a collector of black letter and ancient volumes. He was originally a cheesemonger, and acquired his immense love of books, so it was believed, from the fact that so many old books were brought to his shop to be sold for waste paper. He and Garrick were competitors at the Fleetwood sale, when Garrick missed the only curious old play he did not possess because it rose to the enormous price of 27s.

It was often Mr. Paterson's habit to make a little dissertation from the rostrum, and even distinguished collectors turned to him as to a master. He said one day, "Dr. Lort, permit me to draw your attention to this little book. It contains at page 47 a very curious anecdote, respecting Sir Edmonbury Godfrey, of which I was not aware until I read it during the time I was making my catalogue." Two shillings had been the bid before

he addressed the doctor, who asked to see the book and nodded another threepence. Dr. Gossett, sitting opposite, also inspected the volume, and gave a nod, and up went the bidding until finally it sold for £1 5s.

Some twelve years before his death Mr. Paterson left the rooms in King Street and was succeeded by Messrs. King, Collins and Chapman. Under their new owners the rooms were put to other uses that also would entitle them to fame, for the firm let them out for evening entertainments, and here Collins gave his "Evening Brush," a sort of light lecture, varied with songs and anecdotes, and here Charles Dibdin commenced his "London Amusement," and the rooms rang with the notes of "Poor Jack" and other ditties. But poor Dibdin has left it on record that he was not very fortunate in his "place of entertainment, an auction room in King Street, Covent Garden." "I believe" (says he) "the very place once celebrated by the imitative chess-playing automaton of Jacky Droz. The imitative figure had been, however, much more successful than the real one was, for nothing I could do induced the public to attend me." Mr. Paterson gave a series of lectures on Shakespeare in the rooms, and apparently had a better audience, which included George Steevens, Malone, and Barry the Painter.

Sales were being conducted under the dual title of Chapman and King in 1790, but King and Son were in possession in 1796. Thomas King was a well-known auctioneer of books, and was in business in Lower Moorfields from 1780 to 1796.

The oldest record preserved at King Street is a catalogue of the library of Dr. Richard Farmer, Master of Emmanuel College, and Librarian to the University of Cambridge. Many a day must this

good soul, who carried his learning lightly, have been seen in King Street, carelessly dressed, wig, as like as not, awry, muttering "strange speeches" to himself, thinking of some black letter darling that he had just discovered, on his way to chat and chuckle with Mr. Paterson or Mr. King. His was a sale to delight the lover of books—books sold in lots of ones, twos, and threes, mostly for small sums—anything from sixpence upwards, and lucky they who were there with Shakespeare's works, first edition folio going for £7 and early editions of single plays for a mere song, as well as a lot of twelve rare ancient poems, including Chaucer's "Troylus and Cresyde" and "The Temple of Glass" printed by Wynkyn de Worde, for £26 5s., and "Paradyse of Daynty Devises, b.l. imp., by Henry Disle, 1576," only £6. Dr. Farmer's own annotations added not a little to the value of the books. Three exceedingly interesting lots were Milton's "Paradise Lost"—a first edition 1667, second edition 1668, and third edition 1669, each with a different title page, making 11s. each. As the catalogue stated, these lots clearly proved "that there were three different title pages used to force the sale of that matchless poem." The note was signed S. P. (Samuel Paterson).

"Knox's History of the Church of Scotland without beginning or end" was designated as "a great curiosity—Hume never saw it"; the copies were suppressed and the few that escaped wanted beginning and end. It made £3 9s.

In 1800 came the great library of his friend and fellow-scholar, George Steevens, the eminent Shakespearean editor—a sale that aroused a furore of excitement in the world of books, over which Mr. King presided with Jove-like calm. Here were first editions of Shakespeare, "Henry V." for

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£27 6s., "King Lear" £28, "The Merry Wives of Windsor" £28, "Othello" £27, "The Taming of the Shrew" £20, to say nothing of other priceless volumes, as for instance: "Here beginneth the volume intituled and named the Recuyel of the Historyes of Troy, composed and drawnen out of diuerce Bookes of Latyn into Frenshe, by Raoul le Fleure, in the yeare of our Lord a thousand foure Hlundred sixty and foure, and translated by Willyam Caxton in the yere a Thousand foure hundred sixty and eighte. Impr. by Wm. Caxton 1471." (This is said to be the first book printed in English.) £14 3s. 6d. (Payne).

Dr. Burney was often in the rooms, and perhaps Madame D'Arblay too. At the sale of Mr. Richard Foster's library in 1806 one can picture him lovingly handling the "Quinte Curce par Vasque de Luce, MSS. sur velin" that he bought for £25, and going home along King Street with his treasure, perhaps looking at it as he walked, after the sale, on a November afternoon, when Mr. King would have had to sell by candle-light if the day was dark or foggy. That day a first edition of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was knocked down for £3 3s. (Stace) and the "Boke of Comfort, made up with MS. imp. at Tauerstoke by Deusline 1525" £7 17s. 6d. (Phelps) and "George Gascoigne's Workes, b.l. 1587" for £25. Among a few curios was a brooch of curious workmanship and design (mentioned in Pennant's "Tour of Scotland")—a Druid's head set in pearls—made of silver found on the estate of Lochbury in Mull by a tinker there. It sold for £5 12s. 6d. (Bindley).

In 1810 an extraordinary collection of books and tracts came to the hammer, and then also first editions of separate plays of Shakespeare fetched no more than £7 12s 6d., £5 2s. 6d., 19s., and 12s.

Dr. Heber and Dr. Burney were busy that day making many purchases, the latter buying rare tracts. One book had the extraordinary title "Rules to get children with handsome faces, so that their children may not have such strange, prodigious, ill-boding faces as their fathers, 1642." Though so useful, it was quite cheap, only 7s. 6d.

In the following year came the library of Isaac Reed, a kindly man to whom none applied for information in vain, and who made his library with its enormous collection of old and rare books and plays his "parlour, kitchen, and hall."

One of the most interesting libraries ever sold was that of John Horne Tooke, and again the manuscript notes of that original person enhanced the value of the lots. This particularly applied to the copy of Johnson's Dictionary, for which Major James paid £200. Mr. Tooke's own manuscript materials for a new dictionary made £43. His library was so rich in early printed works that the catalogue itself seems a priceless volume to anyone to whom a book is dear. The very names are delightful—only to quote one of so very many—"Lytel treatyse called the Disputacyon, or complaint of the herte, througheperced with the lokyng of the eye, impreynted at London in Flete Strete at ye Signe of the Sonne, by Wynkyn de Worde." £30 (Triphook) was not much for that. "Nychedemus Gospel, printed in a Ribband over a Wooden Cut, with wood cuts 4to by Wynkyn de Worde" made £9 9s. (Triphook). Dr. Heber was a prominent figure at the sale; indeed he seemed always in the rooms. One of his purchases, for £17, was a "Lytell Boke, that Speketh of Purgatorye, and what Purgatorie is, and in what Place, and of the Paynes that be therein, and which soules do abyde therein, till they be Pourged of Synne,

and which abyde not there; and for what synes a Soul goth to Hell, and of the Helpe that Soules Purgatorye may have of theyr Frends the be on lyve, and what Pardon aveyleth to Man's Soule, in verse, wood cut, black letter, 4to, by Robert Wyer dwellynge at the Syne of Saynt John Evangeliste, in Saint Martin's Paryshe in the Felde, in the Byshop of Norwyche Rentes beside Charynge Crosse."

There were many other book sales of quite considerable importance, for No. 38 was the recognized place for the dispersal of famous libraries, but with the "Natural History collections of John Strange, Esq.," an eight days' sale that fetched £496 5s. 6d., came a whisper of a new era.

About 1805-6 Mr. Lochee entered the business as partner. Sales were long in those days, but their duration was due to the fact that frequently little more than 100 lots per diem were offered. And whereas Mr. Stevens now sells 500 lots at a time, seldom 300 and often less than 200 used to be put up in one day.

The year 1813 marks a change in the environment of the rooms. Hitherto they had been the haunt of the bibliophile, but after 1813 he came but rarely. Books continued to be sold from time to time, but they were practically confined to scientific works, old editions rarely appearing. Seven catalogues of Messrs King and Lochee indicate the coming change. In 1810 there was an important sale of shells, the cabinet of William Webber, when the Wentletrap, from Amboyna, made £27—the first of a long line of conchological sales. In 1819 there was the five days' sale of the conchological museum of William Broderip of Bristol. 1818 is the earliest record of a sale of minerals,

384	SHAKSPEARE (Wm.) True Chronicle History of Thomas Lord Cromwell	—	1613	1	10
385	—	Tragedie of King Richard II. 1 leaf wanting	—	1615	11
386	—	The Puritane, or Widow of Watling Streete	—	1607	13
387	—	The most excellent and lamentable Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet, 4th edition	—	1608	10. 6
388	—	The London Prodigall, FIRST EDITION	—	1605	19
389	—	The Tragedy of Othello, FIRST EDITION, rare	—	1622	12. 6
390	—	The Excellent History of the Merchant of Venice, FIRST EDITION, imperfect	—	1600	12
391	—	Chronicle History of King Lear and his Three Daughters, FIRST EDITION	—	1608	5. 2. 6
392	—	The Lamentable Tragedie of Iocrine, the Eldest Sounce of King Brutus 1595	—	3. 19	
N B. See curious MS. note temp. Shakspeare, signed G. P. otherwise Geo. Peele					
393	SHIRLEY (Jas.)	The Wedding	—	1629	6
394	—	The Maid's Revenge, Tr.	—	1639	3
395	—	The Schoole of Complement	—	1631	6
396	—	The Bird in a Cage, Com.	—	1633	6
397	—	Contention for Honour and Riches	—	ib.	7
398	—	The Young Admiral	—	1637	2. 6
399	—	Hide Parke, Com.	—	ib.	5. 6
400	GWINNE (Math.)	Vertumnus	—	1607	2. 6
401	HAUSTED (P.)	Senile Odium, Com. 8vo.	—	1633	1
402	—	The Tragedy of Paolo Giordano, and Vittoria Coronbona, title wanting	—	ib.	5
403	MUSIC (Old) viz. Madrigals and Motets, by Gibbons, Yonge, Wilbye, Este, Morley, &c. 8 parts	—	1598—1612	2. 5	—
404	—	Psalms, Sonets, and Songs of Sadness, D	—	1. 6	—

FACSIMILE PAGE FROM A KING STREET SALE CATALOGUE OF 1810.



those sales for which the rooms were so famous in the early eighties. The earliest recorded sale of insects is that of the collection of John Francillon, sold the 11th June, 1818.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards many collections or museums of insects, including most or all of the orders were sold, and in this connection the great names of Francillon and (later) Haworth occur. To this nine days' sale every naturalist of note came: Dr. Leach, Vigiers, McLeay, Kirby, and Curtis. A single beetle, *Priomus giganteus*, made a record price of £5 5s. (McLeay), and *Scarabæus elephas*, a male, £2 3s. (Kirby), and a butterfly, *Papilio homerus*, was bought by Haworth for £6 6s., and *Papilio antenor*, Drury, 1, by McLeay for £7 10s. Of *Orthoptera* ten insects made £21. McLeay was the buyer, and the lot was designated: " *Locusta*: New Holland, 1; Georgia, 1; Georgia, 4 species; Africa, 2, a fine species; Nov. Gen. Surinam, male and female, two beautiful and extraordinary insects." " *Mantis*, New Holland, 1, very valuable insect," made £1 6s. (Kirby), and " *Phasma*, grand insect from New Holland," £1 2s. (Haworth). The total sold was £725 11s. 6d.

Another sale was the extensive collection of Thomas Marsham, Esq., in 1820, but unfortunately the catalogue has not been preserved.

Paterson traditions as regards *objets d'art*, which were a feature of his sales, still continued, and apparently at no time in their history have the rooms ever failed the curio hunter. Thus the Webber collection contained, besides shells, an " Alfred's penny," which made £2 10s., and a " Queen Anne's farthing, reverse Car. 1713," £3 4s., and a bit of the Holy Cross, £1 3s.

Sales of prints and pictures continued, and

engravings by Delaram, Elstracke, Faithorne, Pass, and others were bought for £16, £43, and £23.

However, the two most notable achievements connected with the names of King and Lochee were the sales of two famous museums—the Leverian and the London. The Leverian Museum was a remarkable collection, formed by Sir Ashton Leyer, of all objects of natural history and ethnological interest, which in 1774 he presented to London under the name of the Holophusikon. It filled sixteen rooms in Leicester House in Leicester Square. Finally he disposed of it by lottery, and it fell to Parkinson, who exhibited it at the Rotunda on the Surrey side of Blackfriars, and eventually it came under the hammer. Mr. John Lochee, in a letter to Mr. William Bray, stated :

“ Upon referring to our books I find the total amount sold at the Leverian Museum was £6,642 13s. 6d., out of which £1,600 was bought back, and a few of the principal lots passed, as no adequate price was offered. The sale lasted sixty days, without intermission, except Sundays and the King’s birthday. It began on Monday morning, May 5th, 1806, and was generally well attended. Indeed there were more people the last than the first days. Having been the officiating auctioneer the whole time I can speak to anything with the more certainty. Should there be any other previous to the sale you might wish to know, Mr. Parkinson, the proprietor, who now lives in Newman Street, will inform you, I make no doubt.”

Unfortunately no catalogue of this sale has been preserved at King Street. Pennant, Latham, Haworth, McLeay, and Donovan were among the

buyers, and under the name of “Thompson” many purchases were effected for the then Lord Stanley, afterwards Earl Derby, who formed the grand collection that in 1851 he bequeathed to the town of Liverpool. Fichtel, a naturalist, also secured a large number of specimens for the Imperial Museum of Vienna. The Leverian Museum contained most of the specimens, zoological and ethnological, that were collected on Captain Cook’s three voyages, of which some are still guarded at Vienna and Liverpool. The Leverian specimen of the Great Auk was knocked to Mr. Donovan for £10 10s.

Of Mr. E. Donovan’s collection a catalogue has luckily been preserved, but hardly a single price is recorded. This collection, known as the London Museum and Institute of Natural History, was sold in 1818. Its contents were zoological, the collection of birds being particularly fine, comprising Dr. Latham’s collection and the entire British collection of birds of the Leverian Museum. Of the Great Auk the price is unrecorded. Of recorded prices are Black Eagle, female, £6 6s.; three herons, £47 18s. 6d.; White Wagtail, *Motacilla alba*, male, female, nest, etc., 5s.; Grey Wagtail, *Motacilla boarula*, male, female, scarce, 10s. 6d.; Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla flava*, male and female, 3s.; Nightingale, *Sylvia luscinia*, 4s.; Ring-tail Eagle, of extraordinary magnitude, measure nearly twelve feet between the tips of the wings, when expanded, £4 12s. Other lots were: Dark variety of the Honey-Buzzard, unique; White-winged Crossbill, *Loxia jaicirostris*, very rare; Pine Grosbeak, or Pine Bullfinch, *Loxia enenclator*, male and female, extremely rare and very fine; Crested Peacock, *Pavo cristatus*, both sexes in large glazed case —finest of the Leverian Gallery; Peahen, *Pavo cristatus*, which, after a certain age, assumed the

plumage of the male bird: it was bred by Lady Tyne, and presented to Sir Ashton Lever, recorded in Phil. Trans.; Red-breasted Goose, *Anas ruficollis*, presumed to be the only specimen of this very rare species in Britain; Black Eagle, beautiful pied variety, Scotland: the small Black Eagle of Sibbald, unique; Crested Shag, *Pelecanus cristatus*, the individual specimen, upon the authority of which Dr. Latham inserts the Crested Shag as a species in the British catalogue. There were also three varieties of the rare Red-lark, *Alauda rubra*.

In order not to favour one branch of the collection only, other lots are given in a table appended to this chapter.

By 1821 Mr. C. Dubois had succeeded King and Lochee. He conducted a very fine sale of shells (including specimens from M. de Calonne's museum) forming the cabinet of Mrs. Angus, when a high price, £20 10s., was paid for a cowry, *Cypraea aurora*. Mr. Dubois was unfortunate, for the place was sold up a couple of years later—February, 1824—when Mr. Thomas of Foster Lane advertised the sale at 38 King Street of a little collection of odds and ends under distress for rent.

Next Mr. Thomas himself occupied the rostrum at No. 38. Thence onwards for many years a weekly notice appeared at the doorway—a sale of shells, minerals, and fossils, either separately or together. Among the conchological collections that Mr. Thomas handled were the Brand collection (with *Harpa imperialis* £21) (Mawe), a three days' sale in which *Cypraea aurantia* made £18 18s. (Stutchbury), Lord Kilcoursie's collection in which a British shell was bought for £12 12s. On another occasion *Cypraea princeps* was put up at £25, genus *Cymbulia* at £21, and the *Mulleria* at

£25. Among minerals were the collections of Mr. Sowerby, Mr. Terry, Mr. Latham, Mr. Bowles, Mr. Midgley, Mr. Lowndes, Mr. Menge, Dr. Hayes, Mr. Rucker, Mr. Robert Cole, and Mr. Kent. Of fossils there was a remarkable collection sold in 1828, which contained several Leverian specimens (of this certain extracts from the catalogue will be found in the table at the end of the chapter), and the collections of Mr. Bowles, Mr. S. Parke, and Mr. Sowerby.

Occasionally the descriptions of the lots in Mr. Thomas's catalogues were very curious. When at the Egyptian Hall, in 1818, he sold a zoological collection formed by M. Villet, the crocodile was described in this way:

"This animal, native of Asia and Africa, has been found of the enormous size of from 20 to 30 feet. It preys chiefly on fish, and devours almost any animal that comes within its reach. It is produced from eggs, which are numerously deposited in the sand, of a size scarcely larger than that of the goose. The armour covering the body of this rapacious animal may be numbered among the most elaborate pieces of nature's mechanism, being so strong as to repel a musket ball. A modern traveller, Mr. Waterton, has surprised the world by a detail of his adventures, not the least marvellous of which is his having sprung upon the back of one of these horrid creatures, and rode astride it for a considerable time."

Some other lots were: Erody or *Anastomus* (first specimens brought to England), £3 and £2 5s.; Red Flamingo, £2 5s.; Small Flamingo, £3 3s.; Little Bustard, £1 5s.; Cape Bustard £5 5s. The "Mexican" Exhibition, a spectacle formed

by Mr. Bullock, which came under Mr. Thomas's hammer in 1825, displayed Mexican ichthyology and ornithology; a collection of humming-birds made £37 16s., a set of models and casts of fruits and vegetables of the country £47 5s., and there were interesting paintings and a panoramic view of Mexico City bought for £21.

For all this, ethnology was not neglected at King Street, although the passion for this science had not than seized the general public. To ethnologists, a sale that took place in July 1824 will be of great interest, not as regards prices, which were very low, but because it was the earliest, or one of the earliest, of those ethnological sales for which King Street is so famous. The collectors who now have to pay in pounds for what those who were present at that sale picked up for shillings will envy the person who carried off a tippet (*Akoo aora*) "made of the feathers of three very rare birds, a present from King Tameamea," for a guinea. Beautifully carved spears (*moto*) from the Fiji Islands, and clubs went for 11s. and less, and 15s. paid by Sir C. Hamilton was a high price for a black, burnt-wood club (*Malum*) Friendly Isles, beautifully carved. For a splendid carved paddle (anyone who knows the rooms can guess what it was like) 8s. seemed ample, and an idol (*calunalevu*) to which the inhabitants of Matawa, one of the Otaheite Islands, used to offer human sacrifices made 5s. 6d. (Everard). There was actually the native stone chisel given by the Queen Dowager (Ideah) to W. J. Davidson, May, 1807, as the identical one used to construct a canoe for Captain Cook in 1769 (unsold), as well as a large bowl (*Ambillo nangona lévu*) for liquor, and piece of the plant (*angona*) for making it (Fiji Islands) 6s. (Roberts); a tattooing instrument (*Ambati Nanghia*), which formerly be-

longed to a princess of the Fiji Islands, with the box and basket in which it was contained, 8s. (Arlington); a dress worn by Codiack ladies made of birds' feathers, etc., 19s. (Richards); and a cloak (*tappa*) of bark cloth, belonging to King Tameamea-Attoi, Sandwich Islands. At the same sale among other curios, a "beautiful matted helmet from the Leverian Museum, the only one known," made only 7s.

All who know Stevens' are acquainted with the extraordinary medley that comes there, a medley that is highly exciting as it may contain almost anything. But no miscellany ever beat that of Mr. Delabere Blane. The assortment went cheap, for a "curiously carved box, cut out of the solid, from New Zealand," evidently a feather box, would command more to-day than the 7s. 6d. then paid for it. But the gem of the collection lay among the "miscellaneous curiosities of the late Dr. Clarke the Traveller." It was a "box or vessel of alabaster particularly described by Dr. Clarke in reference to 'the box of alabaster mentioned in Matthew, which was brought by Mary Magdalene filled with sweet ointment for the purpose of anointing the feet of our Saviour,' *vide* catalogue of the Graham Greek vases." Lamentable lack of appreciation for this relic was displayed by a winning bid of half a crown.

Donovan was at the Delabere Blane sale buying pieces of the doctor's pottery for next to nothing; in fact everything was inexpensive. Low prices, however, cast no reflection upon the value of the lots, which no doubt were all they were stated to be (with the possible exception of the alabaster box); they are merely indicative of the fact that there was no competition for these articles at the time. With regard to statements in the catalogues, it is not

unlikely that in those Victorian days some of the eulogies were in the nature of "puff," but undoubtedly for the most part, and especially since Henry Stevens has been in the rostrum, every care has been taken to ensure correctness of description.

It seems odd to think that at a sale in 1830, two humble lots lying side by side, simply entitled "the Great Auk, very rare" and "a hawk," fetched 8s. and 6s. respectively. Close to the birds lay an Egyptian mummy "brought to England by Dr. Richardson," which sold for £17 6s. 6d. Impartially Mr. Thomas's hammer fell on a "large Scotch figure adapted for a garden or a tobacconist's"; the tattooed head of a New Zealand chief which Mr. Pettigrew bought for £1 13s. (another instance of lack of competition for such specimens); patent sticks for producing light (in lots of two) for 10s. 6d., 4s., and 3s. Then came a memory of Garrick in an Etruscan jug from his collections, and a box of stained and painted glass from Strawberry Hill brought back Horace Walpole. A penny of King Alfred made £3 18s., for coins seem to have been as magnets to collectors of all times, and a most beautiful chief's cloak from the South Seas, of red and gold feathers, only £2.

Mr. Thomas also introduced the first of a series of medical and pathological museums wherein various portions of the body—heart, lungs, etc.—were dispersed for a few shillings, while barrel organs sold at the same time made £53 11s. and £21 11s.

Paterson traditions lingered yet in certain sales of prints and pictures, and especially in a sale of March, 1825, when among the books of a valuable library was "the identical prayer book (black letter) used by Charles I. on the scaffold, with his name written in his own handwriting in the middle of the book." The book apparently was passed, as it

appeared again in May, when a final bid of £105 (Dupin) was attained. At the same time a fine copy of "Chronicarum Mundi, Norimberg, 1493," was secured by Mr. Bohn for £2 3s.

Bohn had some extraordinary bargains when the collection of Mr. Silberberg of Frankfort (1827) brought engraved portraits and illuminated manuscripts to the hammer. For instance, a beautifully illuminated copy of "The Register or Family Book of the Holy and Rich City of Nuremberg" for £6 10s.; "The Account of Nuremberg from the time of Julius Cæsar to the Tenth Century" for £9 9s., and a "Book of the Coats of Arms of Nuremberg" for £3 10s. Nineteen guineas gave him a book of paintings supposed to be by De Vos; £14 5s. "Walton's Biblia Sacra Polyglotta, 1657"; £38 17s. an early copy of the "Orleans Gallery"; and £17 "Museum Florentinum."

Curtis's botanical magazine, which always fetches a good price, made £36 in Dr. Sims's botanical library, and a rather interesting lot (at Mr. Wilson Lowry's sale) was a treatise on geometry by Sir I. Newton in his own handwriting, bought for £4 8s. by Mr. Donovan.

Collectors of prints and pictures still haunted the rooms, among them probably Matthews, the actor, whose collection is now in the Garrick Club. Prints by Ostade, Pass, Van Somer, Bartolozzi, Faithorne, and other well-known engravers were frequently offered, as well as pictures by Rembrandt, Breughel, Reynolds, Turner, and Mulready. Colnaghi and Molteno bought considerably, the latter purchasing the rare engraving of Richard, Lord Protector, by P. Stent for £28 7s. at the sale of Baron Schrottenberg's prints in 1827, and Charles I. and the Marquis of Hamilton with the horse after Vandyke by Strange for £13 at another sale in the same

year. Mr. Silberberg's prints also made another good sale of that year. A picture (the property of a gentleman of Harrow), "a rich landscape with nymphs at the bath in which will be recognized several interesting public characters," fetched (whether for its artistic worth or on account of the "public characters") £48 6s.

Some of Benjamin West's pictures came to the hammer with other property of Joseph Hayes. His "Expulsion of Adam and Eve" made £24 3s.; "Peter's First Sermon," £30 9s.; "Venus Attired by the Graces," £17 17s.; "Antiochus and Stratonice," £29 8s.; and "The Artist's Own Portrait painted by himself, with a view of Somerset House in the background," £39 8s. The collection also included coins: "Charles I, the fine pound piece with the inscription in a compartment and dated 1644" was bought for £14 14s.; "Mary a Rose Rial" for £5 15s.; and "Charles I. Oxford, 3-pound piece, 1644, Oxon, under the date" for £9.

Rather uncommon events were two sales of what were evidently very beautiful cameos: one, a bust of Minerva, fell for £17 6s. 6d., and an intaglio by Amastini, representing Artemisia at the tomb of her husband, for £13 1s. 6d.

By 1831 Mr. J. C. Stevens, father of Henry Stevens, had entered the business as partner. For the next three years, under Thomas and Stevens, natural history sales continued to predominate—sales of Mr. Heuland's, Mr. Rucker's, Mr. Sowerby's, and Mr. Bowles' minerals; sales of shells, with rare reverse *Turbanellus* cased with gold, £45, and, among Mr. Sowerby's shells, *Mulleria*, £20, and *Voluta junonia*, £15; sales of fossils, birds, and eggs. Curios, including inexpensive tattooed heads, and the first Veterinary

Museum ever offered to public auction (composed of the skulls and skeletons of animals and injected preparations) were also sold, and there were anatomical collections as well.

But the chief sale under the two names was that of the Delafons Museum. First, in March, 1834, the stock of teeth of Mr. Delafons, a dentist in George Street, Hanover Square, was brought to the hammer, and then came his Natural History Museum. This very well-known collection attracted Yarrell, representatives of the Manchester Museum, Sir William Ousley, Tucker, Dr. Clarke, and the College of Surgeons. Here were gathered heads of New Zealanders, "finely tattooed," selling for £2 8s. and 18s. 9d.; a mummy of a sacred cat, 15s.; paddles from the South Seas, 9s.; a rotary steam engine invented by Mr. Delafons, 18s.; and "the skull of a coachman crushed in going under a gateway." The College of Surgeons bought the skull of the rhinoceros for £16, a specimen of the *Argonauta* with the animal in spirits for £5, "a pair of horns of the *Cervus giganteus* from Tipperary, unusually perfect" (which in 1825 had been offered in the rooms with a reserve of forty-one guineas on them and had not been sold but which were again offered in 1832 and then bought by Mr. Delafons for £5 7s. 6d.) for £7, and head of the *Rhinoceros bicornis*, Africa, for £11. A skeleton of the Indian elephant on stand cost Dr. Clarke £32, the Dugong went for £15, and the Great Auk for 7s. (Drane).

Other lots were: a cabinet containing a collection of British lepidoptera, one moth in which was eighty years old and the oldest known in any collection, £18 (Hardwicke); the Frigate bird, £1 2s. (Peters); *Parotia sexcincta*, the Golden-breasted Bird of Paradise, £1 14s. (Drane); Rifle bird,

Ptiloris Paradiseus, and Red-breasted Chatterer, £1 (Tucker); a Bustard, *Otis*, £1 1s. (Hardwick); and a Chough, 13s. (Ashmead). The four days' sale made £439 11s. 6d.

In 1834 the title over the door changed for the last time, and when J. C. Stevens (late Thomas and Stevens) announced a sale on June 23rd, it was a good omen that the name by which these rooms were henceforward to become famous should be coupled at the outset with a collection so notable as that of the Haworth insects. The eleven days' sale of the British and foreign insects of Adrian Hardy Haworth was one of the most important ever held, because Haworth was the pioneer of modern entomological study. The collection, which had been almost half a century in forming, was catalogued by J. O. Westwood, afterwards Professor of Zoology, Oxford, and contained 40,000 specimens. The prices were not remarkable, being mostly in shillings, but the importance of such a sale cannot be reckoned by prices. Every naturalist of any note was there; among them Newman, Swainson, Children, Curtis, Walker, and Chant. The first six days' sales consisted of coleoptera and all the other orders, except lepidoptera, which occupied the other five days. To quote a very few of the lots:

"Coleoptera: *Dynastes actæon*, male, £1 1s. (Smee); *Prionus giganteus*, 1, £3 15s. (Tucker); unique *Lamia* from Africa, 1, £3 3s. (Tucker).

"Orthoptera: Gen. nov.? India, £1 (Hope); *Gryllus*, India, £1 (Stutchbury); *Eurycanthus horribilis*, Boisduval, Voy d'Astrolabe, £1 18s. (Tate).

"Strepsistera: *Stylops haworthii*. Step. The first Br. specimen the capture of which is



JOHN CRAKE STEVENS.
(HEAD OF THE FIRM IN 1820.)



recorded in the Entomological Transactions, and for which Mr. Haworth refused the sum of 25 guineas. £1 6s. (Tate).

"*Lepidoptera*: *Papilio homerus*, £1 14s. (Tate); *Papilio priamus*, £1 (Tucker); *Deilephila celerio*, Br., 2, £2 2s. (Warburton); *Sphinx 5-maculata*, taken at Chelsea, 1, *Ligustri*, 1, £2 8s. (Chant); *Vanessa antiopa*, Br., £1 3s. (Warburton).

The whole sale realized £552 12s.

Two other important collections were those of Mr. George Mylne¹ and Sir Patrick Walker in 1839, followed by the insects of Thomas Stothard, Mr. Raddon, Col. Whitehill, Mr. Henry Longley, Jacob Hoyer, Mr. Hemming, Mr. T. C. Heysham, and Mr. George Brownell. The Mylne and Walker sales realized about £180 and £300 respectively. Sales of coleoptera were at that time more common than they are now, although the best price actually paid for a beetle came later. Among Sir Patrick Walker's beetles, *Catoxantha bicolor*, *Bup. fabrici* made £1 2s., and *Megasoma actæon*, *typhon*, *Chalcosoma hector hope*, £2 12s. 6d. (Hope), and in a remarkable sale of the "Geodephagus coleoptera of a well-known collector," which attracted such buyers as Mniszech, Deyrolle, Pascoe, Laferte, Curtis, and Gray, a fine specimen (*Carabus cælestis*) made £2 6s. Of Captain Boys' coleopterous insects *Jumnos ruckeri*, female, sold for £3 (Stopes), and at another sale *Goliathus torquatus* £4 (Parry). The fine collection of Mr. Charles Lamb included the various orders, as did Mr.

¹ Although no other record has been preserved at King Street, a reference to previous sales, in the Mylne Sale Catalogue, indicates that the famous Drury collection, sold May, 1805, was dispersed in these rooms.

Children's collection in 1840. At the Children sale *Cheloderus childreni* and *Psalidognathus friendii* made £5 10s. apiece (Gray), and *Chiasognathus grantii*, fine male, £2 15s. (Bond), *Trictenotoma childreni* £2 (Gray), and the total of a five days' sale was £676 9s. 6d. Of the Brownell lepidoptera *Cerura bicuspis* made £4 and *V. antiopa* £2 6s.

Other sales were the Surrey Museum (Marlboro Place, Walworth) sold in 1836, and the Museum of Natural History formed by Princess Christian of Waldeck and Pyrmont in 1839.

Sales of birds and eggs were also an important feature, all the principal collectors buying and selling. Among them was that famous sale of the collection of eggs (duplicates) of John Wolley in 1860, sold in parts (nine days altogether) which realized £1,646 17s. Mr. Wolley at his death left his collection to Professor Newton, and it is now in University College, Cambridge. Others were: sales of Mr. Wheelwright's eggs, Mr. J. R. Wise's eggs, a sale in 1824 which contained a specimen of the Great Auk's egg for £20, Mr. T. H. Potts's eggs when two Great Auk's eggs were sold, one to Lord Garvagh for £30, and another for £29, the Rev. H. B. Tristram's eggs, W. Folkes' eggs, eggs and birds of Mr. John Baker, and British birds of T. C. Heysham, as well as any number of sales of Impeyan pheasants, etc. The *Mouruk casuarius bennetti*, the first specimen ever offered to public auction, made £10; a pair of great Bustards (British), £3 3s.; another pair, killed in Norfolk, from Mr. Melon's collection, £5 10s., and fine male Bustard, £4 12s. 6d.

Shells in those days made high prices: the *Gloria maris* fetched £31 10s. (Sowerby) (sale of Bland collection), £43 1s. (Cumming) (collection of

a well-known amateur), £34 (Cumming) (Vernède collection); *Cypraea valentiana*, £40 (Reeve) (Valentia cabinet); *Conus omaicus*, £22 (Vernède collection); *Cypraea guttata* (1861), £25 (Wright); *Cypraea aurora*, £21 (Stutchbury), and reverse Chank shell, *Turbinella rapa* from Ceylon, which had already ornamented three collections, the Portland, Calonnian, and Tankervilleian, £3 10s. (Sowerby) (Leathes collection); *Conus omaicus*, £21 (Goodall collection). Even when prices achieved no record, the sales were numerous and interesting and indicated a great interest in conchology at that date; among the buyers early in the nineteenth century were Lord Enniskillen, Lord Kilmorey, Sir Robert Peel, Hugh Cumming, Sowerby, Stutchbury, Lovel Reeve, Gray, Turner, Tucker, Swainson, Harford, Inwood, Attanasio, Goodall, and Maude.

Among historic sales over which Mr. Stevens presided were those of the Heuland minerals, which for some time occurred several times a year, and they were collections that any auctioneer might be proud to sell or a prince to possess. As a matter of fact some of the Heuland minerals might have graced a palace but for that wifely economy which husbands who collect probably curse in their hearts. When the Chantry collection was for sale, Mr. Heuland, who knew that the Prince Consort had greatly admired Sir Francis Chantry's minerals, purchased it with a view to giving him a chance of acquiring it. He obtained an interview with the Prince, and while they were talking the Queen came in, and the Prince, presenting Mr. Heuland, explained the object of his visit. The Queen was very much interested, and said she knew the cabinets which had contained the collection and had admired their contents. She then asked Mr. Heuland's price,

which the Prince replying said was £1,000. "Oh, you can't afford that," said she, and with that Mr. Heuland found himself abruptly dismissed. When, however, he broke up the collection and sold it at King Street, the specimens realized a good deal more than he had asked his prospective royal customer.

It may be a fancy, but it sometimes seems as if the love of the collector for the collection impregnates the very paper of a sale catalogue, dictating as it were the wording of the lots, and so as one turns the pages of the Heuland catalogues, that for nearly a hundred years have lain unopened, one almost catches the dark glow of some beloved gem, or is surprised by the glitter of crystal—and back the years are rolled and again it is 1834, and spring, and London sunbeams fall upon the Heuland minerals upon the tables. Some of the lots sold for huge prices; one, a *Karpolithe*, or Straw-stone, that had been idolized by its former owner, Dr. Treutler, and valued by him at £150, had a reserve of £25, and there were much higher reserves and prices. The specimen of "native gold," Wicklow (which cost its former proprietor over £20 at the Donovan sale), was put up at £10.

Many also were the fossils sold; to mention but one, "skull and horns of the *Megalocervus* or gigantic elk of Ireland, measuring from tip to tip in a straight line 8 feet 6 inches, or by the skull 12 feet," made £12 12s.; Mr. Inwood's fossils also were a fine collection. Museums of comparative and human anatomy were still sold—comprising such things as skulls of a highwayman and of a girl who died for love, casts of heads of eccentric persons, and in addition the pathological museum of Charles Powell Blackett included a unique skeleton of the Patagonian penguin, £1 2s., a specimen of the

Dugong from the Indian seas (£3 15s.), together with a "beautiful specimen of abscess in the chest." Curious also were collections of Florentine anatomical figures in wax, when the *chef d'œuvre* of Antonio Serantini—a female figure demonstrating thirty-five diseases—made £90, and male figures £95 and £85, and Mascagni's *Universal Anatomy*, £45. There were said to be but four copies of this work, the original plates having been lost in the wreck of the *Elizabeth*, and the only other copy in London had sold for £105. A medical Venus by Signor Serantini made £195. Amid all these the patent rights of the *Physiognotype*, an apparatus by which a perfect facsimile of the human countenance could be produced, were offered.

Books made some good prices. In Mr. Heysham's library, Sowerby's *English Botany*, £22 5s.; Gould's *Birds of Europe*, £48; *Birds of America*, £16 5s.; and Curtis's *British Entomology*, £13 10s. Yarrell's library showed, Gould's *Birds of Europe*, £91; *Birds of Australia*, £79; *Trochilidæ or Humming Birds*, £23; Audubon's *Birds of America*, £36; and Yarrell's *British Birds*, £21.

£250 was the reserve set on 112 copper plates of "Donovan's Naturalists' Repository or monthly miscellany of exotic natural history," and £150 on six copper plates of "Donovan's nests and eggs of British birds, 390 coloured plates, etc., and 500 original drawings with manuscript notes." Another interesting lot was "forty-two astronomical and geological lectures composed by the late Mr. Donovan for a literary and scientific institution, but never delivered, accompanied with drawings, lantern and slides."

Herbaria often turned up then, one herbarium being purchased by Pamplin for £205. One lot of specimens had been collected by M. Gerard,

gardener to the royal family of France, who fled to England after the Revolution and lived there in humble circumstances, collecting plants for botanists and medicinal herbs for sale.

Among curios were tattooed heads of New Zealand chiefs, £2 8s., £1 5s., and 15s.; a silver chalice, £44 8s.; Mary of Medici's toilet glass and crucifix, £22 10s.; an ancient fibula of solid gold found in County Mayo, £25; a couple of pennies of King Alfred, £13 5s.; and a mummy covered with ornaments, £31 10s. The collection of Dr. Buckland, Dean of Westminster, father of Frank Buckland, which included minerals, fossils, and curios, was also sold.

Another change now came to King Street. Hitherto lifeless things had been the objects dealt with, but about 1841 growing things, plants, roses, orchids (of which the story is told in another chapter), bulbs, as well as singing birds, canaries and a "nightingale in full song," which someone had been sufficiently deaf to lead into captivity, found their way to the rooms—the beginnings of a new and lucrative business.

Two famous collections were sold by Mr. J. C. Stevens in connection with this new line, Lord Derby's menagerie and aviary at Knowsley in 1851 and the Surrey Zoological Gardens in 1855. Lord Derby's collection comprised deer, antelope, cattle, goats, sheep, llamas, rodents, lemurs, armadillos, and dogs. Of birds there were vultures, falcons, owls, kingfishers, parrots, and many others. Of the antelopes, two gnus fetched £283 10s., while others went for £45, £39, £60, and lesser sums. Five elands made £1,000 (Zoological Society) and a couple of Wapiti £105. A Brahmin bull fetched £50 and a yak fell for £100; llamas £25 to £69, and zebras £130, £140, and £150. A quagga,

now extinct, made £50, a lot of three kangaroos fell for £105, a Harpy Eagle £25, and a masked parrot for £21. A Japanese male pheasant, "the only living specimen in Europe," went for £28, ostriches sold for £16 to £70 apiece, and four black-necked swans made £160.

Apropos of the sale of the animals of the Surrey Zoological Gardens at Kennington, *Punch* (November 17th, 1855) observed:

"We do not quite understand how the sale is to be managed, or how Mr. Stevens of King Street, Covent Garden, proposes to knock down the elephant . . . We should not be surprised if, while the auctioneer is soliciting 'an advance upon the tiger,' the tiger were to make a sudden and unexpected advance upon the audience, and there are some lots that will hardly be under sufficient restraint to enable the porters to display them . . . it is possible that while he (the auctioneer) describes a lot of monkeys as 'going, going,' one or more of the mischievous brutes may be 'gone' before he is aware of it."

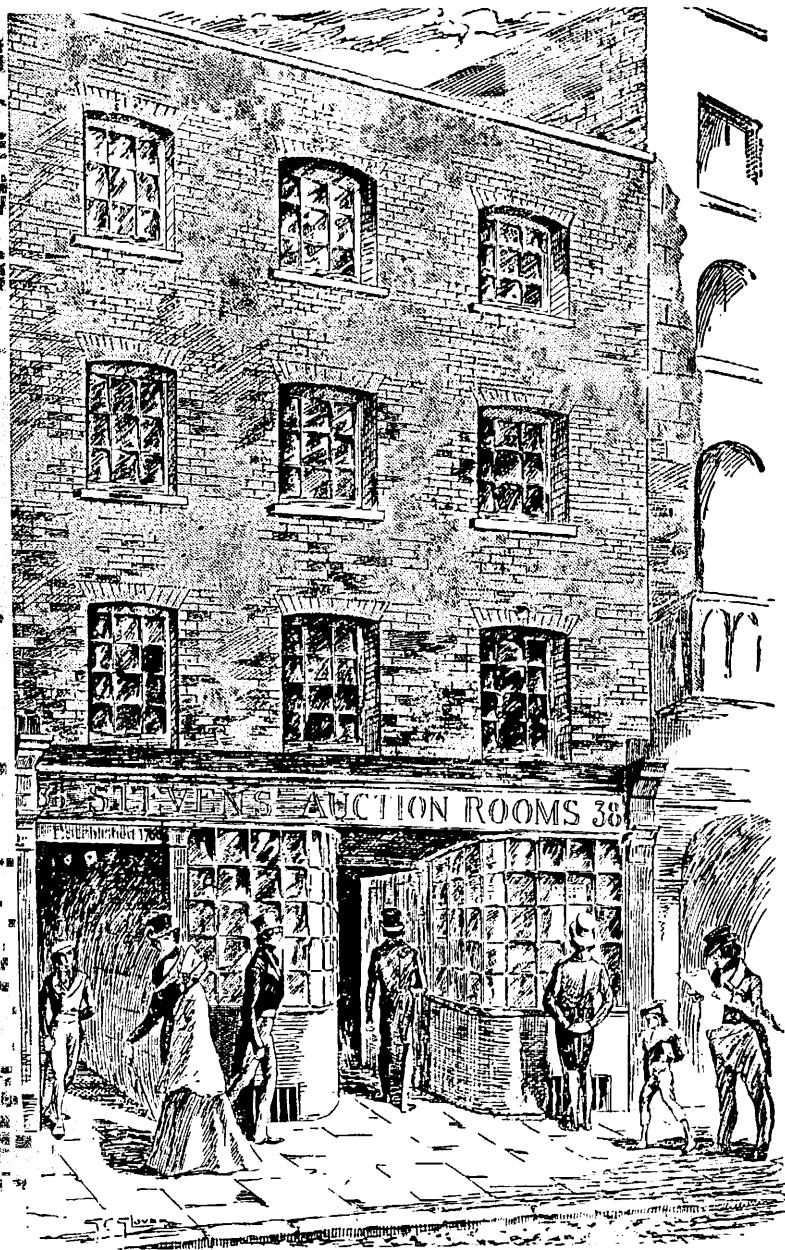
Upset prices were: for a lioness, £150; a lion, £225; an elephant, £336; a male giraffe, £300; an ostrich, £35; camels made £65 2s. and £50 8s.; a tigress, £82 19s.; and pelican, £18 10s.

Mr. Stevens also claimed to be the first to sell the *Apteryx australis* (for £10), the Double-horned Rhinoceros (£21), Black Bok from Africa £46 4s., and the female koodoo £9, £8, and £5. A specimen of the female chimpanzee (1844) in spirits made £44 and another £20, and the skin and skeleton of the tapir from Sumatra £19 19s.

A collection of live animals brought home by Mr. Louis Fraser, the African traveller and curator

of the Zoological Society, was sold in 1847; the rooms began to be noisy with cluckings and protestations of poultry and pigeons, and there were many plants brought in.

Upon a day that he had arranged to hold an orchid sale Mr. J. C. Stevens' sudden death occurred. He was only fifty and left six children—none old enough to take charge of the business—so his brother, Mr. Samuel Stevens, the entomologist, who had already assisted him from time to time, took his place in the rostrum until Henry Stevens could manage alone. Henry was the third child of John Crace Stevens. He was born and spent his first seven years in the upper part of No. 38, above the offices. The passage that leads to the rooms was the child's playground, and as the Garrick Club was then only three doors off, he still remembers how he used to see Dickens and Thackeray walking to and from the club. The family afterwards migrated to a villa in the Upper Richmond Road, then so quiet a country lane with houses so isolated that friends said "what a cut-throat place to live in." The child collected butterflies at an early age, and caught a rare specimen one day on Putney Heath—*Colyas hyale*—for which his uncle, the entomologist, gave him half-a-crown, and fifty years later Henry sold it with his uncle's collection. He was educated in Belgium and still recalls his surprise when out walking one day he met the Duke of Brabant and saw a workman come up to him and ask for a light for his pipe, and, moreover, receive it, for he did not know how democratic Belgium was. At school the collector's instinct, having apparently no other means of gratification, drove him to collect cherry stones. He was very fond of fruit, cherries were abundant, and the boys used to buy and eat plenty of them, and he made a



STEVENS'S AUCTION ROOMS IN 1760.



collection of the stones. All his life he has loved a shell, and these he used to collect, and got together many thousands, and knew their names and series and classification by heart. Many an evening did Hugh Cumming, the great conchologist, whose own collection is now in the British Museum, sit with the boy and handle his treasures and give him information. His father, who died of the effects of a chill contracted during a holiday abroad, was at Brighton with his family when he became very ill indeed, and Henry was sent to London to fetch his own doctor in Henrietta Street. The poor boy ran nearly all the way from London Bridge to Covent Garden, but the doctor was hindered from returning with him at once so Henry returned alone. As he neared the house, he thought, "I shall see the blinds down," and went round by the back way to avoid the realization of his fears. The sad intuition was correct, for his father was already dead.

It had been Mr. Stevens' intention to make his son an architect, as he had been pleased with some correct models that the boy had made to scale of his school in Belgium and of his home. But owing to his father's early death Henry went into the business and at twenty entered the rostrum.

APPENDIX

INTERESTING LOTS SELECTED FROM TWO NOTABLE COLLECTIONS

THE DONOVAN COLLECTION. 1818

Fossils

Jaw-bone of some unknown animal, with three grinders affixed in their sockets: discovered in digging a well at Tame in Oxfordshire. Leverian.

Portion of an elephant's tusk, found near Dorchester, Leverian.

Horn of the stag tribe discovered in a bed of chalk, 30 feet below the surface. From the Lichfield Museum.

A large fossil grinder tooth of a kind of elephant: weight 11 pounds, length 15 inches, and circumference about 3 feet. This monstrous tooth was dug up about eighty years ago, near Munsley, in Norfolk: it is the individual specimen described by Henry Baker, Esq., in the Transactions of the Royal Society for 1745.

A fine and very singular marine fossil body remotely resembling a cabbage of a moderate size. Leverian.

Very fine rounded mass of *Tubipora musica*, or organ pipe coral, highly interesting, as it exhibits the growth of the whole mass as well as the form of the detached parts. Leverian.

A most perfect specimen of the winged spindle shell, *Strombus amplius* of *Fossilia hantoniensia*; in this state of preservation unique. This shell was discovered about half a century ago, and sold at a great price on the spot.

A subnivate nodule of black flint, of prodigious magnitude, being 51 inches in circumference, and completely enclosing a large fossil shell, of the *Cornu ammonis* kind. One side being partially broken away, the shell appears to uncommon advantage within, as it exhibits the entire contour siphunculus, and internal chamber. The whole is completely saturated with silex, and so finely frosted with quartz crystals, of the purest lustre, that it has ever been considered one of the most splendid and instructive fossils hitherto discovered. £100 has been offered for this article, to enrich a royal museum on the Continent.

Minerals

Native tin with quartz, Cornwall, extremely rare (*Stannum nativum*). This is the individual specimen recorded in Vol. VI of Phil. Trans. as being found in Cornwall, and is believed to be the only specimen now in Britain; two others are known in continental cabinets, and described as very valuable. The substance is so rare that its very existence is denied. This little gem, the history of which is well known, was obtained at considerable price.

Sulphate of lead, vitriolated lead, Parry's mine. This is a mass full of crystals of extraordinary magnitude, the crystals of vitriolated leads in general rarely exceeding one-tenth of the size of these in the present specimen. It is reputed in this particular the finest specimen ever discovered. The mine, which was at the depth of several hundred feet, is now over-flowed by the sea beyond recovery so that it will never be again procured.

A large and fine dendritical sport of nature on sand-stone, Lancashire. Leverian.

Native gold, Wicklow Mountains, weighing about two ounces; it is affirmed that, with the exception of the example of Wicklow gold in His Majesty's collection, this is the finest specimen ever found.

Ammoniaco-magnesian phosphate. An object of the utmost curiosity to the scientific world. This very striking article is an incrustation on an upright quadrangular piece of timber, a foot in height, and presenting on each side a surface about 6 inches or more in breadth. All these sides have an elegant crystallized surface: many of the crystals half an inch or more in length, perfectly well defined and very singular. This has been pronounced by our ablest chemists an article of the utmost interest, and it is presumed it may be safely added the article is unique, with the exception of a very inconsiderable example, cut from this specimen, before it came into the possession of the proprietor, and at this time in the British Museum.

Zoology

Stag's and elk's horns; pair of horns of gigantic size, the animal unknown, dug out of a morass in Ireland.

Recent jaws of the common sheep, having the teeth completely encrusted with pyrites of a fine golden colour. Pennant remarks he never knew of an instance of sheep exhibiting this appearance, but that he once saw the teeth of an ox so encrusted with gold coloured pyrites, etc.

Skull of *Monodon monoceros*, the narwhal or sea unicorn, having two completely perfect and full-grown teeth, or horns, fixed in the natural sockets of the upper jaw. This animal being constantly found with only a single tooth, has obtained the name of monodon. The circumstance of its being found, in this instance, with two teeth, and those so completely perfect, has excited the attention of naturalists and anatomists in a very extraordinary degree. The teeth are about 7 feet in length, and of the finest ivory.

Skull of the *Monodon monoceros* or narwhal or sea unicorn as this animal usually occurs having one socket only for the insertion of the horn.

Snake with two heads found in Surrey. This is an object of very great curiosity, both the heads being perfectly formed and distinct from each other. It is believed to be the only double-headed snake found in England.

Testudo corniculata, captured near Bridport, Dorsetshire. Nearly 6 feet in length and 4 in breadth. The only British specimen known.

Wolf—the last wolf killed in Scotland by Sir E. Cameron.

Shells

Mya margaritifera, pearl bearing *Mytilus*, Conway River; and a pearl formed in the upper valve of an ostrea: in point of size as a British pearl, esteemed unique.

COLLECTION OF FOSSILS. May, 1828

Jointed stem of a reed remotely resembling the bamboo cane, but very regularly striated longitudinally; this noble fossil comprehends 27 joints connected in the natural position. Leverian, 10s. (Buckland).

A singular and interesting jaw of an unknown species of quadruped of the large size, retaining two of the teeth complete; found at great depth in digging a well at Tame in Oxfordshire. Leverian, 10s.

Very extraordinary fluted bark, having the perpendicular interstices between the striae figured with quadrangles: a most remarkable specimen (and once the finest of the Leverian vegetable barks). £2 2s. (Sowerby).

An asterias in chalk. This truly valuable and unique fossil is of a kind with long slender rays, as may be perceived by those yet remaining attached in their true

position to the body; when the deciduous nature of those limbs in all the recent analogies is considered, the preservation of this fossil, in this state of perfection, is astonishing. It need only be added that at the Leverian sale (for it was once a portion of that museum) it realized the sum of £15 17s. 6d.; the late Mr. Parkinson, author of *Organic Remains*, was the unsuccessful bidder to the amount of £15 15s. £3 15s. (Gray).

An enormous pair of fossil horns, resembling those dug up in Ireland, but of a more slender kind, and having the palmation of lesser breadth, and similar to one discovered in the Marsh of Rhuddlan, Flintshire, about forty years ago. A noble and probably unequalled fragment, the whole consisting of a single piece; it exhibits the upper portion of a skull, with the pair of branching horns in their natural position. These have been generally considered as the remains of the American moose deer, or of the elk, an opinion altogether erroneous; they are certainly the *restes* of an animal entirely unknown to us in a living state. The expansion is about 10 feet. £3 15s. (Buckland).

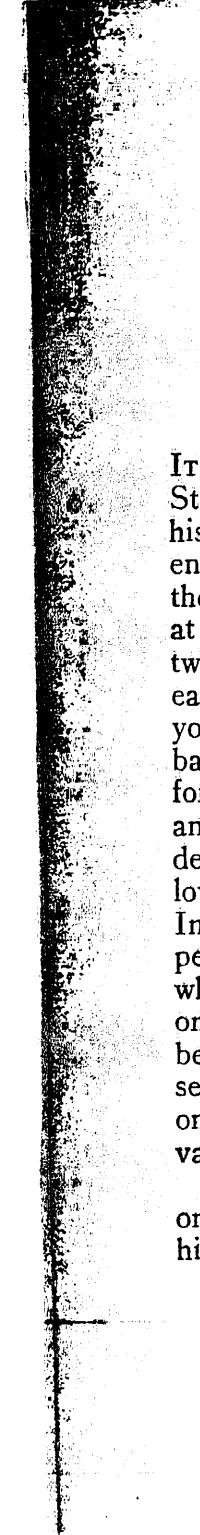
A chalk fossil. An echinus of the mammillated kind in general aspect not remotely resembling the usual figure of the rising sun, the body constituting the orb and the semi-circle of spines the divergent radiations. These spines, about fifty in number, are from an inch and a half in length, and still remain attached to their respective papillæ, in their original situation. £7 7s. (Gray).

A subnivate siliceous nodule of uncommon magnitude, about three or four feet in circumference, and completely enclosing a large fossil shell of the *Cornu ammonis* tribe. The nodule being broken perpendicularly, the enclosed shell is displayed to uncommon advantage: the whole is so completely saturated with siliceous matter that it appears agatified, or rather, in resemblance, becomes an onyx, and the chambers being profusely studded with quartz crystals, of the clearest lustre and transparency, renders it a most splendid and interesting object. One hundred guineas was offered for this extraordinary fossil some years ago, by an agent in this country, collecting for an Imperial continental cabinet. There was, then, no intention of parting with it, and consequently the offer was declined; a subsequent communication intimated an advance on that, and which also, for the same reason, was disregarded. £6 16s. 6d. (Walter).

Small fish palate of excellent perfection. This individual

specimen was once the property of the great fossilist Dacosta (who paid eight guineas for it at a public sale about sixty years ago). £1 1s. (Buckland).

Very fine and well-preserved portion of the jaws of a species of crocodile, exhibiting 23 large fluted teeth of a very peculiar character, the finest of the Leverian series of this class. £1 3s. (Roche).



CHAPTER II

MR. STEVENS IN THE ROSTRUM

IT is as well before relating the story of Mr. Stevens' business career to give a brief survey of his home life, since no business career is ever entirely separate from private life. After entering the business Henry Stevens lived over the rooms at King Street with his mother until he was twenty-six. He then married, but lost his first wife early, and at thirty-six was a widower with several young children, the eldest nine, the youngest a baby. In his loneliness and loss his many interests fortunately helped him, and in his charming home and garden at Addlestone he had scope for the development of his tastes. He has a passionate love of flowers and has been a great photographer. In his garden flowers grow wonderfully. Some people have an idea that one tends to resemble what one loves, even saying that one becomes like one's dog; and certainly there is a secret sympathy between some people and flowers, so that plants seem to rejoice and multiply in their gardens and one is conscious of a reciprocity between the cultivator and his nursling of the ground.

As a boy he had studied photography in a garret on the roof at King Street, but for a time abandoned his hobby, returning to it for distraction after the loss

of his wife. Then he took it up with ardour. Flowers, naturally, were his first models, and he managed to catch in his photography the form and colour of flowers in a unique degree. No colour plates were used by him, the effect being produced by lighting only. From flowers he proceeded to animal and other subjects, his portraits of animals being so remarkable that he has been called the Briton Riviere of photography. The secret of the success of his animal studies is, of course, largely to be found in his love of animals, though photographic skill is not lacking. One of his best known photographs is the picture entitled "Worn Out." He saw the poor old woman coming up his drive seated in a dilapidated little cart, drawn by a little old donkey, one day when he was playing tennis. He rushed for his camera and photographed the old lady, and with his picture won the Graphic prize of £20 open to every amateur all over the world, for which there were three thousand competitors. Queen Victoria accepted a copy of the picture.

All Mr. Stevens' effects are strictly within the limits of the camera. A great deal of modern artistic photography exceeds the sphere of the camera as it demands a considerable amount of extraneous work, it being admitted that photography in its strict sense has its limitations. But Mr. Stevens always took photography in its literal sense and wrote with light, and in this he is unexcelled. Technically his work has rightly been described as perfect, and in spite of lapse of time and improvements in photographic materials, his photographs taken years ago excite at the present day the same admiration as at the time when they were first exhibited. Great patience is stamped on all his work, and he always threw himself very enthusiastically into all he undertook. In the early days of his photography

he went to Eastbourne for a holiday with his children. The first night he was there, he awoke, struck with a new idea as to lighting. In the morning he told his sister-in-law, who was with them, that he was going back to Addlestone. Back he went, tested the value of his idea, and returned, satisfied, to resume his holiday.

The light of publicity was thrown on his work in the following way. The editor of a photographic journal who happened to be visiting him noticed his photographs, and asked if he belonged to the Photographic Society. Mr. Stevens said he did not. "Well," said his friend, "I will propose you, and if you send some of your pictures to the exhibition, I guarantee that they will take medals the first time." The photographs were sent and the prophecy proved true.

The incidents connected with a summer-house that stands on his lawn are rather characteristic. He saw a pile of timber in the rooms one day, and not getting a good bid for it, took it home. For three days he puzzled over that wood—put it together, pondered, and arranged it again, and at the end he had set up, quite complete, a little Japanese tea-house, erected without a single nail or screw. It was evidently a model Japanese house that had been sent over for an exhibition, and after being exhibited had lain in a cellar for years and then had been sent to King Street as mere timber. In addition to his home at Addlestone he has a bungalow at Ashford that he built entirely with his own hands, with the assistance merely of one man to hold the timbers. At one time, to his great delight, some kingfishers nested in a little pond he made by the bungalow.

Another interest must not be overlooked. Some unworthy worshippers of Flora do not like

dogs, but Mr. Stevens' garden has no prim borders which one fancies flowers themselves cannot like, nor is his house (for all it is full of interesting curios) a cloistered place of inanimate treasure. There is all the pleasant litter that animals make (pleasant at least to those who like them, and the reverse to those who do not)—the baskets for the house dogs, the cushion for the cat, the parrot in its cage which has conversation for its master and nothing but a peck for the stranger, and two rough but very warm-hearted watch dogs who leap and bound upon their master, who says "I love my dogs—they are dears," to say nothing of cows and chickens, for all of which creatures Mrs. Stevens (his second wife) shares his affection. To all that his garden has given him, repose, fresh air and fruit, in the hours unclaimed by his profession, Mr. Stevens attributes the vigour and health that he has always enjoyed.

At one time sales were attended by members of the Chinese Embassy. They became intimately acquainted with Mr. Stevens, and several times visited him at Addlestone. One particular desire of theirs was to see a Gas Works, which Mr. Stevens gratified by driving them over to Chertsey Gas Works. The visits to Addlestone evidently gave them great pleasure, for one day they arrived at ten o'clock in the morning and did not leave till ten o'clock at night. They discovered a switchback railway that their host had put up in the meadow for his children, and they promptly amused themselves with the truck and had great fun. It was a very pretty sight to see these Eastern guests in the beautiful garden with the glimmer of silk and satin and the luxury of Eastern dress amid the brief glories of the too short English summer.

In the rooms, microscopes and telescopes chiefly

appealed to the visitors from China, but they found sales of silver plate very confusing, being unable to comprehend (although Mr. Stevens explained very carefully) that the price at which silver is knocked down is the price per ounce and not the price of the article itself, which may consist of many ounces. One poor Chinese gentleman bought a lot of things (Mr. Stevens could not stop him) and was dumbfounded when he found what he had to pay. But of course matters were arranged for him, and the things were put up again.

In Mr. Stevens' house is, as may be imagined, a collection of curios too numerous to be described in detail, and they are interesting as indicating perhaps those sales which appeal most to this auctioneer of so many curios, antiques, and wonders of the animal creation.

To proceed to the business side of his life—Henry Stevens' first licence was taken out in 1863, and his first sales consisted of plants from Ghent—camellias, azaleas, etc. His uncle was present at his debut and complimented the young auctioneer afterwards upon the way in which he passed through his initiation. So little did he betray any nervousness in his first appearance in the rostrum that a buyer afterwards assured him that he seemed an old hand with the hammer. No auctioneer living or dead has probably sold more lots. His favourite maxims are well worth the attention of the profession.

"Avoid jocularity, it is often misunderstood."

"Make a hobby of your business and the details will be easy."

"Do not collect the articles you sell, but know all about them."

No man has followed his own advice better.

He is not jocose, nor is he particularly eloquent—he has other methods, and one, a vast patience, in the rostrum.

He has made a hobby of his profession, though he has not made any special collection himself, and is greatly interested in other people's collections, in addition to being an excellent judge of value. Naturally his first successes lay along the lines laid down by his predecessors. Bulbs and plants he sold three times a week. Millions of tulips as well as hyacinths, crocuses and narcissi were brought to the hammer. He was the medium for the propagation of coniferous plants, and nearly every exotic conifer grown in this country came from seeds bought at his sales, at which all the nurserymen in England bought and sold. His name will always be connected with orchids, for his were the famous sales when the flowers were new to the general public. He sold animals for a time and poultry and pigeons every other Tuesday, the birds at that time fetching from £1 to £10 apiece. Four pigeons once arrived from Peterborough with a reserve of £1 on each, but £25 was the cheque that their owner received. Mr. Bult's birds fetched from £6 to £7 and so did Mr. Haynes' carriers, and very fine fowls were sent from Ewell by Mr. Vizard. But later these sales were found to entail more trouble than profit, and the following letter received by Mr. Stevens explains his not unnatural disinclination to continue them:

"October 31st, 1865.

"SIR,—Will you be kind enough to inform me whether you allow dunghill fowls in your rooms to be sold by auction as I wish to dispose of a fine cock aged two years. The reserved price I wish to be put on him will be two shillings and sixpence.

Please answer by return of post so that I may be in time for the next sale, the 7th of November."

"Lord Harry," the magnificent bulldog sold on the death of his master, Mr. George Ure of Dundee, fetched 100 guineas. However, what with fighting and other troubles, dog sales were considered too much of a nuisance and were given up. Once, when there was to be a sale of dogs, a Great Dane was left overnight in the auction rooms. He got loose somehow, and when the men opened the place in the morning he rushed into the street. A man immediately rushed out also, and pursued him along the Embankment to Fleet Street, but there lost him among the traffic. The dog had been sent from Croydon by train, and for days nothing was heard of him, except the claim that the owner made for £8. A week later he reached his home in Croydon in an emaciated condition. Mr. Stevens, hearing of his arrival, and being struck by his intelligence (for he had never seen the road from London to Croydon, having come by train) went down to see him and bought him. He was a docile, faithful creature, but unfortunately did not live long with the master who had recognized his worth, for he contracted illness and had to be killed.

To those who have seen the rooms decorous and beautiful when Pekin relics were displayed, or weird and wonderful with savage trophies, it may be difficult to believe that Mr. Stevens ever attempted to "place" a cow. In his young days he sold yearly the surplus stock of the ducks and waterfowl off the ponds in Battersea Park, and many a singing bird and parrot has been picked up at King Street, among them a young grey parrot, "a matchless talker and does not know any bad

language," for £5. Someone who, seeing a parrot waiting its turn to be offered, observed "Poor devil, he has nothing to eat," got a surprise when the bird replied, "What's that to you?"; and another time, when everyone was making fun of a lot (a blackbird), the lot in question, described as able to crow like a cock and talk like a parrot and otherwise accomplished, proved the veracity of the statements by opening his beak, as soon as Mr. Stevens put him up, and giving a perfect imitation of the chief of fowls, amid roars of laughter.

A customer (Mr. Conrad Cook) bought a monkey at a poultry sale, and it is said that he regretted his purchase, for the creature was so mischievous that it could not be permitted to run at large, but somehow it got loose, and when he tried to catch it ran away altogether, and from his windows he could see half the neighbourhood running over Clapham Common in pursuit. He was rather glad—perhaps he had lost it for ever. But presently the maid announced that a mob was at the door, and it is not known how many boys demanded a reward for returning the monkey. Eventually he sent it to the Zoo.

As late as 1897 a live seal came under the hammer. The poor beast was bought for the Zoological Gardens for £2, and it happened that a customer who had attended the sale witnessed its arrival in Regent's Park and saw its joyful plunge into the water. But it had been too long separated from its native element and it only lived a few days.

The character of the sales had already been definitely established, but, with few exceptions, there was, under the young auctioneer, a general expansion along all lines, and more records were made. Cases of Impeyan pheasants were sent to the rooms in the early days when they were much

worn in ladies' hats, and they would fetch £4 and £5 a couple. Sometimes there would be several days sales of Baxter prints, which went splendidly, and fetched good prices; then suddenly the price dropped, no one apparently wanting the prints any more. Minerals, shells, and fossils are all sales of the past, but minerals fetched some of their highest prices after 1863, although the sales soon ceased. Mr. Ludlam of Piccadilly was a famous collector whose collection Mr. Stevens, who valued it for probate after his death, assessed at £10,000. It was left to the Jermyn Street Museum. Apropos of this museum, Mr. Stevens says that, many years ago, a lady who attended a sale of minerals bought a mass of red silver for £100 and took it straightway to Jermyn Street, where it is now in the nation's collection. Mr. Ludlam purchased considerably at King Street, paying £100 on one occasion for a mass of red silver. An unknown collector had turned up at King Street and had been allowed to unpack his collection in the gallery there during a Friday sale. Mr. Stevens told his foreman to go up and see what sort of a collection it was, and Charles returned breathless to say it was wonderful—exquisite crystals, separate and in mass. It fetched £1,000 altogether, and in addition to Mr. Ludlam's £100, another good price was the British Museum's £50 for a fine mass.

An early sale (one of his very first—1863) was one of turquoises from Arabia Petrea, when single stones made £12, £5 5s. (Rothschild), £17, £16, £8, £8 15s., £7 10s., and £6 6s. Then there were Mr. Sargent's minerals in 1866, Mr. Alexander Bryson's in 1868, and in 1871 some minerals, "the property of a gentleman resident in South America many years," which included "a magnificent and beautiful specimen of silver glance

in crystals, nearly one inch in diameter, with red silver, £30 (British Museum); magnificent crystallized specimen of argentite from Chanarcillo, £6 6s. (Ludlam); a beautiful crystallized specimen of argentite, in fine octohedrons, £12 (Ludlam); a unique specimen of crystallized iodide of silver in crystals of a pale yellow colour, from San Francisco Mine, Chanarcillo, £9 10s. (British Museum); a very beautiful specimen of crystallized sulphide of silver in perfect crystals, £11 11s. (Ludlam); choice and valuable collection of precious stones, containing fine specimens of diamond, emerald, ruby, sapphire, etc., neatly arranged in form of a book, with list, said to have been presented by George the Fourth to Mrs. FitzHerbert, £20 (Ludlam); a beautiful native silver in brilliant crystals, £5 5s. (British Museum); a magnificent crystallized chlorobromide of silver, with native silver £5 10s. (British Museum)."

In 1873 the minerals of Mr. Algernon Perkins of Hanworth Park were sold, in 1885 Mr. Terry's, and in 1876 the most beautiful and rare specimens of mineral ores from Chile, some of the crystals of which were said to be without equal, when Mr. Ludlam gave £200 for proustite, an enormous group of crystals of clear red colour—the most beautiful specimen existing, while other groups (proustite) were bought for £105 (Wright), £34 13s. (Ludlam), £16 16s. (Ludlam), and £12 12s.

The first specimen of that wonderful fabric *Euplectella aspergillum*, or Venus's flower-basket, one of Mr. Stevens' favourites, fetched 15 guineas. Hugh Cumming bought it, and for many years it adorned his cabinet. Then *Euplectella aspergillum* was dredged up in quantities from the Persian Gulf, and the price fell.

There are not many stories connected with sales of shells, but there is one which may please those laymen who say that collectors are cranks and queerer than the things they collect. Collectors do, no doubt, retain a good deal of the child in their composition, but then so do some great lovers, great artists, great thinkers, for that matter. At any rate to possess what no one else has, is the collector's heaven, as it is the child's, and his particular hell will be to see the duplicate of his darling in someone else's possession. In Mr. Stevens' young days a sale of shells took place. A collector, of forgotten name, was there, and his eyes were upon one shell and one alone. Up to that day he had had in his possession a certain shell, that was the single, unique specimen of its kind, since the sea had never, so far as he knew, yielded up another. But he discovered that in this collection that had come to King Street there was actually a second specimen of his shell. He marked it for his own, he bid for it, he won it, and then—before them all there, he dropped it on the floor, and he stamped upon it, and "Now," said he, "I still have the unique specimen."

The crowning glory of conchological sales was that of the Dennison collection in 1865; then *Fusus pagodus* with operculum made £5 10s.; *Cypraea guttata*, £42; *Cypraea princeps*, only two others known, £40; *Conus cedo-nulli*, a magnificent variety C. of Reeve, £22; *Conus gloria maris*, £42; *Conus omaicus*, £12; *Conus cervus*, £19; *Conus malleacanus* (the specimen figured in the *Conch. Icon.*), £10 10s.; *Conus cedo-nulli* (the shell figured 46 E., *Conch. Icon.*), £18; *Conus aurisiacus*, £3 17s. 6d.; *Voluta fusiformis*, £6 15s.; *Corbis sowerbyi*, £10; *Voluta festiva*, specimen figured in the *Conch. Icon.*, £16; two

specimens of *Oniscia dennisoni*, exquisitely beautiful shells, in the finest possible condition, and it is supposed that no other specimens are at present known, £17 and £18; *Pholadomya candida*, £13; *Voluta papillaris*, £5; *Bulimus powisianus*, the specimen figured in the *Conch. Icon.*, £3; *Voluta cymbiola*, specimen figured in *Conch. Icon.*, £5 15s.; *Voluta festiva*, the second specimen figured also in *Conch. Icon.*, £14; *Voluta reticulata*, beautifully pencilled, very rare, specimen figured in *Conch. Icon.*, £8 8s.; *Strombus thermites*, £3; *Oniscia exquisita*, specimen figured in *Conch. Icon.*, £7 7s.; *Pholadomya candida*, £8; *Voluta virescens*, £3 7s. 6d.; *Voluta angulata*, £5 5s.; *Voluta papillaris*, £4 15s.; *Tenebra pretiosa*, £2 10s; *Pyrula mawae*, the pink mouth variety and *rapa*, £7 5s.; *Scalaria magnifica*, £4; *Mitra balteolata*, the specimen figured in *Conch. Icon.*, £1 16s., and *Cypraea aurantia*, £4 17s. 6d.

Other sales were "duplicate shells of Mr. Hugh Cumming" (1865); a collection formed by a gentleman during a long residence in the Mauritius (when *Cypraea broderipi* made £13) (1866); a collection made by a gentleman long resident in Amboyna, when the price of *Conus gloria maris* had fallen to £28 (1880); and in 1884 a collection of shells and conchological works, the property of a well-known collector (Mr. Harford) "most of whose shells" (according to the catalogue) "had been purchased at the Dennison, Rucher, Vernède and Angas sales, and at the dispersal of all the important collections which have been sold in Mr. Stevens' rooms during the last forty years." Then the specimen of *Voluta angulata* sold in the Dennison collection for £5 5s. only made £1 1s., and *Carinaria vitrea*, the specimen that in the Dennison sale made £10 10s., only fetched £5 10s. Shells were a fancy of the

past. Previously, in 1870, Mr. W. J. Hamilton's and the Angasian collections were sold; unfortunately the records of the latter sale appear to be lost, and at the former, prices were not high. Mr. Stevens also sold the Wollaston collection from Madeira and Mr. A. W. Langdon's collection in 1899.

With shells, and especially in connection with the Dennison collection, the *Conchologia Iconica* must not be omitted, for it is the loveliest illustrated book on shells ever produced. To look through its pages is to wander on the shores of tropic seas and find these lovely habitations of perfect workmanship and colour. The edition of the *Conchologia Iconica* sold by Mr. Stevens in 1901 fetched £100; Mr. Dennison's copy, catalogued as "Reeve's *Conchologia Iconica*, Vols. I to IV, whole bound morocco, gilt edges; Vols. (wanting *Hemipecten* and otherwise slightly imperfect) V to XII, unbound; 13 parts, 200 to 205, and 13 ditto, 210 to 215," made £76. In 1867 a copy "In Monographs to the end of Vol. XIV" (sold in a collection of shells formed by a gentleman) made £56, and in 1880 *Conchologia Iconica*, well bound, *Reeve*, fell for £85 1s. Mr. Harford's "Conchologia Iconica, subscriber's copy, 20 vols.," in 1884, made £89 5s. (and with it another work on conchology, Sowerby's *Thesaurus Conchyliorum*, £9 19s. 6d.). Admiral Manley's copy, 11 vols. (sold with his shells 1860) had fetched £48, and Mr. Terry's copy in 1885 made £70. Besides the *Euplectella aspergillum* (that cornucopia-shaped skeleton of a sponge, of which the graceful inclination is supposed to be caused by the entrance of tiny crabs into the cavity), Mr. Stevens has also sold another favourite, the glass rope-sponge from Japan—the rope-like twist growing

from the sponge, and resembling strands of spun glass.

In the British Museum one can see Chinese shells with figures in them. The Chinese make little images of Buddha and push them into the shell while the fish is alive, and the irritated animal then covers them with mother-of-pearl, which is his exquisite manifestation of wrath. These shells are often included in curio sales, though of course they are not to be found in scientifically arranged collections.

Another marine product (although not a shell) is ambergris, seldom seen by the ordinary person. But in February, 1920, Mr. Stevens had a piece to sell. It was a small lump of dark stuff, very light in weight. Mr. Stevens explained that it is a substance thrown up by the sperm whale. The whale has a biliary concretion in its intestines which it vomits, and behold the ambergris, which is found floating on the sea, or lying on the sea-coast. Its value is £5 per ounce, and it is invaluable to perfumers. Not of an agreeable odour itself, it nevertheless has the property of imparting fragrance and permanence to other scents with which it is combined, and thus is an ingredient of many perfumes.

Again, though it was mostly in the old days that one went to King Street to read the history of the past stored up in fossil remains, the Backhouse collection, sold 1907, once more united the oldest and the newest ages. There were Pleistocene remains from the Thames valley, teeth and bones of the elephant and rhinoceros, hippopotamus, aurochs, horse, and gigantic Irish deer. There were bones and teeth of the mastodon, rhinoceros, horse, deer, tapir, etc., from the Suffolk red crag. A molar tooth of a mastodon (Suffolk) fetched £3; a skull of the cave bear from

Gargas caves in the Pyrenees £2 2s. The lower right jaw of the sabre-toothed lion (Kessingland, Norfolk), was bought by Dr. Scharff for the Dublin Museum for £14 14s.; a skull of *Cervus verticornis* (Norfolk), with parts of both antlers made £3 15s.; and an antler-beam of *Cervus sarvini* £1 10s.

The George Arnold Museum (1911) contained a "fossil mammoth tusk, dug up at Blyth Lane, Kensington, in 1881, about 3 feet 6 inches long," which fetched £1 5s. Professor Tennant bought largely, both minerals and fossils, and when the fossils of his friend, Dr. Bowerbank, came under the hammer in 1865, in order to help the sale he made an offer of 3s. for every single lot in the first day's sale. Unfortunately there were few buyers that day, and he found himself saddled with the better part of the day's sale, which was rather more than he wanted.

Orchids, again, sales of which began in the forties, attained their highest prices in the eighties, and at sales of insects unprecedented bids were obtained for unique specimens. (See special chapters.)

Then zoology—zoos of all kinds have passed in and out of the doorway of No. 38. Mr. Stevens began his career with the important sale of the Du Chaillu collections in 1863. The collection did not number more than a hundred lots, but these included Paul Du Chaillu's famous gorillas, then for the first time seen by the white man as in their wild state. The lots, as described in the catalogue, and prices were:

"Magnificent series of gorillas, male, female, and young, in fine condition, the two adults beautifully prepared by Mr. Wilson, the eminent taxidermist, skeleton of the male nearly complete, skeleton of

the female complete, and skeleton of young male complete," £110.

"Skin and skeleton of a young gorilla, £10; a complete adult skeleton of male gorilla, quite perfect, articulated, £32; a ditto, female, £18; a ditto, £18; a magnificent chimpanzee, the largest in Europe, with the skeleton, complete, £18; skin and complete skeleton of bald-headed chimpanzee or ape, £10; ditto, young, £7; ditto, ditto, £4 10s."

The College of Surgeons bought many of the skeletons, and Dr. Crisp of Chelsea was the purchaser of the first lot for £110. He was a well-known figure in the rooms, and had formed a beloved museum and was a collector of repute. But when he died and Mrs. Crisp stood watching his museum being borne away to King Street for dispersal, she observed to Charles Mason, the well-known foreman of No. 38 King Street, who was directing the transfer, "With the doctor, it was just this: his profession first, his museum second, and his wife third." It was unlucky that the gorillas for which £110 had been paid, when re-sold only fetched £22 1s.

Another interesting lot was that curious animal the anomalurus or flying squirrel, whose skin, spreading like a sail between its fore and hind legs, serves in some sort for wings.

At the sale of the Du Chaillu collection, another collection was also offered of which the principal lot was a skin of the aye-aye from Madagascar (*Cheiromys madagascariensis*) containing the skull, nearly perfect, and the bones of the limbs. This was described as the first specimen of this extremely rare and curious animal ever offered for public sale in this country. It realized £12 10s.

Some time later some more aye-ayes arrived,

long remembered at King Street for having nearly killed the man who unpacked them. Mr. Stevens told his foreman that he was expecting a box from Madagascar and particularly wished to be informed when it arrived. It came, and a man was duly sent to unpack it. After a time he returned and asked the foreman to come out and see what was in the box. "If your looks are anything to go by," said Charles, "it must be pretty bad." It was very bad, and Mr. Stevens, who was summoned to inspect the aye-ayes, decided to postpone that duty until the odour from the very high smelling solution in which they had been packed had somewhat gone off.

As a matter of fact, one approached cases that arrived at King Street warily in those days. All sorts of things accompanied plants, for instance ants, cockroaches, or rats. Once, while some unpacking was going on, the cockroaches that had been liberated delighted some passing schoolchildren, who filled their pockets with them "to take home to mother."

£13 13s., £9 9s., and £8 18s. 6d. were prices made by aye-ayes in 1883.

In 1877 Colonel Bagot's fine group of fighting tigers was bought by the Liverpool Museum for £200.

The sale of the trophies of such a sportsman as Roualeyn Gordon Cumming was naturally a great event. His books tell of daring deeds, and for those who have the huntsman's soul they warm the blood and kindle the spirit, while for others they serve to arouse admiration for the majestic beasts that fell to his rifle. The trophies that came to King Street represented not only the mighty and beautiful creatures of the tropics, but the fatigues, hardships, and perils endured by the man who had slain them, to which even those who care for animals

too much to enjoy looking at them stuffed, must pay tribute. A descriptive catalogue belonging to the hunter himself, enumerating some of his spoils, included—only to mention a few—skulls, tusks, tails, teeth, and feet of elephants; skulls and horns of the rhinoceros; skulls and tusks of the hippopotamus; heads, etc., of giraffe; skulls of buffalo, bison, eland, oryx, antelope, gnu, koodoo, and skulls and skins of lions, tigers, and leopards. Interesting notes are appended in which the hunter describes the elephants' horror of man as such that even a child could put a herd to flight by passing at a quarter of a mile to windward, and if so disturbed they will go a long way before they halt. He writes that this creates one of the chief difficulties of the elephant hunter, for when one troop of elephants has been attacked all the other elephants in the district know of it within two or three days, and immediately migrate so that the hunter must continually move on. The elephants also choose for resting extremely secluded spots at a great distance from the waters where they drink. He tells of the music of the lion's deep low moaning, of his roar in the forest, of his eyes that glow in a dark night like balls of fire, of his utter fearlessness when his partner has young, of his noble imposing dignity, of his power and agility which enable him to spring on and slay the lofty giraffe and the powerful buffalo, of the extraordinary concert that arises when two or three strange troops of lions meet at the same drinking fountain, and when one roars, all lift up their voices together in opposition in savage harmony which the writer declares to be the sweetest music he ever listened to, and then he finally remarks that a "recklessness of death, perfect coolness and self-possession, and an acquaintance with the disposition and manners of lions, and a tolerable

knowledge of the use of the rifle, are indispensable to him who would share in the overpoweringly exciting pastime of hunting this justly celebrated king of beasts."

So when such trophies came under the hammer at King Street in 1866, it was a great day. All the previous night the foreman and the men had worked getting the specimens ready and arranged, and at seven o'clock in the morning Charles lay down on a lion's skin and slept a little. From half-past twelve onwards all were busy, and the room was crowded. Barnum, of the celebrated circus and menagerie, buying under the name of Nimmo, was one of the principal bidders. (Among other things he bought a large pictorial roll representing some huge panorama for £100). All the trade was well represented, and the one day's sale fetched £1,000; skins selling for eight, ten, and twelve guineas apiece, and little roebucks' horns making £4, £5, and £6 a pair.

Lately, in 1920, there was the interesting sale of the stock of Mr. Gardner, the well-known naturalist, which lasted several days and covered the whole range of natural history, from beetles to books dealing with all living things. On that occasion lions, tigers, and bears guarded the entrance to the rooms, startling those who came upon them suddenly, until they remembered that the King Street zoo is a stuffed one.

As an illustration of the variety of natural history objects that sometimes come together at one time, one can quote a sale in 1909, which included Mr. Sydney Crompton's collection of British butterflies and moths, Lord Dormer's collection of exotic tiger beetles, and the Rev. A. Matthew's collection of British butterflies and coleoptera. At the same time a collection of skins, with preserved beasts, horns, antlers, skulls, was sold. A fine pair of

horns with the skull of the wild sheep of Tibet made £3 10s.; a pair of Himalayan ibex, £30; a handsome pair of the lesser koodoo measuring 26 inches straight, and said to be the second largest known, £2 7s. 6d.; a pair of the Rocky Mountain sheep on skull, £1 5s. An oyster catcher said to be unique made £16 16s.; a male and female sparrow hawk in very light plumage, shot in Perthshire, £12; a cinnamon variety of the hedge sparrow, £1; and a silvery white variety of the starling, 15s.

Dr. Hamlyn Harris's collection comprised exotic butterflies, bees, wasps, horns, skins, and mounted specimens. One case in the collection contained 100 beautiful kingfishers, and a legend on the front recorded the fact that they were taken by the collector in an English county in one year, which was a poor matter for pride. Fortunately, the law for bird protection now prevents such a disgusting slaughter of these lovely creatures.

Mr. Stevens has many times sold the Great Auk's egg—practically a monopoly of his—for £18, £21, £24, £30, £60, 160 guineas, £168, £180, £225, £280, £315, and £330 15s. He has sold the largest egg in the world, that of the extinct *Aepyornis maximus*, the huge bird of fable and story, and in fact he is the great breaker-up of all the principal oological collections.

Apropos of sales of eggs we must recall a certain dinner tinged with romance. Stories of wonderful banquets have been the delight of children innumerable, and unhappy they who have never tasted of the fairy food, but with adolescence dream dinners vanish, and stately dinners are often very dull. Therefore, in the after years of fact, one would not expect to find grown men and editors—persons who sit on revolving chairs at desks and hurl the

manuscripts of unknown writers (unless accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope) into their waste-paper baskets, or even if so accompanied, often return them, it has been whispered, unread—invited to a fantastic feast and, were it so, one would not look for the host in the rush and bustle of a business career. However, here is the story.

Sir Henry Peeke walked one morning into Mr. Stevens' office and said, "I've brought you a new-laid emu's egg. It will make you a splendid omelette." Being busy at the time, Mr. Stevens laid the egg on one side, and there it remained until it was too old to be made into an omelette. It lay aside for a year, and then one day into the little room came Sir Cuthbert Peeke, Sir Henry's son.

"There is the egg your father gave me," said Mr. Stevens, "and I never used it."

"Oh, that doesn't matter," said Sir Cuthbert, "I will give you another." And he did—an egg laid on his estate.

Straightway Mr. Stevens bethought himself of a surprise party. He wrote at once to all his friends among the representatives of the well-known papers, and asked them to be his guests at a luncheon at the Camera Club.

They came and found a surprising menu:

Chablis	Tomato, Jardinière
Sherry	Boiled Salmon with Cucumber
Heidsieck	Kangaroo Tails à l'Australia
Dry Monopole	Roast Fowl and Sausages
Beaune	Saddle of Reindeer
Port, 1851, in Magnums	Emu's Egg Omelette Assorted Savouries Stilton.

In the midst of it all, when these journalists and others were at the table with their host, a waiter approached. "Are you ready for the egg, sir?"

his death in 1839 he left one doll to the Earl of Westmorland, and "Topsy" to the owner's father. She was sold for 12s., and if she was given to a child, one hopes that the story of Dragonetti and his dolls was explained tenderly to the little owner. Close to "Topsy" lay a Breeches Bible dated 1597, and not far off was a great curiosity in the shape of sections of elephant's tusk with a spear head entirely embedded in the ivory, which could not be removed except by breaking the tusk which had completely grown round it, forming a sheath. The length of the spear head was twelve inches, and the circumference of ivory tusk thirteen inches; the reserve of £20, however, was not reached. At the same sale the picture of Dutch Oven, who won the St. Leger in 1882, painted to the order of Matthew Dawson by W. H. Hopkins, was picked up for £4 15s., though it had originally fetched £20 at Matthew Dawson's sale.

The "Gray" curios (the collection of Archdeacon Gray), 1907, which had been exhibited at the Chinese Court of the Crystal Palace for thirty-seven years, brought a curious old red and gilt prayer wheel that made £5; a Celadon crackle vase, £6; a brass and copper incense burner from Tibet, embossed with figures of lamas and dragons, £12; and a Tibet brass teapot ornamented with silver, which in its native land had held a brew that no European recognizes as tea, £12 12s.

Then from all over the world came the garnered treasures of the Whitfield, George Arnold, and Leitner Museums. Dr. Whitfield had accumulated relics from the field of Waterloo, from the battles of the crusades, and the Franco-Prussian war, and had not neglected Indian warfare, or Japanese armour and swords, as well as savage weapons, rude musical instruments, and clothing from the islands of the

Pacific, and he had a lot of natural history specimens besides. Dr. Leitner's trophies represented the worship and art of Egypt, India, Japan, China, and Persia. As for Mr. George Arnold, what did he not collect in the shape of anything curious and rare?

Many things met again when some hundred and eighty "lots" of the Maxwell Stuart gems were the attraction of the sale. The colours went to one's head with a sort of intoxication. Some were filmy, delicate and soft—silver, rose, ethereal amethyst, pale pearl, like the sea in the space betwixt sunset and the rising of the moon, or faintly lustrous, very early in some summer dawn; some were the brilliant blues and greens of the wings of foreign butterflies; some were shot with changing tints, like foam of phosphorescent waves; some flashed with red flames; some were very nearly black with fire in their sombre depths, and one rough stone held in its centre a tiny lake, a scrap of liquid light. There was fire marble, lumachelli—glowing heart in dusky opaque—opal, ruby, turquoise, amethyst, agate, and they made good prices. With these there came a little inro and netsuké—a charming thing—and a shrunk head that people at the table handled carelessly, feeling its long hair, pulling the string that sealed its lips, forgetful that this had been a man's head, that perhaps had burned with love, or ached with longing. It fetched £15, and the product of a man's head which happened to come next, a lovely Japanese vase, rich with enamel and mother-of-pearl, made £1 more. A cup of brass and copper studded with stones had come from Tibet—quite a beautiful thing, but a skull formed its basis. There were two fine Japanese swords, a rare brass Cingalese mask, and a collection of old pewter that sold for £19. "There are some clever people in the world,"

said Mr. Stevens as he looked at one "lot," a marvellous specimen of Chinese carving, both sides alike, executed upon the horn of the extinct white rhinoceros. This made thirty guineas, and was very cheap. Egyptian mummies of a calf, a cat, and the sacred ibis were there, but no one seemed to want them much, and a lovely old Maori feather box, which, had it not unfortunately lacked a lid, would have been worth a great deal. From the gallery was suspended a bit of African ingenuity—a carved wooden chain cut from one solid piece of wood without a join—a wonderful thing.

At other sales, with Aztec idols, stolen not without danger, was a cocoanut carved entirely with a common needle by a prisoner in a Mexican jail, and fine work it was, and a terrible tale of the slowness of the awful hours it told. A large bronze bell from Louvain was sold for £20 among relics of more ancient wars and costumes from Tibet, and an uncommon relic was a penny piece made from a brass cannon at the battle of the Boyne; these penny pieces were coined for the payment of the soldiers after the defeat and flight of King James at the Boyne.

Many specimens of glass are constantly being sold—all sorts and kinds of old cut glass, heavy or slender pieces, finely cut, sparkling as crystal. During the eighteenth century Bristol obtained a unique distinction for the manufacture of a special genre, an opaque white glass, decorated with enamel colours, of which not many pieces now remain, but of these few, certain specimens have come under Mr. Stevens' hammer. Then Waterford glass, with its faint blue tinge—derived from a minute admixture of cobalt in the mould—also very rare, has been sold. Nailsea, nine miles south-west of Bristol, where Glass Works were established in 1788, and

survived until the middle of the last century, has sent its ware to the rooms. Some of the earlier productions of the Nailsea works were the yellowish-green jugs with splashes of white upon them, seen sometimes in the West of England. Various examples of enamelled glass from Bohemia have appeared in many a vase and in bright liqueur glasses and bottles.

Any number of jugs, mugs, and plates of old pewter have been picked up by collectors, as well as fine pieces of old Sheffield plate. The production of old Sheffield plate, it will be remembered, dates from 1743, when Thomas Bolsover discovered that if silver was laid upon copper the metals could be united by fusion, and hardened and strengthened by pressure between rollers; the industry was carried on for about a hundred years, when it was supplanted by the discovery of electro-plating.

Apart from the porcelains of China and Japan examples of the ceramic art of all the world, opaque and translucent, have poured into King Street. "A very fine Palissy ware jug, cover, and stand" seemed the symbol of something pathetic, triumphant and inexorable. If ever artist trod Art's "burning ladder," Bernard Palissy was he. He tested his own quality with the fire that tried his pots. In his search for the secret of enamelled pottery, he reduced himself, his wife, and many children to desperate poverty. Six little graves, it is said, marked the potter's progress. Fifteen long years he searched. He lost the support of friendship and conjugal love, and toiled alone, until at last, at such cost, he achieved the ideal vase, and was recognized as a master. His whole life was dedicated to great ideals, and he ended his days in prison for his religious faith, but it may be that such as he should not marry.

Specimens of the famous Sèvres ware bring a