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ANCIENT COUTTS' BANK.

IT WAS ESTABLISHED NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

Queen Anne Lodged Some of Her Superbuous Cash in It, as Did Alexander Pope, Pitt, Fox, Sir Walter Scott, Thackeray, Dickens and Others of Note.

NEW YORK, June 27.—A little way down the Strand, in London, within a stone's throw of the National Gallery, there is a long and somewhat grimy looking building, with iron railings running from one end to the other. Foreigners and country cousins on a visit to London stare at it and ask, "What is it?" There is nothing on the face of it to show. There is a little narrow door, but no name on it; several windows, but they show nothing except a want of washing. A constant stream of people may be seen passing in and out, like so many bees hurrying in and out of a hive, and generally there are two or three carriages waiting. It might be taken for a workhouse, only as a rule the visitors to those establishments are not carriage people, nor are ingresses and egresses quite so free as appears to be the case here. It might be anything; for, as the Bluecoat school boy said to a patronizing old gentleman, in reply to the query, "Well, my little man, what might your name be?" "My name might be Beelzebub, but it isn't." If, to solve the difficulty, the aforesaid foreigners or country cousins were to ask the nearest policeman, "What is that building?" he would reply, "Coutts' bank."

They might then be informed that they were looking at one of, if not the oldest and richest banks in England, a bank which was old before joint stock banks were thought of. The oldest joint stock bank (with the exception of the Bank of England) cannot boast a longer existence than sixty years. Coutts' bank, originally founded in 1692, will, in three years from the present date, have completed 200 years of official life. It speaks wonders for the ability and integrity which have from time to time been brought to bear upon the management of the institution, that after two centuries of ceaseless activity, it not only continues to exist, but that its prosperity and renown continue to increase.

Despite its somewhat meager external appearance the interior embraces a series of spacious and even handsome offices, and the ever growing requirements of the business have caused the bank to stretch itself out at the rear, right and left, into the Adelphi and the adjacent neighborhood. It has in particular absorbed a house in James street, Adelphi, where Lord Beaconsfield and his father once resided. The lease is still extant by which the house was conveyed from Mr. Isaac Disraeli to Mr. Thomas Coutts. Another interesting document in the possession of Messrs. Coutts & Co. is the marriage certificate of George IV and the unfortunate Mrs. Fitz-Herbert. The underground premises for the storage and safe custody of plate checks, jewelry and valuables of various descriptions, run along the entire extent of the ground occupied by the bank, and go down so many flights below the surface that it is calculated to give one a very fair notion of the bottomless pit.

Just inside the door, by the porter's lodge, stands a stalwart gentleman in blue, brave in buttons, heroic in helmet and terrible with truncheon, in short, a policeman, ready to attend to any chance visitors with larcenous tendencies for bank notes or who may wish to "try it on" with a forged check. Happily his services are not often required, although there are certain "chevaliers d'industrie" who make a specialty of watching people who leave banks with notes or gold and kindly endeavor to save them the trouble of carrying them all the way home.

Stepping on through the swinging doors we find ourselves in what is technically called "the shop." This is a large and lofty apartment, where the payment of checks, bills and other negotiable documents takes place. On the right is the counter where busy cashiers daily pay away and receive hundreds of thousands of pounds—so vast are the proportions modern banking has assumed. Going straight on we cross a bridge which connects the Strand with the Adelphi premises. Here we see a spacious room of more handsome proportions than "the shop" we have just left.

The partners sit here, and all around are doors leading to different departments where the inner work of the bank is done. At the end, is the "bank parlor," that important feature of all banking establishments, where anxious customers are, for example, informed that they can be accommodated with a loan of £20,000, or, under more happy circumstances, inform an official of their wish to lodge that sum.

The bank parlors (for there are more than one) contain portraits of some of the former partners, the older ones being easily distinguished by their peculiar coiffure—or the want of it—men never seemed to brush their hair in those days. There is also a portrait of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who has been connected with the fortunes of the house for more than fifty years. Perhaps the most famous of the partners was Thomas Coutts, who entered the house in the year 1761. In Chambers' Journal we read that "Thomas Coutts became the first banker in London. Great from his wealth and munificence, mingling in the highest circles, and yet never forgetting Edinburgh, which he visited on one occasion with Sir Walter Scott, his friend and kinsman, when he was complimented with the freedom of the city." Mr. Coutts had three daughters. The first married the Earl of Guildford, the second the Marquis of Bute, and the third Sir Francis Burdett. The daughter of Sir Francis Burdett was created a peeress in 1871 with the title of Baroness Burdett-Coutts. There is also a portrait of Mr. George Robinson, who recently died at the ad-

vanced age of 94, after no less than seventy years of active service. He entered the office as a clerk in 1815, was eventually taken into partnership, and continued until almost the close of his life to take an active part in the management of the bank's affairs. Dulce et decorum est pro patria vivere, might well have been his motto.

In bygone days every house had its "sign," and Coutts was known as "The Three Crowns." The old sign and the date of the founding of the house, "1692," still appear on the checks. The sign originated from the fact that three royal families then, as now, banked here, viz.: Those of England, France and Belgium. Of the English royal family Queen Anne was the first to open an account with Messrs. Coutts & Co., and her signature is still preserved in one of the ledgers. From that time all the English sovereigns have banked here. The bank numbers among its constituents the creme de la creme of the aristocracy both of England and France. Of the latter suffice it to mention such names as the Comte de Paris, the Duc de Nemours, the Duc de Alencon, etc., etc.

The list of celebrated characters who have banked here would occupy a formidable space; Alexander Pope, Pitt, Fox, Sir Walter Scott, the Duke of Wellington, Thackeray, Charles Dickens, etc., etc., have all been familiar figures in their day at 59 Strand.

All the old ledgers, beginning with the one in 1692 (with the exception of one or two, irreparably injured by damp), are still carefully preserved. The penmanship in some of them, written before the era of steel pens, is very beautiful, but rather suggests to an irreverent mind that they must have taken "all day" over it.

The bank employs 100 men, some of whom have been in the house for more than half a century, but of late years the staff has been gradually assuming a younger appearance than of yore, at least this was the opinion of one of the old customers of the bank who called in some few months ago. He said that in former days he never used to do business with anybody under 80 years of age, but now when he came and asked for £10,000, a beardless boy of 16 came forward and told him he could have it.

Coutts' adhere strongly to their old customs. One of them is the old-fashioned rule of clean shaving, dating from the time (some hundred years ago or more) when our fathers wore wigs and knee breeches, and shaved clean. This, no doubt, accounts for the particularly juvenile appearance of the younger men. There is a story current that the Comte de Paris, during a recent visit, noticed and greatly wondered at the universal absence of mustaches. Expressing his surprise to the Prince of Wales and asking the reason, the prince good humoredly replied he supposed it was to make them look innocent.

There is a large library on the premises, the gift of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. Here are illustrated papers and a file of The Times, and here some of the men occasionally meet after office hours for a quiet game of chess.

Another old custom, which we may mention by way of conclusion, is that every year, some time in the afternoon or evening of the 24th of June, all the men adjourn to the luncheon room to eat strawberries, which are always provided for their delectation on that day. Nobody quite knows why, but nobody objects. ANTHONY J. GAVIGAN.

The Drury Lane Girl.

NEW YORK, June 27.—Parents of the Drury Lane girl? Father? A brute. Mother? A scold. Brothers? Bears. Her infancy? Scoldings. Boxed ears. Cyclones of temper from mother and elder sisters. Lugged the baby till it could walk when just able to lug herself. Home from morning till night a bedlam just within boundaries of so called sanity. Meal times the season for growling, chewing and abusing. Beef, beer and bullying.

Ran away from home, sweet home, at sweet sixteen. Found another girl. In street. Brought up just the same. Sympathized. Other girl a pioneer. Had found path leading to freedom. Path of vice. Broad and free. Room for ten abreast. Plenty of company. Plenty of excitement. Plenty of change. No limitations but capacity of purse. Trod it. Raced on it. Not by slow degrees. By quick degrees. Gone longer and longer from home. Scolded for absence. Then whipped. Sudden disappearance. All night. Search by parents. One week. Gave it up. Girl in another part of London. Lost in the swarm. Population 4,000,000. Keeps shady by day. Emerges by night. Here we see her. Gone to the dogs. And gin. Exchange places with respectable sewing girl or girl out at service? Not she. Too much drudgery. Too much bossing. Compensation what? Few pounds a year. Looked on as inferior. Told to be content with station Providence has assigned her. Sees reward of virtue. Long hours of work. Wages? Sufficient to keep body and soul from falling apart. Respectability means drudgery. Possible consumption. Probable emaciation. More or less starvation. Not for Susan. Possibly has tried it. Reward for virtue not tempting. Narrow path too hard. Straight, to be sure. Straight and monotonous. Turns into broad road. Leads to death. Concludes death by gin no worse than death by starvation. And easier. Doesn't have to work so hard in dying. Goes for liberty. Vice means liberty. Respectability means slavery. Thinks liberty is cheap. Cuts loose from world of propriety. Propriety goes out of sight. Out of sight out of mind. Reminded of it possibly at times by preacher. Missionary sent to start reform mission in her quarter. Good man, of course. But forty foot pole preaching. Sermonizes at long range. Talks to her as if he belonged to another, better and holier world. Tells her to reform. Girl resents. Cries out to preacher, "Will reform pay our room rent and buy us mutton chops?" Poser for preacher. Girls not nice. Naughty. Naughty but practical. Good man preacher. Nice. Lives up to his own light. So does girl. So do all of us. Marry and Amen. Let's pray for charity. Charity for us all. All sinned and gone astray. PRENTICE MULFORD.

THE ARIZONA KICKER.

A Few Earnest Kicks from the Enterprising Journal.

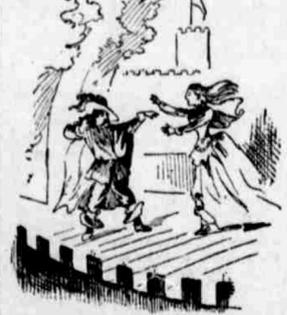
We take the following extracts from a late issue of The Arizona Weekly Kicker: "APOLOGETICAL.—We are compelled to apologize to our subscribers for the typographical appearance of the present issue. Owing to the snow blockade, a keg of ink which we ordered weeks ago failed to reach us, and rather than miss an issue we compounded a substitute. We don't seem to have hit the right proportions, or else molasses and lampblack are not the proper substitutes. "As it will be impossible for subscribers to make out any of the reading matter, we will solace them with the statement that there is little or nothing worth reading. We hadn't much time to give to the paper last week, and it is just as well that we hadn't. It would have been time thrown away."

"THE URUGAL HEWARD.—We understand that Arizona Joe, Col. Hilton, Dick Fenshaw and other ingrates are going about with the statement that we were horsewhipped by the Widow Burnham one day last week. When we refer to those hyenas as living liars, we do so in all gentleness. We can't afford to get mad and kick such freaks of nature. Arizona Joe is wearing a collar we lent him from our slim stock, and if any one will rip the collar's coat down the back he will find one of our undershirts surrounding the ingrate's body. When Dick Fenshaw struck this town he hadn't eaten anything but pig weed for three days, and he was trying to make a pack of cards cover his nakedness. We filled his stomach, gave him a coat and lifted him out of the slough. This is our reward. Sick transit! Sick gratitude! Sick hyena!"

"WELCOME BACK.—Professor Whitewater entered The Kicker office day before yesterday with beaming smile and extended hand, after an absence of about ten months spent in the penitentiary. He was unfortunate enough, it will be remembered, to hurt some one in a little dispute, and the court thought it best for him to take a little vacation.

"The professor returns home looking in good health and filled with enthusiasm over the progress the town has made during his absence. We welcome him. A little state prison experience hasn't hurt him, nor won't hurt any of our townsmen."—Detroit Free Press.

Presence of Mind.



Elvira—Oh, Reginald! My love! My— Reginald passionate, but inexperienced— T-too late, Elvira! Farewell! With this blow I and my earthly woes— Stabs himself. Curtain. Tremendous applause.



Elvira (sotto voce)—You chuckle headed fool! What do you want to die outside the curtain for?—Life.

General Roddy's Bullies. Here is a good story told of Roddy's Confederates cavalry: One day the troopers were about to go into battle dismounted, leaving every fourth man to hold the horses. The men were drawn up to count from right to left. Of course every fourth man felt jolly and this is the way the count went on: "One," "Two," "Three," "Bully!" "One," "Two," "Three," "Bully!" etc. Gen. Roddy heard each fourth man call out "Bully." His face flushed. When all had called off he said: "Numbers one, two and bully will go into the fight as dismounted cavalry. Number three will hold the horses." There were a good many sick "bullies" that day.—Chicago Ledger.

Must Get Even.

A Kingston dentist says he had an odd experience the other day. A man came into his office and told him he wanted a tooth pulled. After he had been seated in the dentist's chair he said: "Now, don't pull it all at once, pull it a little, then come up on it, and punish the pesky thing! punish it! It is as been punishing me for a month."—Kingston Freeman.

A Husband's Flattery.

Wife (who wants a tailor made suit, but as only hint at it)—Did you notice Mrs. So-and-so's figure? Husband (who smells a rat)—Yes, poor woman, she has no figure at all, like other women of that sort, has to depend on tailor made suits. Now you, my love, are a babe in anything.—New York Weekly.

No Prospect.

"Emeline," said the mother of that enchanting young lady, "do you think that Mr. Flatfoot has made up his mind to propose to you?" "I'm afraid not, mother," replied Emeline, sadly. "He was bragging about his appetite only yesterday."—Chicago News.

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