

Karl and others visited the evil-smelling place. Now, a man will remember through his nose and finger-tips when other more highly trained senses fail. The first sniff of the closely-packed laager of caravans brought to Grier's mind a series of vivid pictures of early days in the Himalayan foothills. He lost himself a little, but his dreams were interrupted by a scene that yielded an exciting paragraph for next morning's newspapers.

A defective iron screen enabled a gorilla to get at a black panther. The two beasts had a peculiar antipathy to each other, and the showman placed them close together for effect. Like many another dramatist, he obtained a "curtain" he had not bargained for. Once the way was clear, by reason

of the giving way of the corroded lattice, the animals met in Homeric combat. It was a fine fight, but it did not last long, for the gorilla tore the panther's head off.

But the other denizens of the menagerie, aroused from lethargy by the mortal defiance hurled forth by cat and ape, scented the battle and spoke in strange tongues. And behold! Karl knew what they were saying. He heard the lion and tiger roaring "Kill!" the deer and buffaloes shrieking "Run!" the monkey tribe chattering "Climb, brother, and reach from above!" Above all resounded the raging challenge of the elephant, who when stirred to fury is the real master of the jungle.

Whips, hay-forks and heavy bars of iron soon

ended the disturbance. A number of fainting women were carried out into the fresh air, and Karl, to his intense chagrin, for he was a great dandy in those days, found that his nose had bled freely during the hubbub.

When Mr. Verdant Green was "up," his friends would have asked who had tapped his claret, but Karl's companions were anxious to learn the identity of the man who had "punched him on the boko." Youth is perennial, though it may change its idioms. It was disappointing to learn that the gore arose from natural causes. The slaying of the panther had evoked the boy's fighting instincts. Pugilism—to use the naked hands on a foe—that

Continued on Page 15

"LORD" TIMOTHY DEXTER'S OLD HOME

By Susan Ethel Hodge

THE famous old Dexter mansion of Newburyport, Massachusetts, after passing through various vicissitudes and transformations, has become the object of renewed interest among New-England visitors by the reason of the fact that it has passed into the possession of N. G. Pierce, a wealthy business man, for many years resident in St. Louis, who now makes it his home.

"Lord" Timothy Dexter was a most eccentric man, and the old mansion is intimately associated with so many of his eccentricities that it has been one of the most interesting landmarks in Newburyport for more than a century. The story of Dexter, therefore, has been an oft-repeated tale, but one that loses no whit of its interest in the retelling.

Born in Malden, Massachusetts, in 1716, he began as a leather dresser in the village of Charlestown. Later he removed to Newburyport, where he married a widow nine years his senior. She kept a huckster's shop, and her income added to his aided him in amassing several thousand dollars.

Just at this time, which was after the adoption of the Constitution, Continental money became greatly depreciated in value. Securities were worthless, but several influential men in order to preserve the confidence of the people and to assist friends bought many of these securities. Taking his cue from these leaders, Dexter began buying in small amounts all the securities he could afford to purchase. Then, with the institution of Hamilton's funding system, the securities began to increase in value until they could be redeemed at par. Dexter therefore sold his formerly useless possessions, and was a rich man.

Having attained to this position of wealth, he determined to live as became a man of means—according to his own notion. To begin with, he affixed the title of "Lord" to his name, and was pleased only when he was courted and feted and received the salutes and attentions usually accorded to royalty.

He bought the "Tracy House," now the Newburyport Public Library, but soon took up his abode at Chester, New-Hampshire, where he purchased an expensive country seat. Here he showed to a marked degree his great desire for notoriety, styling himself "King of Chester." But he made himself so presuming that Chester became too hot for him, and he returned to Newburyport, where in 1798 he bought a large house on High-st., erected by Jonathan Jackson in 1771. He at once proceeded to adorn this residence in accordance with his peculiar tastes.

He had gilt balls placed on the minarets of the house, and ordered forty columns, fifteen feet high, to be erected in front, each column bearing a statue of a noted man. Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, William Pitt, Bonaparte, George IV., Lord Nelson, General Morgan, the Goddess of Liberty and an Indian chief were among the celebrated group; and apparently for variety he changed the names of these heroes as the fancy struck him.

These effigies have been widely scattered. Some were blown down and neglected, others were sold at auction, the Goddess of Fame bringing the highest price, and that only five dollars, and still others have been given away by the various successive owners of the estate. Several of them, still in a fair state of preservation, are owned by residents of Newburyport. One reposes in Haverhill, Massachusetts, and still another was purchased and removed to Florida where it graces a Southern garden. The eagle surmounting the cupola has been the only figure to remain undisturbed. It has lately been regilded, its four feet of height and two of breadth requiring two layers of gold-leaf in the operation. The carving, unlike that of many of the figures, is said to be a most excellent piece of work, and is supposed to have been done by a grandfather of Wilson



Brothers, the last firm of carvers in Newburyport.

It is related that one of the statues (presumably that of Adams), represented a statesman holding a parchment, supposed to be the Constitution of the United States. When having this statue painted, Dexter, with his usual desire for contrast and sensation, instructed the painter to place on the scroll words that were entirely irrelevant to the Constitution. The painter remonstrated, whereupon the irate proprietor procured a gun and chased him off the premises. As a proof that the imitation lord considered his attitude praiseworthy, he incorporated the incident in a volume that he afterward published.

Whether Dexter was animated by shrewd or foolish motives in erecting these statues is a mooted point, and for the following reason: He was the largest stockholder in the old toll-bridge over the Merrimac River, and in order to increase toll receipts he occasionally erected a new statue or changed the name or appearance of an old one, advertising freely that there had been a new acquisition to the group. This drew curious sightseers and visitors to the town from all the near-by country, and as they were compelled to cross the bridge to visit the place, the profits accruing from the collection of toll were greatly enhanced.

In the midst of all those curious figures, and as if illustrating the extreme vanity of this self-created lord, stood a statue of himself, bearing the inscription, "I am the first in the East, the first in the West, and the greatest philosopher in the Western world."

His admiration for royalty, whom he aped in every possible way, amounted to a passion, and fashioning his life after this class of society, he sent an artist abroad to buy paintings with which to adorn his home. But as he had no knowledge of art himself, the selections he made from the artist's purchase comprised a most inferior collection. With books he had the same experience, scattering about the apartments of his house volumes whose bindings were their only feature of recommendation.

Going a step further, he hired a poet-laureate from among the villagers of Newburyport, and this singer, who bore the unpoetic name of Jonathan Plummer, having served in all sorts of capacities from peddler to farmer and book agent, turned his lyre to the song of Dexter's praise. The first of his effusions ran:

Lord Dexter is a man of fame,
Most celebrated is his name;
More precious far than gold that's pure,
Lord Dexter, live for evermore.

Not content with the laureations of his laureate, Dexter decided to try his own hand at literary production. His effort in this direction was called "Pickles for the Knowing Ones," or "Plain Truths

in Homespun Dress." It is a conglomeration of incidents and reflections put together without the least regard to form, punctuation, spelling or capitalization. At the end is a group of various punctuation marks with the instruction: "the Nowing ones compane of my book the fust edition had no stops I put in A Nuf here and thay may peper and solt it as they ples." Thousands of copies of this remarkable attempt were printed and given away broadcast.

But one of the oddest caprices of this exceptional man was his building of a tomb for the reception of his own remains. A handsome coffin was made at his direction, with rich linings and pillows and solid-silver handles. Invitations were then issued for a rehearsal of his funeral. After the mock ceremony was over at the tomb, the company was led to the house, where they were served to costly wines. In the midst of festivities, cries were heard issuing from the kitchen, and upon investigation it was found that they were occasioned by a beating that Dexter was dealing out to his wife for not shedding tears at his funeral services.

His eccentricities did not end, however, with his fantastic home, his mock funeral, his coach with coat-of-arms copied from a book of heraldry and the cream-colored horses; nor did his financial success terminate with his sale of the Continental securities. Having acquired a small fortune by this means, he set to work to increase his revenue. It is said that he cornered whalebone, opium and other articles, selling at his own price when he had monopolized the market. And, what would seem more improbable, it is told that he bought forty-two thousand warming-pans and sent them to the West Indies, where they were sold at a good profit as ladles in the sap industry. This story is vehemently discredited by William C. Todd, who has called into question several points of Knapp's "Life of Timothy Dexter." He doubts also the tale that Dexter sent several thousand Bibles to the West Indies where they were sold as charms against the evil spirit; but judging from his numerous outlandish actions one could believe almost anything about this counterfeit lord. A shipment of red woolen nightcaps to Guinea also strangely resulted to his profit, as did almost everything he handled.

He had a genius for bargains, but was so superstitious that before making a deal he always consulted one or two sorcerers, among whom were Madam Hooper of Newburyport and the famous Moll Pitcher of Lynn. The most influential of these fortune-tellers was Lucy Lancaster, a colored woman, who, having nursed him through a serious illness, at last made her home upon his estate.

Timothy Dexter was the father of two children, a son and a daughter, who were both mentally deficient and after leading melancholy lives died somewhat immaturely. "Lord" Dexter, having taken to drink when he became wealthy, also spent his latter days in a distressful condition. His life was shortened by his intemperance and ended in 1806.

His will, in which he left a fair proportion of his property to charity, was a remarkably sane document, evincing none of the eccentricities that had characterized his whole career. This circumstance, together with his business shrewdness and the benevolence that attended his acquisition of wealth (although it was often concealed by his gross oddity), lead one to think that possibly "Lord" Timothy Dexter was not the fool he was supposed to be, but rather the one who fooled, blinding the public with his queer ways while turning to gold everything that he touched.

He was buried in the "Old Hill Burying-Ground" at Newburyport, the Board of Health refusing to allow his interment in the tomb that was intended for his remains.