

The Body Snatcher and Other Stories

Robert Louis Stevenson

EDITED AND WITH AN
INTRODUCTION BY
Jeffrey Meyers

The Body Snatcher and Other Stories

Robert Louis Stevenson

EDITED AND WITH AN
INTRODUCTION BY

Jeffrey Meyers



A SIGNET CLASSIC

NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY

NEW YORK AND SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO

NAL BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE AT QUANTITY DISCOUNTS
WHEN USED TO PROMOTE PRODUCTS OR SERVICES.
FOR INFORMATION PLEASE WRITE TO PREMIUM MARKETING DIVISION,
NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY, 1633 BROADWAY,
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10019.

Introduction and bibliography copyright © 1988 by Jeffrey Meyers

Cover painting, "Portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson" (detail)
by John Singer Sargent; 1887; Bequest of the Mrs. and Mrs.
Charles Phelps Taft; The Taft Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio.

All rights reserved



SIGNET CLASSIC TRADEMARK REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES
REGISTERED TRADEMARK—MARCA REGISTRADA
HECHO EN CHICAGO, U.S.A.

SIGNET, SIGNET CLASSIC, MENTOR, ONYX, PLUME, MERIDIAN
and NAL BOOKS are published in the United States by NAL PENGUIN INC.,
1633 Broadway, New York, New York 10019,
in Canada by The New American Library of Canada Limited,
81 Mack Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario M1L 1M8

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 87-61822

First Signet Classic Printing, February, 1988

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

INTRODUCTION

Robert Louis Stevenson, who came from a repressive Calvinistic background and spent his adult life as a restless invalid in search of health, was born in Edinburgh in 1850 and died in Samoa in 1894. His great themes are romantic love, rivalry and vengeance, passion and renunciation, the supernatural and the macabre, the temptation of the forbidden, the torments of conscience, the strain of savagery beneath the veneer of civilization, the influence of ancestry, the conflict between fathers and sons, the double or alter ego and the dual nature of man.

He is excellent at evoking the setting—in a few vivid paragraphs—of London and Edinburgh, the Scottish moorlands and highlands, France and Spain, Hawaii and Samoa. He writes in many genres: black comedies, historical fables, moral allegories and folk tales. His stories, an odd mixture of the adolescent and the sophisticated, combine atmosphere and action, adventure and morality. Many of them take place in nocturnal darkness or crepuscular light. He employs an archaic style to evoke the past, and is stronger at inventing than concluding his ingenious plots.

His dashing and decent heroes fall instantly in love, usually in lonely landscapes. Most of his women, compromised in some strange fashion, are noble, beautiful and boring. In "The Sire de Malétroit's Door" the protagonist chooses marriage over death; in "The Pavilion on the Links" he defeats a vicious rival in love; in "Olalla" he renounces his love for an attractive lady in a bestial family; in "The Bottle Imp" he overcomes adversity and is reunited with his devoted wife; in "The Beach at Falesá" he accepts domesticity with a native woman; in the unfinished "Weir of Hermiston" he is destined to be rescued from prison and escape to America with his beloved after killing a friend who had seduced her.

The subtly controlled tone, perfect diction and grim ironic humor make "The Body-Snatcher" a minor masterpiece. A frame story (or story within a story)—in which Fettes confronts and accuses Macfarlane, his old confederate in an unnatural occupation that runs counter to funerary convention—leads into the fictional equivalent of Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson*. Fettes' pathological duty in the Edinburgh school of medicine had been "to supply, receive, and divide the various subjects" who "supplied the table" in the anatomy class. He frequently noticed "the singular freshness of the bodies" and, when a personal acquaintance is delivered in a sack, is forced to admit that almost all his corpses had been murdered.

Macfarlane encourages his progressive immersion in evil by urging Fettes to suppress and ignore the truth. When Macfarlane produces a corpse he himself has murdered, forces Fettes to conceal the crime ("The more things are wrong the more we must act as if all were right") and briskly announces: "Richardson may have the head," Fettes realizes the thin partition between life and death, the gruesome contrast between the physical and spiritual aspects of man: "To bodies that had been laid in earth, in joyful expectation of a far different awakening, there came that hasty, lamp-lit, terror-haunted resurrection of the spade and mattock," which exposed the body "to uttermost indignities before a class of gaping boys." Fettes' exclamation at the beginning of the story, "I wished to know if, after all, there were a God; I know now that there is none," illuminates the meaning of the supernatural transformation at the end. If there is no God, then the devil is free to do evil.

A historical romance set in France in 1429 during the Hundred Years' War, "The Sire de Malétroit's Door" opens as Denis de Beaulieu, feeling his way through the darkness ("the touch of cold window-bars . . . startles the man like the touch of a toad"), is pursued by hostile men-at-arms and finds refuge through a door that suddenly opens behind him. Malétroit's character is revealed in his countenance: "equivocal and wheedling . . . greedy, brutal, and dangerous." Their dialogue begins with a misconception ("I have been expecting you all the evening") and ends with Beaulieu's realization that he has been mistakenly snared for an impromptu marriage.

Malétroit's niece Blanche, whose name, "white," sug-

gests her innocence, explains that her recent flirtation with a young captain, which Malétoit feels has dishonored their ancient family, has led Beaulieu into the trap set for her lover. Forced to choose between hanging and nuptials, Beaulieu at first feels honor-bound to refuse matrimonial coercion. They debate the niceties of the situation during the two hours allowed by her wicked uncle and, as dawn breaks, Beaulieu does the decent thing and opts for life rather than for "a dark and dusty corner, where a man gets into his tomb and has the door shut after him till the Judgment Day." "Though I will die for you blithely," he confides to Blanche, "it would be like all the joys of Paradise to live on and spend my life in your service." The wildly improbable plot can be read as Stevenson's ironic commentary on the chivalric ideal.

"The Pavilion on the Links" is as thrilling and intriguing as "The Sire de Malétoit's Door" is pleasantly absurd. For the former contains all the romantic elements: a remote setting, keen suspense, mysterious strangers, hidden crimes, fatal quicksands, dangerous attacks, a passionate love triangle, a destructive conflagration and a rescue ship that arrives too late to help.

Cassilis, after nine years of wandering, returns to the links ("a Scottish name for sand which has ceased drifting and become more or less solidly covered with turf") where he had once spent a lonely winter and then quarreled with his friend, Northmour. A puzzling misogynist and lover, Northmour is both handsome and repulsive, brave and cowardly, and "combined the vivacity of the south with the sustained and deadly hatreds of the north." On the links, Cassilis witnesses a number of enigmatic events and asks: "Why was the pavilion secretly prepared? Why had Northmour landed with his guests at dead of night? . . . Why had he sought to kill me? . . . How had he come to have a dagger ready in his hand?"

Cassilis saves the beautiful Clara from the quicksands and falls in love with her. As their courtship develops, she elucidates the baffling incidents. Her father, Bernard Huddleston, a dishonest and ruined banker, is fleeing from his enemies. In return for marrying his daughter to his savior, he is about to escape to the South Seas in Northmour's yacht. In a neighboring village, Cassilis discovers three Italians in pursuit of Huddleston. Ominous seagulls—who "wheeled over his sepulchre with their

usual melancholy piping" and continue to hover and circulate throughout the story—indicate that one of the Italians has fallen into the deadly sands. Northmour is enraged when he discovers Cassilis embracing Clara. He reveals that Huddlestone had gambled away a huge sum of money deposited in his bank by a group of Italian revolutionaries who have now come to Scotland to murder him. For Clara's sake, the two suitors agree to suspend hostilities and to risk their lives in defense of the thieving banker. The Italians move in to attack the fortified pavilion, call for the blood of the traitor Huddlestone and promise to spare the others if they will hand him over.

There are some surprising and perverse sexual moments, swirling beneath the conventional romance of the novel, which excite the men and reinforce their bond at the expense of the passive girl. Northmour, realizing that he has lost Clara to Cassilis and will probably be killed, declares: "By God, I'll have a kiss!" He rudely and repeatedly embraces the woman as Cassilis looks on impotently, and then urges his rival to take a kiss himself to square accounts. When Cassilis contemptuously refuses, Northmour justly exclaims: "You've been a prig in life; a prig you'll die." After they have been driven out of the house by the fire and Huddlestone rushes into the avengers' bullets to save the others, Clara faints. The next moment, as Cassilis cries "Shame!" Northmour, still eager for sexual compensation, "was straining Clara to his heart and covering her unconscious hands and face with his caresses." Not to be outdone by his passionate rival, and also taking advantage of his beloved's unconsciousness (though under the guise of assisting her), Cassilis, in a wonderful phrase, "loosened, as well as I was able, her dress and corset." Though Northmour warns him to keep his hands off the girl, he again falls to his knees and plants a chaste kiss on her brow. Cassilis' comparative restraint takes the wind out of Northmour's sails. Defeated in love, he atones for gross lechery by sacrificing himself for the cause of Italian freedom. Years later, he is killed in the Austrian Tyrol, fighting under the patriotic colors of Giuseppe Garibaldi.

"Markheim," influenced by Poe's theme of the double self and by the murder of the old pawnbroker in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, is Stevenson's macabre

contribution to the genre of the Christmas story. Markheim (whose German name makes him seem more sinister) enters a London curio shop and rejects a mirror, or hand-conscience, as a Christmas gift. He then anticipates the "double" theme by observing his reflection in a series of mirrors and in several large pier glasses. He muses that life is short and insecure and, in an unmotivated and gratuitous act, kills the dealer with a dagger. Staring at the body of his victim, "where it lay both humped and sprawling," he notices that it looks "incredibly small and strangely meaner than in life."

After the murder the story moves inside the tortured mind of Markheim with considerable psychological penetration. The sense that he was not alone "grew upon him to the verge of madness." He is confronted by his alter ego or evil conscience in the form of a commonplace yet odd devil-figure, who says he lives for evil and debates the meaning of the murder. He urges Markheim to steal the dealer's money and to stab his maid, and offers to help him escape. Yet Markheim, with a resurgence of moral awareness in his corroded heart, rejects this advice. He moves from justifying his evil deed—"about God Himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice"—to an acceptance of his guilt. Though he does not admit responsibility and repent at the end of the story, he struggles with his conscience and decides to resist evil: "If I be condemned to evil acts . . . there is still one door of freedom open—I can cease from action." Knowing the consequences of his crime—the dock, the prison, the gallows and the black coffin—he has the moral courage to spare the maid and tell her: "You had better go for the police. . . . I have killed your master."

The opening of the vastly underrated "Olalla" anticipates the beginning of D. H. Lawrence's story, "Sun," and has strikingly Lawrencean themes: sun worship, primitivism, "blood-consciousness" and the ghastliness of Catholic iconography (as in Lawrence's essay, "Christ in Tirol"). Stevenson's "Lawrencean" belief, expressed in a letter to his cousin Bob, suggests the theme of the story, for he wrote that man should "honour sex more religiously. THE DAMNED THING of our [puritanical]

education is that Christianity does not recognize and hallow sex."

The English hero of the story is sent to recover from a war wound in the salubrious mountain residence of an ancient but decayed Spanish family. Stevenson recreates the Spanish landscape (perhaps the Sierra de Guadarrama north of Madrid), which he had never seen, with consummate skill. Before leaving for the mountains, the hero learns that the wild mother of the family broke with all tradition and married (or perhaps never bothered to marry) a muleteer or smuggler. Her half-witted son Felipe—still a common type, whom Spanish villagers today call *mental* and treat with unusual sympathy—conveys the hero to the decayed mansion and is chastised by him for torturing a squirrel.

The mother's nearly mute and exceptionally hedonistic behavior is subtly portrayed. She spends her days brushing her hair and lolling in the sun with "an expression of almost imbecile good-humor and contentment," her vacuous face "a moral blank expressing literally naught." Her beauty and stupidity soothe and amuse the hero, though she is bored by him, yawns in his face and falls asleep while he is conversing with her: "She lived in her body; and her consciousness was all sunk into and disseminated through her members." When the scirocco blows in from Africa, everyone in the house becomes tense and depressed. Late at night, the hero is shocked to hear an outbreak of atavistic cries of pain and rage, but he is unable to discover where they came from or what caused them.

The hero is introduced to the elusive and mysterious daughter, Olalla (whose name echoes the disturbing ululations), through her books and poetry that present a complete contrast to the rest of the feral family. The first words she speaks to him are an order to go away, and the rest of the story explains why he must unwillingly obey her command. The good soldier immediately responds that he "would gladly forswear my country, my language, and my friends, to live forever by her side." The deeper vision of Tolstoy's realistic *Anna Karenina* shows how the romantic love of Anna and Vronsky is destroyed by precisely these sacrifices.

In an extraordinary brutal scene, the hero (perhaps punishing himself, seeking a nurse or searching for a

reason to remain) slashes his wrist on a casement window. (Both Stevenson and Lawrence were obsessed by blood, which recalled their nearly fatal tubercular hemorrhages.) When he shows his bloody wound to the bestial mother, she thrusts his hand in her mouth, bites it to the bone, utters the monstrous cries that had awakened him on the night of the hot wind and is pinned to the floor by Felipe. Her screams, the hero realizes, "were the death-cry of my love. . . . This savage and bestial strain ran not only through the whole behaviour of her family, but found a place in the very foundations and story of our love."

Olalla believes that she can end her cursed inheritance ("the hands of the dead . . . guide me") only by refusing to propagate her race. Though she is the great exception in the degenerate family, she persuades the hero to accept her Christ-like renunciation: "We must all bear and expiate a past which was not ours." Unlike the muleteer who damned himself with her mother, the hero—guided by the Christian precept that pleasure is "not an end, but an accident"—abandons love, marriage, sex, procreation and the concept of earthly happiness.

A fable and folk tale, written with engaging simplicity for a Polynesian audience in Hawaii, "The Bottle Imp" is fired by Stevenson's Calvinistic sense of damnation and incites the fears instilled in the islanders by hellfire missionaries. The gentle hero Keawe—who wanders between San Francisco, Honolulu and Tahiti—buys the "round-bellied bottle with a long neck; the glass of it was white like milk, with changing rainbow colours in the grain. Within-sides something obscurely moved, like a shadow and a fire." Though the bottle imp grants every wish at once, there are two conditions: The bottle must always be sold at a loss, and if a man dies before he sells it, he must burn in hell forever.

The bottle is sold five times in the story. Keawe, having fulfilled his desire for a magnificent house, sells it to a friend who wants to own a schooner. After falling in love with a beautiful maiden, Kokua, Keawe discovers he has leprosy and buys back the bottle to rid himself of the disease. But he fears he will not be able to sell it for less than one cent and imagines the fire burning him in the bottomless pit. He marries Kokua, tells her that he dared hell in order to possess her and is overjoyed by her

suggestion that he sell it for French centimes. But he does not want to save himself by the eternal ruin of another man. Kokua repeats Keawe's sacrificial act by buying the bottle back from an old man who has bought it from her. Stevenson invites the reader to anticipate, rather than merely read about, a satisfactory solution that would enable Keawe to achieve a happy ending. The story suggests not only that a man's character is revealed by his material desires and that human greed finds it impossible to resist the temptation of unlimited and immediately gratified desires, but also that crass materialism can be transcended by noble altruism.

The two longer and more substantial stories, "The Beach at Falesá" and "Weir of Hermiston," show a considerable advance in realism, depth of characterization and narrative skill, and show Stevenson working at the height of his powers at the end of his tragically curtailed career. "The Beach at Falesá," a South Seas *Heart of Darkness*, helped to create the image of the innocent and degenerate tropical islands that is also found in the work of Melville, Gauguin and Maugham. (The story was transformed into a film script by Dylan Thomas.) The opening paragraph of the salty first-person narrative instantly evokes the fresh and exotic setting and brings the hero, John Wiltshire, to an atmosphere heavy with menace and to a place where white men die suddenly. Like Conrad, Stevenson exposes the corruption of the white man's colonialism—Wiltshire exclaims: "It would be a strange thing if we came all this way and couldn't do what we pleased"—and his crude exploitation of the gentle island people.

Though he learns about the disastrous fate of his predecessor and sees in the drunken Captain Randall (who has "gone native") a warning of his future fate, Wiltshire clings to his optimistic expectations. He naively accepts the lies of Case, a rival trader, who provides a wife, Uma, a bogus marriage contract and false reassurance that everyone is honest in Falesá. In the course of the story, Wiltshire moves from passive persecution by Case to a decision to retaliate, from exploitation of the native woman to a recognition of her generosity and appreciation of her love.

Though Wiltshire pours his case of gin over the edge of the verandah in order to make himself worthy of his new

wife, things immediately begin to go wrong. Valuable stock is stolen; the natives gather in a circle to stare at him; they refuse to buy anything in his store; he learns that Case has poisoned a previous trader, Johnny Adams; the native pastor is terrified of Wiltshire's appearance; and he is taboo for mysterious reasons. Case, who can speak the local language, offers to help; but Wiltshire finally realizes that Case has turned the people against him. Uma then reveals that she has been jilted by her suitor and rejected by the village, and that she too is responsible for the taboo. Nevertheless, Wiltshire's love for Uma grows, and he is properly remarried by a missionary. The missionary tells Wiltshire that Case has also corrupted the native pastor, driven one trader off the island and buried a second one alive.

In order to defend himself against Case's evil, Wiltshire seeks Case's devilish shrine—the source of his power over the natives, who are caught in the uneasy transition between paganism and Christianity. In the bush, Wiltshire finds eerie noises made by Aeolian (he calls them "Tyrolean") wind-harps that Case placed in the trees and demonic idols burnished with luminous paint. When Wiltshire exposes Case's fraud to the young chief Maea, Case's rival in love, Maea lifts the taboo and buys from Wiltshire's shop.

To complete the destruction of his enemy, Wiltshire returns to the bush to blow up the shrine with dynamite. As he passes through the jungle, "the light of the lantern, striking among all these trunks and forked branches and twisted rope-ends of lianas, made the whole place, or all that you could see of it, a kind of puzzle of turning shadows." Uma follows him to warn him of danger, they are both wounded by Case and Wiltshire stabs him to death—taking considerable sadistic pleasure from the extinction of evil: "His body kicked under me like a spring sofa; he gave a dreadful kind of a long moan, and lay still. . . . The blood came over my hands, I remember, hot as tea."

At the end of the story, Captain Randall dies after his hand is accidentally blown off and Black Jack (who had performed the bogus wedding ceremony) is eaten by cannibals. Wiltshire finally restores to the island the simplicity and innocence he had originally hoped to find there. He abandons his plan to return to England and open a

pub, and remains loyal to his wife and children: "There's nobody thinks less of half-castes than I do; but they're mine, and about all I've got."

Stevenson was dictating "Weir of Hermiston" on the day he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. But his notes and conversation anticipate the conclusion of the novel (see Appendix). Adam Weir, the father of the hero, is based on a notorious eighteenth-century hanging judge, though the bitter quarrels with his son Archie reflect the young Stevenson's arguments with his father. There are four Elliott brothers in the story, three Weirs, two Kirsties (aunt and niece) and one rival for young Kirstie's love, Frank Innes.

The marriage of Archie's parents is an unnatural union of opposites: the father coarse and cruel, the mother refined and religious. The father is hostile to the son, the mother adores him. In a finely wrought, almost Shakespearean scene, the older Kirstie is forced to announce the wife's death to the husband:

"The Lord peety ye, Hermiston! the Lord prepare ye!," she keened out. "Weary upon me, that I should have to tell it." . . .

"Has the French landit?" cried he. . . .

"Is onybody deid?" says his lordship. "It's no Erchie?" . . .

"It's the mistress, my lord; she just fair flittit before my e'en." . . .

"Weel, it's something of the suddenest," said he.

"But she was a dwaibly [infirm] body from the first."

Adam begins to decline after his wife's death—"he became less formidable and infinitely more disgusting"—and, as the animosity between father and son increases, Archie seeks out the wise and sympathetic Lord Glenalmond as a substitute parent.

Archie attends a trial at which his father pronounces the death sentence—"the loathsomeness of Duncan Jopp enveloped and infected the image of his judge," publicly denounces "this God-defying murder" and also condemns capital punishment at a university debating society. (It is a great pity that Stevenson, unlike Orwell, did not give a detailed description of the hanging.) Archie's subsequent

interview with his father, which parallels the talk with Lord Glenalmond and shows Adam in a more favorable light, is the high point of the fragment. Instead of defending his principles, Archie, overawed by his father's personality, admits he has made a fool of himself and promises filial obedience. Outraged by his son's disloyalty, Adam disqualifies him from the bar and sends him to manage their country estate at Hermiston. This concludes the first part of the story.

Archie's ephemeral opposition to his father leads to independence as laird of Hermiston, a complete contrast to Adam's house in Edinburgh, and allows him to fulfill his emotional destiny. His wooing of the young Kirstie is strikingly different from his parents' courtship. He finds in her the qualities of his dead mother; she discovers in him the gentleness so notably absent in her four brothers. Though they come from different social classes, Kirstie's father, like Archie's, "had never been loved, but he had been feared in honour." The brothers' honorable vengeance of their father's murder—one "rode his horse to and fro upon the human remnant" of the attacker—foreshadows Archie's projected vengeance on Kirstie's seducer, Frank Innes.

Archie and Kirstie first see each other in church and are immediately attracted, though the torn page in her psalm book warns of their danger. Their fate is hastened by the arrival of the mephistophelean Frank Innes, a casual university friend who sponges off Archie when he runs out of money. He resents Archie's indifference to his visit, quarrels with his friend, slanders him and discovers his secret courtship of Kirstie. Old Kirstie, who had established a satisfying friendship with her master before he met her niece, repeats—for equally selfish motives—Frank's criticism of Archie's love for Kirstie. Both Frank and old Kirstie resent the loss of his favor and both are emotionally frustrated. In a final interview with Kirstie, before the story breaks off, Archie rejects her embraces and pedantically warns her that they must not risk scandal by their supposedly secret meetings. Archie's rather priggish lecture will provoke Kirstie's desire to punish him and lead to her tragic involvement with Frank Innes.

The bleak moorland setting of "Weir of Hermiston" is very different from the lush tropics of Samoa, where he

wrote the story; yet the contrast stimulated Stevenson to recall the memories of his Scottish childhood. He lies buried under a simple but solid tombstone on a mountaintop above his grand house Vailima and the town of Apia, on the island of Samoa. Ten years ago I climbed for several hours through the creeping lianas of the jungle, up the steep slippery paths and past the freshening spray of cascading waterfalls till I left the dense foliage, reached the clearing at the peak and saw the magnificent view of the landscape, sea and sky over which the brilliant, gentle spirit that suffused the stories still seemed to preside.

—JEFFREY MEYERS

University of Colorado

The text of these stories is from the Swanston Edition of Stevenson's *Works* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1911-12).

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Introduction</i> | vii |
| The Body-Snatcher (1884) | 1 |
| The Sire de Malétroit's Door (1878) | 20 |
| The Pavilion on the Links (1880) | 40 |
| Markheim (1885) | 92 |
| Olalla (1885) | 109 |
| The Bottle Imp (1891) | 149 |
| The Beach at Falesá (1892) | 178 |
| Weir of Hermiston (1896) | 243 |
| APPENDIX: THE PROJECTED CONCLUSION OF "WEIR OF HERMISTON" | 347 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 349 |

The Body-Snatcher

EVERY NIGHT in the year, four of us sat in the small parlour of the George at Debenham—the undertaker, and the landlord, and Fettes, and myself. Sometimes there would be more; but blow high, blow low, come rain or snow or frost, we four would be each planted in his own particular armchair. Fettes was an old drunken Scotchman, a man of education obviously, and a man of some property, since he lived in idleness. He had come to Debenham years ago, while still young, and by a mere continuance of living had grown to be an adopted townsman. His blue camlet-cloak was a local antiquity, like the church-spire. His place in the parlour at the George, his absence from church, his old, crapulous, disreputable vices, were all things of course in Debenham. He had some vague Radical opinions and some fleeting infidelities, which he would now and again set forth and emphasise with tottering slaps upon the table. He drank rum—five glasses regularly every evening; and for the greater portion of his nightly visit to the George sat, with his glass in his right hand, in a state of melancholy alcoholic saturation. We called him the Doctor, for he was supposed to have some special knowledge of medicine, and had been known, upon a pinch, to set a fracture or reduce a dislocation; but beyond these slight particulars, we had no knowledge of his character and antecedents.

One dark winter night—it had struck nine some time before the landlord joined us—there was a sick man in the George, a great neighbouring proprietor suddenly struck down with apoplexy on his way to Parliament; and the great man's still greater London doctor had been telegraphed to his bedside. It was the first time that such a thing had happened in Debenham, for the railway was but newly open, and we were all proportionately moved by the occurrence.