

decided if we knew whether Casanova worked quite unhampered or whether he used notes. Marr turned instantly to his registers, which are linked together by a clever system of cross-

reference, and speedily showed me under the call-word 'Memoirs' numerous places in the archives in which mention is made of the way in which the memoirs were written.

LUCK¹

BY FRANK A. CLEMENT

'THERE is no such thing as luck,' said Sir Henry Derringer.

'My dear man,' exclaimed Lady Adela Favershams, 'no such thing as luck! Why, there 's nothing else. You did n't think it was merit, did you? And in the diplomatic service, too.'

'What 's that?' boomed Sir Thomas Grandon, our host. 'Who 's talking about luck?'

'Sir Henry says there is n't such a thing,' said Lady Adela.

'No such thing as luck!' shouted Sir Thomas. 'Good heavens! Of course there 's such a thing as luck!'

'You surprise me,' said Rowley, the famous criminal lawyer; 'I thought you of all men would deny it.'

'That 's where you slipped up, my friend,' retorted Sir Thomas. 'Luck? Why, the whole world is run on luck. Often, I'll grant you, it takes a wise man to know it when he sees it. But there are times and people —'

'You 're not going to defend charms and mascots and all the silly ritual of modern superstition, are you?' said Derringer.

'Why not? I don't suppose a Teddy bear tied to the bonnet of a car makes a good driver out of a bad one, if that 's what you mean. But I do think that if

a good driver feels happier because he has a gollywog with him, he'll drive all the better for it. A mascot, if you favor mascots, creates a lucky atmosphere. But that 's not the luck I was talking about. Did any of you know Jimmy Lorimore?'

'D' you mean the man who died of apoplexy as he finished speaking at a public dinner?' asked Derringer.

'Yes, that was Jimmy. Best after-dinner speaker in London. Died while the crowd was laughing and hammering on the tables. Talk of luck!'

'Oh, well,' sneered Derringer, 'if you call that luck! Is that the luck you were talking about, Lady Adela?'

'Possibly,' replied the lady coolly; 'one would want to know all the facts.'

'Exactly,' said our host. 'Truth is, Lorimore simply stumbled into good things. His life was one long string of happy accidents.'

'And his death?' said Rowley.

'That was probably the happiest accident of all.'

'This is intriguing,' said Rowley. 'Sir Thomas has said so much I think he ought to tell us more.'

'Hear, hear!' cried Lady Adela.

'I second that,' said Derringer.

'Carried unanimously,' added Rowley.

'Very well,' said our host, 'here goes. Lorimore had the usual upbringing, you

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know, public school and 'varsity, and our story starts when he had come down from Oxford with a pass degree, a pretty taste in wine and other things, and a disinclination to take life seriously. It was understood that he would have to do something presently, and meanwhile he was looking about him, as he was fond of saying. Well, one day he was looking about him in the middle of the road at Hyde Park Corner, and was run over by a brougham. That's how his luck started.'

'Luck?' said Rowley.

'Luck, all right,' responded our host. 'Brougham belonged to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he happened to be inside. Old boy was awfully cut up, trundled Jimmy round to the hospital, where he had his arm set, just a simple fracture, and then took him to his own house. Final result, Jimmy got a Treasury appointment.'

'Yes, I remember him there,' said Derringer.

'So do a lot of people,' chuckled Sir Thomas. 'Fortunately, the men in his Department took a fancy to Jimmy — everybody always took a fancy to Jimmy — and held him up for a year or so, when his next stroke of luck occurred. You'll understand that, much as everybody liked Jimmy and did their best for him, you can't make a system of dry-nursing foolproof. Not that Lorimore was a fool, but you could never get him to believe that what went on in his Department mattered.'

'And did it?' asked Lady Adela brightly.

'Very rarely,' said Sir Thomas. 'But there came a time when it did. His particular guardian angel was away, and Jimmy got his papers in a devil of a mess, with the result that he put the wrong papers before the wrong man, and incidentally exposed the biggest scandal the Civil Service had ever known. Of course, it was hushed up.'

'Of course,' murmured Derringer judicially.

'Oh, quite,' retorted Sir Thomas. 'But Jimmy was a marked man: marked for removal, because his chiefs felt that if he went away he would forget all about it; and for promotion, because his friends wanted to do him a good turn. You see, luck had set in for Jimmy.'

'I see,' said Rowley; 'and how did they manage it?'

'Easily. They sent him out to Dudsylvania, with a competent staff and an ornamental chief, to put the finances of that dilapidated State in order.'

'And did he?' asked Derringer slyly.

'No, as it happened, he did n't. But he would have if he'd had time. His chief would have got a G. C. B., and he would have got his C. B. in the usual way. There's a systematic way of doing these things, is n't there, Derringer?'

'Oh, quite,' said that diplomatist hurriedly.

'As our old friend says, "Quite"! But they did n't give Jimmy time. The people of Dudsylvania chose the moment of Jimmy's visit to start a revolution, and — luck again — the biggest scoundrel in the country took refuge under Jimmy's bed, and was eventually got out of the country as one of Jimmy's secretaries. There's luck for you!'

'But I thought you said he was a scoundrel?' murmured Rowley.

'Politically, only politically!' explained Sir Thomas. 'Socially he was very wealthy. Stambulescov — that was the chap's name; I expect you've all heard of him — was tremendously grateful, and, persuading Jimmy to resign from the Treasury, appointed him his principal private secretary. It was while Jimmy was running Stambulescov's racing-establishment at Newmarket that he met Angela Morbiton.'

'They were engaged, were n't they?' said Derringer.

'Yes, I remember,' exclaimed Lady Adela. 'Was n't there something romantic about the breaking off?'

'There was,' replied our host. 'Jimmy's luck held. On the eve of the wedding Angela changed her mind and went off with old Forfar.'

'Luck indeed!' murmured Derringer.

'You knew Forfar?' asked Sir Thomas.

'I knew his wife!' said Derringer.

'Of course, Jimmy did n't know his luck at the time, but Stambulescov opportunely fell ill, and dying left Jimmy £20,000 and no end of business to settle. When he'd cleared everything up Jimmy painted several towns red, and invested the remains in a friend's rubber plantations — that was in 1906 or 1907. Damn-fool thing to do,

of course, but it was Jimmy, and he came out in the boom year a rich man, took a nice little place in the country, and did himself and his friends uncommonly well. And, really, I think that's about all.'

'But you said he was lucky to die when he did!' said Lady Adela.

'So he was,' retorted Sir Thomas. 'You see, when he came out of rubber he put his money in the Guarantee Liberator Victory Insurance Company, and on the day after the dinner at which he died it was rumored in the City that the directorate of that famous company had sailed for Bolivia. Consequently Jimmy never knew that he was practically a pauper.'

'So you see,' murmured Derringer slyly to Lady Adela, 'there really is such a thing as luck.'

'Don't be silly,' said Lady Adela.

A CHINESE LITANY OF ODD NUMBERS¹

BY HILAIRE BELLOC

THE NINE NINES, OR NOVENAS

The Nine Deplorable Social Habits

Drunkenness
Dirt
Shuffling
The loud voice
Scratching
Unpunctuality
Peevishness
Spitting
Repeated jests

The Nine Admirable Social Habits

Relieving of tension

Courteous attention
Discreet mention
Tenacious retention
Assiduous recension
Wise abstention
Calculated prevention
Tactful intervention
A sense of dimension

The Nine Follies

To think oneself immortal
To think investments secure
To take convention for friendship
To expect a reward for right-doing
To imagine that the rich regard you as an equal
To continue to drink after you have

¹From the *New Statesman* (London Independent weekly), January 31