

THE  
OPENING BALL

OF

The Lindell Hotel.

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BY

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# The Great Lindell Ball.

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SHODDY.—\* \* Vide "*The Russian Ball.*"

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You may fancy King Charles at some Court Fancy Ball,  
The date you may fix  
In sixteen sixty-six,  
In the room built by Inigo Jones at Whitehall.

*Ingoldsby Legends.*

And bright  
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.

*Byron.*

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Now listen, dear reader, a story I tell,  
Of the ball that took place at the Lindell Hotel ;  
The structure, itself, is an ornament fair  
To the city to which it belongs, I declare.

And, allow me to say,

That at this present day,

Speaking now in a pure architectural way,  
That in planning, and carving, and laying the stones,  
Was a work that was worthy of Inigo Jones,

(Said Inigo being an architect true, 10

Who flourished in London 1632).

To inaugurate this undertaking so great,  
Was decidedly proper to give a great fête.

So the talk of the town,  
 'Mong the great and the small,  
 Was of nothing excepting  
 This elegant ball.

The ladies—the darlings—with long, anxious faces,  
 Selected their dresses, their ribbons and laces,  
 And the thought of their life, 20  
 And the chief of their cares,  
 Was the dread that another's  
 Were finer than theirs.

Those sweet ones who daily the hospitals throng,  
 Said “The patients will certainly now get along,  
 “For, dear me, the soldiers  
 “Have now left their beds,  
 “And do not require  
 “That bathing of heads,  
 “Or nick-nacks to eat, 30  
 “Or a whisper or tear,  
 “That renders ourselves  
 “So uncommonly dear.”

Such making of dresses and ripping of skirts,  
 Left many a husband with buttonless shirts,  
 And rents in his stockings  
 Enormous to view,  
 And perhaps in his inexpressibles, too.

It was worthy of note  
 How the rumors did float— 40  
 That a man must have frills round the tail of his coat ;  
 That rich Mrs. Dingdong had sent far away  
 For a silk that was trimmed with point applique ;  
 That Clara had jewels that made Helen's poor,  
     And rived in brightness  
     The famed Koh-i-noor ;  
 And the ball-talk I mention was greater by far  
 Than the march of the army, or fate of the war.

One evening I called,  
     With a lady to spend, 50  
 She being to me a particular friend,  
 And in hopes that I'd make an agreeable call,  
     By way of suggestion,  
     I first put the question ;  
 And asked *her* opinion concerning the ball.

Dear me ! oh ! dear me !  
 It was gushing to see  
 How she lengthened her face, <sup>60</sup>  
 And turned up her nose ;  
 Then, with fearful grimace,  
 Gave a twirl with her clothes ;  
 Her back-bone grew straight,  
 And as stiff as could be,  
 And *shoddy* ! oh SHODDY ! oh SHODDY ! said she.

She uttered these words  
 In such heart-rending tone,  
 That I actually dreaded  
 Myself there alone.

But meekly I turned up my orbits on high,  
 And "What's shoddy?" I asked her, by way of reply. 70

"Why shoddy," she said,  
 "You most ignorant man,  
 "Its diamonds and dresses,  
 "The whole of that clan  
 "Who have made *piles* of greenbacks,  
 "Have money to lend  
 "And money to splurge on,  
 "And money to spend;  
 "Who love to buy jewels,  
 "And horses and wine-- 86  
 "Why there's Mistress X—,  
 "Next neighbor of mine,  
 "Who year before last  
 "Was as poor as could be,  
 "Now, see how she dresses,  
 "Yes,—finer than me."

Then I ventured an answer—I said it quite loud—  
 Then shoddy, dear madam,  
 Will *go* with the crowd;  
 And you'll find in the end it will happen somehow, 90

That the *world* will make shoddy  
 Its stateliest bow,  
 And that shoddy will go to the great Lindell Ball,  
 Enjoying the supper,  
 The dancing and all ;  
 And shoddy will ride in a carriage so fine,  
 And wear the great diamonds,  
 And drink the best wine ;  
 But if I were going to any such place,  
 It would certainly be with the very best grace.

*Secure in position,*  
 By virtue of *good,*  
 Secure in my footing,  
 By virtue of blood,  
 Secure of my standing  
 'Mong women and men,  
 That I'd stand among shoddy most proudly, and then  
 While I talked to my neighbor,  
 'Tho shoddy he be,  
 I'd feel that poor shoddy  
 Could never hurt me.

Then the lady arose, pleaded pains in her head,  
 Muttered something like "common," and backed  
 off to bed.

Not only the great fish,  
 But all the small fry,  
 Could talk 'bout the ball  
 'Till the subject was dry.

And I heard one in shrilly, sharp accents exclaim,  
 "Yes, my ma's a going, but dressed very plain ;  
 "For you know in a crowd if you're splendidly fixed  
 "Your taken, 'ma says so, for one of the mixed ;  
     " And these managers, bowing  
     " To new fangled folks,  
     " Have forbade aristocracy  
     " Bonnets and cloaks,  
 " And have laid down the rule, if you come to the  
     ball,  
 " You must come there in costume, or else not at all."

But if the excitement had run very high,  
 It rose to a frenzy as ball-time drew nigh ; 30  
 Many ladies were seen in perpetual run,  
 Ascertaining if dresses were soon to be done.  
     Every man in the street,  
     Whom you'd happen to meet,  
 Carried queer looking bundles, so large and so light,  
 That single men followed to peep at the sight.  
     And bureaus were toss'd  
     By damsels forlorn,  
     For articles lost,  
     But yet to be worn ;  
 While great Mrs. Thing-a-my, clean as a pin,  
 Sat covered with towels tucked under her chin,  
 To prevent any stain on her shoulders so fair,  
 So finely be-powdered and painted with care,

While there  
 On a chair,  
 In conspicuous place,  
 Was a dress of silk velvet,  
 All trimmed with point lace.

Yes, all things were there,  
 But, gracious me! where

Was the artist who promised to do up her hair?

Hark! he comes—a ring at the bell;

But a horrible story he has to tell.

The RATS and the MICE to wear in her head,  
 Could not be procured 'mong the living or dead,  
 And the case standing thus, a WIND-MILL instead,  
 Was offered in lieu, with a WATER-FALL near,  
 In which Mrs. Thing a-my had to appear.

If I chose I could tell you of powder and paint, <sup>60</sup>  
 And of other things, too, which would much shock  
 a saint,

Of ladies instructing themselves—how to faint;  
 Of mothers, forseeing undoubted success,  
 As beautiful daughters appeared in full dress;  
 And fathers (fond parents) predicting each one,  
 That *the* man of *the* ball would be surely *his* son;  
 And of rouge and pomatum, and tailors bills too,  
 Which last if their paid—well that's nothing to you,  
 Let us pass to the ball room without more ado.

## THE BALL.

See, myriad lights are gleaming  
    Along the spacious halls,  
And gorgeous banners streaming  
    From all the frescoed walls,  
And myriad feet press lightly  
    The velvet of the floor,  
While lovely eyes beam brightly  
    Throughout each corridor.  
From many a snow-white forehead,  
    From many a raven curl,  
The rainbow tints are flashing 80  
    From diamond and from pearl.  
The jewelled rays are shedding  
    Their lustre far and nigh,  
As stars when night is spreading,  
    Beam sparkling in the sky,  
And music sweet is stealing  
    O'er beauty in its bloom,  
Implanting many a feeling  
    To end but in the tomb.

But the crowd is increasing, the couples advance,  
Loud, louder the music; on, on, with the dance,

See, the cheek that before when the ball but began,  
 So striking in paleness, it almost seem'd wan,  
 Now flushes with pleasure, excitement or pain,  
 Then slowly relapses to pallor again.

Then the light of those eyes,  
 That did feeling inspire,  
 See their brightness arise  
 Till they flash into fire.  
 Then low words are spoken, 90  
 And fair hands are pressed,  
 And many vows broken,  
 And sins are confessed.

In a *musings* mood  
 Alone I stood  
 At the head of the supper-room, where  
 Unnoticed I gazed,  
 Myself all amazed,  
 At the beauty and loveliness there.  
 As the splendid throng  
 Moved slowly along,  
 An elegant woman passed by,  
 In silks and in laces ; while jewels most rare,  
 Though beaming resplendent in light golden hair,  
 Could not rival in brightness her eye ;  
 And she ope'd her fair lips to her partner to speak,

While I saw, as he answered, a flush on her cheek,  
 When somebody close to me said,  
 "She's *got* sixteen *young ones*, perhaps even more,  
 Her husband's a 'buster,' and keeps a big store,  
 But now, he's at home in his bed."

So I turned around,  
 And there, near the ground,  
 A queer little boy in a uniform found.  
 I laughed as I ask'd him his name.

He said with a whistle, "you know who I am,  
 "I belong to the army, my uncle's called 'SAM,'  
 "And my sister's a lady called 'Fame,'

"In our family belief

"One item is chief,

"And 'SAM' says, he don't care who knows it,  
 "That if you earn greenbacks by working for him,  
 "You can go where you choose in *respectable* trim,  
 "With very few folks to oppose it;

"But if you make money and then put on airs,  
 "Like Tittlebat Titmouse in dyeing his hairs,  
 "And puff up your soul and your body,

"Then the really genteel

"Will soon make you feel

"The meaning of that word called SHODDY!"

It would take me all time  
 To pass into rhyme

All the crash, and the crush, and the turmoil and din  
When the *regular* eaters of suppers came in,

Nor can I portray

The splendid array

That the tables presented, not only to eat,

But whose gorgeous *appearance* itself was a treat.

There the turkies were boned,

And built high into towers,

And the tables all groaned,

With fruit and with flowers.

But the manner of folding those napkins—dear me !

Such gor-gi-ous contortions, I never did see ;

And the artist who furnished a work so sublime

Should be rolled in a napkin, and kept for all time,

There stood every dainty the gourmand could wish,

The charlotte, the oysters, the coffee, the fish,

The ice-cream, the jelly, the pickles and cakes,

And salads, and flowers, and luscious sweet grapes,

And fruit of all climes and the game of the season.

If the epicure there

Was not suited in fare,

It were certainly hard to discover the reason.

“ Now,” I said, “ Here’s a treat—

“ How the Shoddy will eat,

“ While, for delicate feeding, I know very well,

“ I, genteel from Shoddy, can easily tell ;”

But, I say it with pain,  
That I looked there in vain,  
For I could not distinguish in eating or drinking  
The one from the other. While thus I was thinking,  
The Belle of the Ball,  
In beauty serene,  
Passed down through the hall,  
And she looked like a queen.

Her eyes shone as purely as twin stars of night ;  
Her step, tho' 'twas haughty, was gracefully light ;  
While purity's self was enshrined in her face,  
She bowed her sweet neck with so matchless a grace,  
And so charmingly parted her lips when she smiled,  
That the women all envied—the men, they went wild.

How I wish I could mention  
This beautiful maid ;  
The truth is—I'm married,  
Therefore—I'm afraid.

But time and my language would fail me to tell  
Of the night of that ball at the Lindell Hotel.  
I care not who went there, they all must confess  
That the management claimed and deserved the  
success.

And I think on reflection you'll easily see  
That such a result could not otherwise be.

The mind of man must surely be diseased,  
 Who finds no pleasure through his senses pleased ;  
 Then, first of all, on this eventful night,  
 What combinations pleased the sense of sight.

In any case,  
 For such a ball,  
 A proper space  
 Is all in all.

And when each room is gaily frescoed o'er—  
 When costly carpets cover every floor,  
 And the rich damask with its circling folds,  
 In dark'ning shades a sort of splendor holds—  
 When polished mirrors, which, at every turn,  
 Flash back the rays from myriad lights that burn—  
 When velvets rich, adorned with rarest gems,  
 On noble brows form costly diadems,  
 When graceful women and brave men pass by—  
 Why, surely, this should please a cynic's *eye*.  
 If merry laugh, or sweeter whispers near,  
 With strains of music, do not please the *ear*,  
 There's but one conclusion to come to, alas !  
 That the man is an egotist—which means, an ass.  
 And if the epicure, who carries his heart  
 In that large recess of a lower part—  
 Whose feats of *taste* can only equal those  
 Digestive acts which all his "feeds" disclose—

Could not be tempted by the viands rare,  
In many forms profusely lavished there,

Then all I can say,

Be he who he may,

Just get up a ball without further delay ;

But *until that is done*,

This ball is THE one.

And I think all agree it is surely the best

Of the kind that has ever come off in the West.