# London News and Gossip.

BY WILLIAM TRUE HAWTHORNE.

LONDON, Feb. 19.—The life story of William Whiteley, "the universal provider," who was shot to death in his great department store after a private interview with a young man claiming to be his son, is that of a man born and bred on a farm, but whose exceptional native abilities brought him to a high pitch of success in the business world. The names of many English firms are known all over the globe, but in this case it was the individual who had gained wide fame, and William Whiteley came to be regarded as the very embodiment of all that was enterprising in his own domain of commerce. It was his boast that he could supply anything ordered at his establishment, and many were the attempts made to challenge the accuracy of his statement. An elephant, a second-hand coffin, and, most curious of all, a pint of fleas were among the "goods" he was called on to provide, and in each case the order was duly filled. "I don't say the fleas were in stock," he would say when interrogated on this point, "but they were procured."

When as a lad he came from Yorkshire to London to seek his fortune, Whiteley did not even have a ten-pound note at his command. After gaining experience as a draper's assistant, he rented a small shop, engaged two young lady clerks, and in 1863 took down his shutters. The first to enter the shop was a lady. "Am I your first customer?" she asked. "You are, madam," replied the young tradesman. The lady thereupon suggested that she might offer up a prayer for the success of the business, and it was thus that the great house of Whiteley was founded. About this time Whiteley formed an intimacy with George Rayner, a young financial agent a—friendship which had for its tragic sequel the death of Whiteley, for it was Rayner's reputed son, Horace George Rayner, who committed the the crime and who claims that his real name is Cecil Whiteley and that the victim was his father. Young Rayner refuses to go into particulars pending his araignment, but an old friend of the elder Rayner and of Whiteley has thrown some light on the mystery. He relates that many years ago Whiteley and Rayner were acquainted with two young ladies (sisters), and the two frequently went to Brighton together to visit the girls. It was over this acquaintanceship that a quarrel arose and brought the friendship of the two men to an abrupt end. An accusation by Whiteley against Rayner led to a threatened suit for slander, but the matter never came into court. "The exact nature of the quarrel is not easy to state in plain words," says the old friend of the principals. "Suffice it to say that Rayner threatened Whiteley with an action for slander in respect of a charge which the latter made against one of the young ladies and Rayner. I do not know exactly what connection this may have with the claim the murderer is said to have made that his name is Cecil Whiteley, but it may have been that when he called on Whiteley he threatened him with some disclosure in connection with the old scandal I refer to."

Whiteley's attorneys deny that any such person as Cecil Whiteley exists. The family, they declare, never heard of such a person as the assailant made himself out to be. They are entirely ignorant of the motives which actuated the commission of the tragedy. The police have possession of a package of documents found in Rayner's rooms which, it is believed, relate to the hidden story, but, of course, they will be withheld from the public until Rayner is put on trial. So far the only clew is a slip of paper found on Rayner after his attempted suicide on which was penciled the following declaration: "To All Whom I May Concern—William Whiteley is my father, and has brought upon himself and me a double fatality by reason of his own refusal of a request perfectly reasonable.—R. I. P."

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Princess Trixie disappointed King Edward and the royal household by failing to respond to a summons to appear at Buchingham Palace and display her thinking powers. Instead of Trixie, there came a card of excuse to the effect that the vetrinary had advised that the engagement for the evening be cancelled. Trixie had caught a cold and symptoms of pneumonia made it imperative that she stay indoors. So the King and Queen had to leave for Paris without having seen Princes Trixie do her stunt in a thinking part. It is hoped, though, that Trixie will have recovered in time to keep a date with a select committee of the Society of Psychical Research—the ghost hunters, in other words—for the purpose of demonstrating the powers she possesses in the matter of thought transference. A prize of 100 pounds is offered to one discovers by what means Trixie does her thinking, and her owner stands in no awe of the distinguished investigaters, so confident is he that she will baffle them. It is really wonderful intelligence that Princess Trixie exhibits. She does all that performing horses have done before, and a great deal more. Trixie will tell you how many people are in a box at the theatre, and, privileged by her sex, will also decide which of the ladies she considers the most handsome. Her choice is expressed by watching the color of the lady's dress, selecting the right handkerchief from a mixed assortment on the stage. She spells words of several letters by picking out the blocks on which they are painted from a heap. She does the same with figures when put to a test in simple subtraction. Some suggest occult means on Trixie's part; others suspect a system of signals, rather than thought transference from trainer to horse. However, Trixie's owner does not trouble to combat any theory you may suggest. "Take them as tricks if you like," says he, with a flavor in his accent of the Highlands, where he and Trixie were born and bred; "they are better tricks than any other horse can do, and if the profound gentlemen of the society can discover her secret to the satisfaction of public opinion they win my hundred."

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Next to the Thaw trial, the most engaging piece on the boards of human drama is having its presentation at Vienna. A great sensation has been caused by a scandal concerning M. Polonyi, the Hungarian minister of justice. The accusation against the minister has caused a great agitation, and Emperor Franz Josef is terribly annoyed. It is alleged that while the Emperor and the Hungarian Parliament were at loggerheads recently M. Polonyi induced Baroness Bella Schoenburger, an intimate friend of Count Paar, the Emperor's adjutant general, to spy out what his majesty was saying about the Hungarian party, and at the same time to spread in court circles news from the opposition camp calculated to influence the Emperor. For this service M. Polonyi promised the baroness 2,000 pounds but as the money was not forthcoming she complained to M. Rudnay, director of the Budapest police. The baroness is said to have compromising letters from M. Polonyi, which he was anxious to get back, some of them being of a nature to bring disaster on Hungary should their contents be made known. She refused to return them, and when the baroness last called on the minister he, thinking she had the telltale letters with her, resorted to violence, and after a struggle overpowered and searched her, but failed to find the documents. This M. Polonyi admits having done "for the welfare of the country." The baroness tried to commit suicide, and thus the wretched story got into print. The Hungarian government issued a statement declaring that while it was known that secret information was being received from Vienna, they did not know to what lengths M. Poloyni had gone to obtain it. They requested him to resign, but he refuses to do so, and it seems likely that the entire cabinet will resign and will be reconstructed without M. Poloyni.

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Notice is hereby given that the partnership heretofore existing between James Paulos, Daniel Mehalos, and Louis Mehalos, has been dissolved, the said Louis Mehalos retiring and James Paulos and Daniel Mehalos continuing the business as co-partners.

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2-19-6t

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