"Well, he went on in that same strange way nigh on three weeks, and we did not know so much as the name of the sick man. Just as Ned was going about again all well, we thought the sight of him might bring the stranger to his recollections. So Ned went and sat by the bed-side till he woke. It was getting near Christmas, and we wanted the poor man to be well enough to enjoy the time with us. When he opened his eyes Ned held out his hand, and, says he—

"'Give you joy, comrade. Ay, I see you'll be more than a match for me the next turn we have, particular when 'tis grass we stand on.'

"With that the tears came into his poor dim eyes, and catching Ned's hand he said:

"'I remember now. Were none saved but me?'

"Ned was fearful to tell him the truth, in case it might make him worse, so he just laughed and said:

"'You've been so long sleeping off the effects of your wetting, that they're all gone and left you. But 'tis time we know'd your name, stranger, if it please you to tell.'

"'Gascoigne,' he said—'Richard Gascoigne. Has no one written to my mother?'

"'How should we,' says Ned, 'when we did not know where she lived.'

"With that he got up to come away, for he was afraid if he stayed he'd tell himself out about his shipmates, only three of whose bodies we ever found.

"He'd just got to the door when the poor man wanted him to come back, but before he could turn about the parson came into the room, and Ned got away.

"We never knew the particulars for certain, but always believe to this day that that young man was no common sailor.

"The parson used to come and sit with him for hours together, and a fine lot of letters they wrote between them. But we were never the wiser for any of their scholarship-doings but in one thing, and that won't be forgot round here for many's the long day.

"The Christmas day we were all standing about the church door, shaking hands and wishing each other a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, when the little gate that led from the Parsonage lawn into the churchyard was opened, and a lady came among us, so beautiful dressed and so beautiful herself, that we all stopped talking to look at her.

"I'm before my story, though, for I should have told you that the stranger had gone to the Parsonage as soon as he could be moved.

"Well, the lady came right forward into the midst of the crowd, and she said:

"'Which of all you brave, kind men, is Edward Smeeth?'

"Ned was just behind me, and seemed ready to slink away, but I pushed him 'fore, and says I:

"'If it please your ladyship, that's him.'

"Well, Ned know'd manners too well to run away then, so there he stood, blushing like a girl.

"The lady took his hand, and seemed going to make a speech; but she had only just begun her thanks when her heart rose in her throat, and the tears stood in her eyes, and she only said 'God bless you,' and put a little box and a purse into Ned's hand, and then kissed his great rough hand as if 't had been a baby's face. Ned seemed struck all of a heap. He looked at the things she had given him, and turned his hand as if he expected to see a mark where her beautiful lips had touched.

"Well, as the lady could not speak for herself, the Parson up and told us all the sense of it. How that there was a grand place up to London, with a many grand people that subscribed among them, to reward them that saved life.

"'And proud,' says the parson, 'proud I am that such a token has come into my parish.'

"He said a many kind and good words, and then told Ned to open the little box and show what was in it. There, sure enough, was a beautiful medal, with Ned's name, and the name of the man he saved, and some Latin words, which the Parson said was that we should never give up trying to save life, for perhaps a little spark of hope might remain, though all seemed gone.

"Ah! here comes Ned, he'll be proud to show your honours the medal."

So we walked to Ned's cottage hard by, and were delighted to find that, though seven long years had past—years that had robbed him of his fair young wife, and laid her with her new-born babe in an early tomb—his dark eyes would brighten and his fine form look taller as he exhibited that well-earned medal from the Royal Humane Society.

PENLEE.

CHEVALIER D'EON.

CONSIDERABLE sensation is now being aroused across the water among the friends of the Alliance—whose number, I need hardly say, is legion—by the republication of the pseudo memoirs of the Chevalier d'Eon, under the taking title of "Un Hermaphrodite." As the hero puts on female clothing to delude King George III., because he had indulged in a criminal intrigue with good Queen Charlotte while yet a princess, it is almost superfluous to hint that such a book ought to find no hearing in this country. I see, however, that the "Saturday Review" speaks of it in terms of commendation, and apparently regards it as authentic; and therefore, in order to prevent any of my readers flying to it for highly-spiced and unwholesome information about this enigmatical character, I purpose to tell the story of the Chevalier in my own fashion, and rub off the gilt of romance that may still adhere to it.

The subject of this sketch was born on Oct. 5, 1728, at Tonnerre, in Burgundy, and received at the baptismal font the names of Charlotte Geneviève-Louise-Augusta-Andrée-Timothée d'Eon de Beaumont. His father, who belonged to the magistracy, had him brought up as a boy, and intended him to study jurisprudence. He was sent to Paris, where he studied at the College Mazarin, and was eventually admitted to the degrees of Doctor in civil and canon law. After

being called to the bar of the parliament of Paris, he wrote several political pamphlets, which gained him the acquaintance of the Prince de Conti, then head of Louis XV.'s secret diplomatic cabinet. The prince proposed to the king that D'Eon should accompany to Russia in the capacity of secretary, Chevalier Douglas, who was sent to Petersburg in 1757 to effect a reconciliation between the French and Russian courts. This was a difficult task, owing to the animosity Count Bestucheff, the High Chancellor of Russia, had vowed against France. The secret envoys contrived to form an understanding with the Vice-Chancellor, Count Woronzoff, and an intimate correspondence was set on foot between Louis XV. and the Empress Elizabeth, the letters passing through the hands of Woronzoff and D'Eon. On November 5, 1757, the Empress of Russia acceded to the convention concluded on March 21 of the same year between France, Austria, and Sweden, with reference to the exercise of the guarantees of the peace of Westphalia, in so far as they related to Germany. She acceded to it as a principal party, that is to say, bound herself by the same engagements as the other contracting parties. The accession of Russia was the more important, because that power had just been on the point of concluding an alliance with the courts of London and Berlin. D'Eon, who was selected to convey these happy tidings to Versailles, received from Louis XV. his portrait on a valuable snuff-box, which contained in addition an order on the royal treasury, and a commission as Lieutenant of Dragoons. He started again immediately for St. Petersburg, where, in the interim, the Marquis d'Hôpital had succeeded Chevalier Douglas. Both gentlemen concerted with the ambassador of the Empress of Austria the means they should employ to disgrace Count Bestucheff, and they were perfectly successful. Bestucheff was arrested by the orders of Elizabeth, while presiding at a council in the palace; all his papers were examined, and in his cabinet a memorandum was found of the suspicious persons he proposed to get rid of, among them being Douglas and d'Eon. After this operation, General Apraxin, although commanding the army, was recalled; General Tottleben shared the same fate, and the troops, being placed under other leaders, gained several victories over the King of Prussia. D'Eon, one of the most active agents in this revolution, returned to France in 1758, and in 1761 took part in the campaign of Germany as captain of dragoons, and aide-de-camp to Maréchal de Broglie. At Ultrop he was severely wounded in the head and hip, while at Osterwyk, he charged with such impetuosity a Prussian battalion, consisting of 800 men, that he compelled it to lay down its arms.

On the re-establishment of peace, D'Eon accompanied the Duc de Nivernois to London, as Secretary to the Embassy. He continued from that capital his secret correspondence with the king's privy council, and was the soul of the Embassy, whose nominal chief, as Walpole tells us, displayed such exaggerated confidence and friendship for him, that it trenched on the ridiculous. M. de Nivernois, having taken the first opportunity to return to France, D'Eon continued to direct affairs at London under the title of resident, and as the arrival of the new Envoy was delayed, he was eventually nominated Minister-Plenipotentiary. He had already rendered himself so agreeable to the Court of St. James, that George III. had selected him, though contrary to usage, to bear to France the ratification of the treaty, and on this occasion Louis XV. presented him with the cross of St. Louis. So much good fortune appears, however, to have turned the head of the young Secretary to the Embassy, whose merit and literary capacity Walpole himself condescends to recognise: from this moment he forgot the modesty he had always displayed in his language and conduct. Moreover, some reverses happened to him, when the successor-elect of the Duc de Nivernois arrived in London. This gentleman was the Count de Guerchy, who had distinguished himself in the Flanders campaign, under Maréchal de Saxe, and in the lately terminated war, contributed no little to the victory of Hastembeck. Walpole describes him as an agreeable soldier, possessing no extraordinary capacity, but great knowledge of the world, indefatigable zeal and polished manners, but unfortunately under the supreme control of his wife, a very ugly and insignificant person, although extremely sensible and most faithful to her husband—possibly *pour cause*. Guerchy was not at all disposed to grant D'Eon that influence he had enjoyed under his predecessor, and from the first moment of his arrival made the secretary feel his dependent position. D'Eon had not received his salary regularly, while the funds intended for his superiors had arrived most punctually. Hence, in order to meet the expenses entailed on him by his title of Minister-Plenipotentiary, he had spent in three months, and without any authority, 50,000 francs of the money intended to provide for the establishment of the Count de Guerchy, who made some insulting remarks to him on the subject. He also annoyed him about pettifogging trifles,—as for instance the subscription to sundry newspapers. D'Eon asserted, moreover, that, as he had held the title of Minister-Plenipotentiary, he had a right to retain it, even after de Guerchy had handed in his credentials, and alleged with some show of reason, that he could not appear as a simple secretary at a court to which he had been accredited as minister.

These squabbles appear really to have disturbed this ambitious man's senses. About this time an adventurer, of the name of Treyssac de Vergy, arrived in London, and D'Eon took it into his head that he had been sent expressly to assassinate him. When dining with Lord Halifax, he misunderstood the meaning of an expression made by the host, owing to his imperfect knowledge of English. He imagined that Lord Halifax threatened to break the peace of which he, D'Eon, had carried the ratifications to Versailles, and rushed with such fury on the ambassador, that it was found necessary to call in a magistrate, who arrested D'Eon, while Treyssac de Vergy obtained a warrant against him for a breach of the peace. The French court recalled D'Eon, who refused to return to Paris, and the Versailles cabinet was

compelled to notify officially to the British Government that D'Eon no longer held any office at London. He was consequently denied admission to St. James's Palace. Furious at what had happened to him, and impelled by vanity as much as by a desire for revenge, D'Eon published at London a stout quarto volume under the title of "Letters, Memoirs, and Private Negotiations of the Chevalier d'Eon." This volume comprised the narrative of the various operations which had been entrusted to him, and of his disputes with M. de Guerchy, as well as his correspondence with the Duc de Praslin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs: the friendly letters he had himself received from the Duc de Nivernois, and—what was the height of imprudence on his part—the correspondence of his friend St. Foix, clerk in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which the latter indulged in many biting remarks on his superiors. To these relations were added confidential letters between the Ducs de Nivernois and de Praslin, in which D'Eon was alluded to in kind and flattering terms, while the Count de Guerchy was treated with contempt; though it

was allowed that this "poor Guerchy" was the most proper man they could find at the moment. The book produced an immense sensation, which was lessened neither by the attempts to suppress the edition, nor by an answer published under the title—"Examination of the Letters, &c., of the Chevalier D'Eon, in a Letter to M. N." M. de Guerchy's colleagues in London having taken his part and demanded satisfaction, the Solicitor-General received orders to prosecute D'Eon for a libel, while in France the idea was momentarily entertained of carrying him off by force from London and imprisoning him in the Bastille. It is said that Louis XV., having heard of the plan, gave D'Eon a hint to be on his guard. Driven to desperation by the loss of his place and his salary, D'Eon threatened to publish the whole of his secret correspondence with Louis XV., which the monarch prevented by granting him a pension of 12,000 livres, the patent for which, entirely in the royal handwriting, was thus drawn up:

In consequence of the services which the Sieur d'Eon has rendered me, both in Russia and with my armies, I deign to grant him an annual pension of 12,000 livres,

which I will order to be paid to him punctually every six months, in whatsoever country he may be (except during a time of war, among my enemies), and will continue to do so until I think proper to give him some post whose appointments are larger than his pension. *At Versailles, April* 1, 1760. Louis.

At the commencement of the year 1770 the rumour spread from one to the other that d'Eon was a woman. Several years elapsed before anybody was willing to believe it, but after a while few could be found to contradict it. It is incorrect that an order intimated to D'Eon by the French government that he was to assume feminine attire gave rise to these rumours; on the contrary, the rumours occasioned the order, which D'Eon did not obey, indeed, till some years later. It is probable that these rumours originated, in the first instance, from the names given to D'Eon at the baptismal font, and by many traits of his character, which had something feminine about them; it is also possible that nothing in his face, stature, or mode of life contradicted them; and that, moreover, the numerous enemies he had made carefully propagated them. Still there is considerable mystery as to the motives that could determine the French government to order d'Eon to assume female attire, as well as the reasons that led him to obey the order. If it be admitted that Louis XV. considered this mystification the best way of attenuating the effect of certain indiscretions committed by D'Eon, and that a feminine garb appeared to D'Eon himself an excellent protection against the numerous enmities of which he was the object,—I cannot, for all that, refrain from a suspicion that there must have been some other cause which compelled him to wear female clothing, and it may have been for the purpose of lulling suspicions which might be aroused in some minds, were it not for this supposition. The thing was not absolutely believed, but the number of those who took D'Eon for a woman was far larger than that of the sceptics, and, during the latter years of his life, there were very few who doubted the fact of his being a woman.

An immense number of wagers was made on this vexed question, and it is a very remarkable fact that the French were persuaded D'Eon was a woman, while in England he was persistently stated to be a man. These bets gave cause to several trials, and in 1777 the Court of King's Bench had to settle the case of Surgeon Hayes *v.* Baker Jacques in this matter. The latter had received from the adverse party fifteen guineas, on the undertaking that he would pay him back five hundred on the day it was proved that D'Eon was a woman. The jury considered the testimony produced by Hayes so conclusive that they gave a verdict in his favour. Other trials of the same nature were stopped by a declaration of the court that wagers of this description were contrary to the law; and it was asserted at the time that this judicial decision produced England a saving of 75,000*l.*, which otherwise must have been paid to the French bettors. D'Eon declared his determination to have no act or part in the wagers laid as to his real sex. He left England, and proceeded to France, whither the Count de Vergennes had summoned him. He at first appeared in man's clothes, was kindly welcomed, but soon received from Louis XVI. an order to reassume his female attire,—an order which that king, with his strict ideas on matters of morality and decency, would hardly have given unless he had been convinced that D'Eon was really a woman.

D'Eon at first refused obedience, but finally consented to what was asked of him, and went about everywhere in petticoats, with the Cross of St. Louis on his bosom, and calling himself the Chevalière d'Eon. As all doubts had not been removed as to his true sex, this *travestissement* attracted upon him many jests, and even challenges, which the government found no other means of putting a stop to, than by imprisoning him for some time in the citadel of Dijon. D'Eon left his prison in 1783, and then returned to England, whence it appears that he maintained a correspondence with Baron de Bréteuil, at that time Minister of Foreign Affairs. When the revolution broke out in France, D'Eon hastened back, and sent in a petition to the National Assembly, in which he asked leave to resume his rank in the army, for "his heart revolted against cap and petticoats." This offer being declined, he returned to England, and lost his pension by being placed on the list of emigrés. He was compelled to part with his library and jewels, and fell into such a state of distress, that he was reduced to the necessity of making a livelihood of the celebrity attaching to his name: in 1795, he set up a fencing school, in which he gave lessons dressed in female clothing. D'Eon was a very fine fencer, and gave several public assaults of arms with the Chevalier de St. Georges, who was considered the first swordsman of the day. It is, therefore, probable that his very necessities prevented D'Eon from lifting the veil of that mystery, which urgent considerations caused him to favour at an earlier period of life. In the correspondence of Anna Seward, there is a passing allusion to D'Eon, whom that lady saw at Lichfield. With her tendency to romance, the once fair Anna tells us that she (or rather he), appeared to possess a noble and undaunted spirit, and her (his) martial appearance, activity, and strength were marvellous in a person of the age of sixty-seven.

When old age and its sad train of maladies and infirmities began to press heavily on D'Eon, he only subsisted on the scanty charity bestowed by a few rare friends. In 1809, M. de Flassan, who was thoroughly initiated in all relating to French diplomacy, still firmly believed that D'Eon was a woman, but the mystery was cleared up at his death, which took place on May 21, 1810. The autopsy which was made by Dr. Copeland, in the presence of Mr. Adam Wilson, and Father Elysée, first surgeon to Louis XVIII., proved that D'Eon was a man. In a work of thirteen volumes, containing a great number of political and historical dissertations, and entitled "Loisirs du Chevalier D'Eon," which he published at Paris, in 1775, not a single allusion is met with to the strange part he consented to play. As I said at the beginning of this article, the Memoir published in D'Eon's name are apocryphal.

Lascelles Wraxall.