

**SQUIRE  
SILCHESTER'S  
WHIM. VOL. II**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649310449

Squire Silchester's whim. Vol. II by Mortimer Collins

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**MORTIMER COLLINS**

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BY

MORTIMER COLLINS.

VOL. II.

LONDON:  
HENRY S. KING & CO.,  
65, CORNHILL, & 12, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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1873.

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## SQUIRE SILCHESTER'S WHIM.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE LODGER AT DYER'S.

*Poet.* Upon your nice mince-pies I've made a sonnet.

*Confectioner.* Thanks. I will make my next mince-pies upon it.

DYER, the confectioner, famous for his tarts, and a dealer also in music and toys, let lodgings when a lodger could be found—which was seldom. However, when a lodger did arrive, he was not badly treated, for Dyer had a deft hand at cookery, and Dyer's wife was one of those brisk and alert little women who can do anything.



Late one Saturday night, when the market-place brawled with bucolic noises, there walked into Dyer's shop a stranger. He was a good-looking fellow, hairless, of any age between thirty and fifty; carried a small valise; and sat down by the counter with a deep sigh. He wore a white necktie, and a long coat, and looked very much like a preaching Puritan.

Mrs. Dyer, anything but puritanical, and indeed with a slight touch of wickedness in her, asked his pleasure.

"Can I have lodgings here?" he said. "I want to stay in these parts for some time, having work to do for the Lord. I desire not to go to profane taverns, where wine and beer are drunk, to the detriment of mankind. I am sure from seeing you, madam, that yours is the estimable establishment I desire; and if you can take me in, I shall, being a stranger, gladly pay you all charges beforehand."

Wherewith our puritanic friend laid on the counter several pieces of gold.

Mrs. Dyer, delighted with the compliment to herself, but more delighted with the guineas, showed him very quickly to her famous front room on the first floor, overlooking the market-place, and with her own fair hands prepared for him tea. He went to bed early—before indeed her husband came home. Mr. Dyer, having beheld palpable gold, thought his wife had acted wisely, and ate his supper of tripe in beatific mood.

The strange lodger had informed Mrs. Dyer that he was the Reverend John Joyce. He was reverend by courtesy. The next morning, Sunday, he lay late in bed, and Dyer, who was organist at the parish church, did not see him. But he told a lady who was parsoness of the parish, that his wife had let her lodgings to a clerical gentleman, and the rumour spread, and there was quite a flutter among the ecclesiastical maidens. And in the afternoon, when the Reverend John Joyce, having recovered from his fatigue, went to church, he was put into a

splendid old-fangled square pew, with quarto prayer-books, and hassocks of vast dimension, and a park paling round it that rendered view of the reading-desk impossible.

The Reverend John Joyce heard scarce any of the Reverend Arundel Saint Osyth's delicate musical flutelike passages. When Saint Osyth began his clerical career, he was one of three curates to an old-fashioned rector of the high-and-dry school, who had hunted in scarlet when he was forty, and who drank port now he was eighty. Old Jack Russell's living was good—two thousand at least; and his humour and piety and tolerance and temper were also good; and he paid his three curates well for boyish clergymen—clergy-boys one might say. All three were proud of their style of reading: all three had diverse styles. The Rector called Saint Osyth *Flute*; he called the second, an Irishman, *Trumpet*; he called the third, a sharp-voiced gentleman *Fife*. To flute or bray or scream the service 's not the