

GASMASK GAZETTEER

Peterborough Station

An examination of a rail depot and associated hotel of reduced glory, its proprietor, and his unwholesome motivations.



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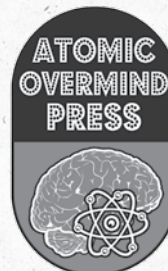
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Introduction

The *Gasmask Gazetteer* is a supplement for *Unhallowed Metropolis*, Revised, of interest to and use by Narrators and players alike. Each instalment of the *Gazetteer* shines a light upon a location in the city of London, 2105 A.D. and the inhabitants thereof and relates to a specific Calling. These places are described in grim detail for use by Narrators seeking locations to include in their games of *Unhallowed Metropolis* and include statistics for important non-player characters. Furthermore, players may find these locations and non-player characters useful in describing the backgrounds of their own characters. Finally, each instalment of the *Gazetteer* concludes with several items intended for the use of players, including new Calling-specific Stunts as well as a number of new combat Stunts, Qualities, Impediments, or equipment of use to any character.

The third instalment of the *Gasmask Gazetteer* investigates the curious goings-on at a rail depot and railway hotel north of London and introduces the hotel proprietor and his staff. This waypoint contains little of interest to most guests, and yet a chosen few may never take their leave once the hotel's owner takes an interest in *them*. A hotel with more doors than rooms will serve to house those who choose to stay the night. This material is supplemented with new Intrigant Stunts for Aristocrats, a single new Flash Thief Stunt for Criminals, and a variety of intriguing new Qualities and Impediments suitable for use by characters of any Calling. The *Gazetteer* concludes with four short appendices on the Loyalty of Service, the State of the Industrialist Class, Trains, and Houses with Secret Passages.

Part One: The Great Northern Railway

In going through a tunnel it is always as well to have the hands and arms disposed for defence so that in the event of an attack the assailant may be immediately beaten back or restrained.

—*The Railway Traveller's Handy Book of Hints, Suggestions, and Advice: before the journey, on the journey, and after the journey, 1862*

London's Great Northern Railway carries passengers from the metropolis through wastelands and some of the remaining fertile land surrounding the metropolis to destinations to the far north. Trains are the only viable method for relatively safe long-distance travel through the wastes, though dangers still abound. Besides the threat of derailment and animate attack outside the confines of the city, there are many unsavoury human elements who prey upon fellow passengers.

The northern line stops in Peterborough, a place of ancient habitation. During the Plague Years, the population of Peterborough



diminished: much of the once verdant fens are now stunted and twisted, as though untouched by the pale sunlight, and the water is dark and noisome, home to strange fauna. Furthermore, the area surrounding Peterborough and the fens is an eerie place, filled with the cries of half-glimpsed creatures. The loss of arable land hurt the city's population, which has never fully recovered, but because of its location near the fens and its pre-Plague prosperity, the city weathered the storm.

As an officially recognized city with a rich heritage and a hub of travel, Peterborough is home to many burgeoning businesses. Some entrepreneurs stubbornly cling to the hope that the population will surge and see great opportunity in locating their business in such a large interchange, but relatively few succeed. The streets are lined with the rundown storefronts of failed ventures.

Eight-foot high walls surround Peterborough, manned by unkempt Deathwatch guards with dark-ringed eyes. The guards rarely see any action and discipline is low. If faced with a large-scale animate attack, the population is instructed to retreat to either the train station, where they will board a special train that only leaves in an emergency, or to proceed to boats which have been prepared

to depart into the fens. Since animates cannot swim, the wetlands quickly swallow them. A sizeable animate attack has not happened in more than a century, but the guards all know that Peterborough would quickly fall if one should occur.

Peterborough has large gates, arguably the best maintained structures in the entire city, save perhaps for the churches. They must be, for if they should fail to open or close, the results would be disastrous. They are guarded, as well, though they never remain open for long. Conductors contact Peterborough gatekeepers via radio to alert them of an approach, as a secondary measure in case changes to the written schedules occur. Switches built into the tracks at a measured distance from the gates also send an electrical signal, which will open the gates in the case of operator failure. The Peterborough railway station was, in fact, the first to implement electrical functionality. The Deathwatch guards who ride on the train usually disembark during the stop, as much to stretch and refresh themselves as to keep guard while passengers and cargo load and unload.

Many of the rail workers for the Great Northern and East Coast Main Lines are actually Deathwatch Penal Corps, but some are civilians who live in Peterborough. Theirs is a hard lot, since they must sometimes travel into the wastes when there is a critical repair needed on a stretch of distant track. The most common method of travel is by small rail cars, which have their own private track in Peterborough and are stored separately in the train station. Travelling by horse or by foot is done where necessary; either method sees the workers move in groups as large and well-armed as they can manage. Severe injuries and even deaths are tragically common. Rail work is physically strenuous at the best of times, consisting of heavy lifting, trench digging, and pounding in stakes, resulting in strained and torn muscles, broken bones, and sometimes lost fingers, toes, or whole limbs. Deaths, when they occur, are often the result of human error, such as improperly stored materials (black powder accidents are especially dangerous) or, less often, strain due to inadequate sleep, supplies, and weather.

The depot, while small by London standards, is a large brick building with half-a-dozen train platforms and is the sturdiest structure in Peterborough. It serves as an important interchange, the point upon which two axes balance: rail lines running east-west and north-south. Six tracks converge on Peterborough station, but two have fallen into disrepair and disuse. Two are for passengers and two for cargo, each type of train arriving at a separate set of platforms. Freight destined for Peterborough itself is commonly building materials for maintenance, or a new establishment, but most of it consists of food and clothing. A greater amount of freight passes through Peterborough, heading down the line to stations at smaller cities along the Great Eastern Line, and consists of a large variety of supplies: educational materials; provisions; and construction materials for Tesla arrays and infrastructure such as outer walls, houses, roads, and bridges. Occasionally, freight trains arrive that contain materials meant for storage in Peterborough.

Should London or another nearby city find a sudden need for supplies, they can quickly be distributed from the Peterborough depot. More rarely, arms and armour fabricated in London itself pass through; inspections conducted by Peterborough guards sometimes find "defective" items and remove them for "disposal." This is often how the guards come by such luxuries as new armour to replace old and worn-out items, as well as lightning guns and the latest firearms models.

Peterborough railway station does its best to serve the tourists and travellers from the metropolis whether they stay overnight before boarding a connecting train or stay to see the city. Yet, what was once a proud waypoint is now a shadow of its former grandeur. Once, it served as a place of meeting for families and students en route to colleges and the other great cities. Restaurants would serve the needs of hungry travellers, and gift shops sold their wares to mirthful tourists. Now, it little more than a dilapidated façade hiding a dirty, rundown facility, as it sat for fifty-odd years before it became an important transportation hub for Reclamation forces.

The outside of the station, street-side, maintains the original brick complete with an impressive wrought-iron railroad clock, to let passengers coming and going know just how late they are for their train. To the side of the station proper sits the Great Northern Hotel, in all its red-brick glory. The sturdy brick of the hotel is inset with iron-barred windows and an uncompromising door of dark, iron-banded wood, featuring a heavy iron knocker which sounds loudly enough to be heard over the moans of an animate hoard.

Part Two: The Great Northern Hotel

The hotel is located across the street from the station. The lobby is quiet and dignified, with cherry wood fixtures, fine couches upholstered in deep-red velvet lining the wall, and the latest issues of whatever periodical the distinguished traveller might desire, readily available. Across from the check-in counter are a hat rack, an umbrella stand, and several sets of hooks for gas masks and overcoats. To the left of the desk sits the smoking parlour, decorated in the same sombre, severe tones as the lobby and featuring several enormous cherry bookcases, filled with historical books on London, many concerning the Reclamation, and texts on psychical studies. All the lamps, as well as the hooks, are made of burnished brass, including the ornate—but somewhat past its prime—chandelier hanging over the centre of the lobby. All of the lights of the Great Northern are powered by the Peterborough Tesla array.

Further decoration for the ground floor includes the many enormous portraits featuring previous Burneses who ran the hotel, which hang even in unconventional areas, like the scullery and kitchen.

The tea room offers typical fare between noon and five. They have their own custom-made china, decorated with painted-on train tracks around the edges. The quality of the meal is not exceptional in any way—rather, it is simply considered a decent place to take one's afternoon tea during a railway layover.

Behind the lobby desk is the door to the office of James Burnes, the present owner of the Great Northern. The office is decorated in the same style as the lobby: dark and foreboding. When James' father, Edmund, retired in 2100, James completely renovated the station to his own tastes. His walls are lined with bookshelves like those in the smoking room, filled instead with penny dreadful murder stories he loves, Sherlock Holmes novels and similar, as well as several treatises on famous serial murders. Burnes also has his own hat rack, complete with mask hooks, set by the door for guests. Next to the rack is an ornate grandfather clock, the hourly peal of which can be heard throughout the entire first floor.

Burnes' desk is also cherry wood, uncluttered and meticulously kept free of dust and stain. The only things on the desk are the large, red, leather-bound ledger and its inky accompaniments. Everything else Burnes uses is kept locked in desk drawers, including a first aid kit specially designed to treat Burnes' haemophilia. Burnes' office has none of the enormous portraits hung throughout the ground floor, featuring instead an enormous bay window overlooking a lush garden full of colourful flowers and sweet-smelling plants. The pleasure gardens and grounds of the Great Northern are well-maintained and serve as quite the draw for guests. One can easily get lost admiring ponds, hedge sculptures, and flower patches.

The other door in Burnes' office leads to the kitchen and scullery, both of which are presided over by the fearsome Mariah O'Malley. Before O'Malley, the kitchen was messy and disorganized, and Burnes was loathe to enter it. The kitchen staff now fears O'Malley almost as much as they fear Burnes himself.

The kitchen and scullery are hardly decorated at all, save for an unsettling portrait upon the bare, red brick walls. The oven and stove are both classic cast-iron black. The wood preparation tables are cheaper, and foodstuffs sit on them in organized piles.

There are fifteen rooms each on floors one and two, but the hotel is never quite full, seeing perhaps two dozen occupancies in a week. Burnes expanded the hotel after acquiring ownership in hopes of accommodating more passengers and thus drawing more revenue. Sadly, his hopes were never realized.

Room 201

Room 201 is typical for the hotel. The bed is plainly but attractively made, with a maroon duvet and pillows. There is a window which affords a view of the trains across the street as they come and go. Rooms on the other side of the hotel boast views of the pleasure garden instead.

The walls are papered in a red-on-white pattern reminiscent of Victorian damasks, with cherry wood trim. Room 201 is as ominous and foreboding as the ground floor. Each of the rooms has one of the Burnes' portraits, and room 201 is no exception. Arthur Burnes, 1965–2003, sternly reminds the resident where he is, which does not encourage a good night's rest. Down the hall is the only white room in the whole hotel, with white fixtures and gleaming silver pipes. The tub is a porcelain, claw-footed affair, without a good system of indoor plumbing. In order to fill up the tub, scullery maids must heat up the water on the stove all the way down in the ground-floor kitchen.

When Burnes was twelve, he found a secret passage between room 201 and his father's office. Built as a part of the original hotel, it had since been forgotten until young James discovered it. Burnes kept knowledge of the passage secret until his father's retirement, after which he expanded the passage to extend to all of the guest rooms, as well as all of the areas on the ground floor.

Furthermore, Burnes added a basement bunker that connected directly to the sewers of Peterborough. He used staff he suspected knew about the secret passages to dig out and construct the bunker. When it was finished, he poisoned their meals that night and one-by-one dragged them into the sewers, where he gave them to the ghouls as a treat.

Only Mariah O'Malley knows exactly what happened to the former staff, but everyone who works at the hotel, has heard rumours of disappearances and other strange goings-on. They are advised to keep quiet about the things they hear, and indeed, the staff of the hotel no longer gossip freely about the place or its eccentric owner.

Part Three: Dramatis Personae

James Burnes

Before the Plague Years, the Burnes family was middle class, with no real name to speak of. Young William Burnes was the only survivor from his family, taking the family's wealth and fleeing as London burned. He settled in Peterborough in 1939, where he invested his remaining family money well and married. Burnes bought up potentially lucrative properties until his death in '52. Following the death of William Burnes, Alistair Burnes took over his father's estates and, soon after purchasing several businesses in Peterborough, including restaurants and clothing shops, drove almost all of them into the ground, eventually whittling the family fortune down to the hotel. In time, thanks to the resurgence of rail travel and the prospering of the hotel, the Burnes estate regained much of its lost value.

James Burnes is the current owner of Great Northern Hotel and its primary overseer. He supervises the day-to-day affairs from his office. Burnes is in his late thirties, and the years have not been

kind to him, as shown in his rotund form and thinning hair. He nevertheless exudes a charismatic air of utter confidence.

He has always known that he would end up in charge of the hotel, and he has been studying for it since he was young. His blood disease, haemophilia, assured that he could never go into the military like his younger brother Malcolm, currently a decorated Deathwatch soldier. Instead, James spent all his spare time as a child in and around the hotel, imagining life as owner and manager of the place, learning from his father's mistakes and becoming determined not to repeat them. Some dark habits developed in his youth, as well, such as spying on hotel guests, even stealing small items from their rooms—not out of want for material possessions but due to a sense of ownership and the thrill of control. The hotel, and the people who stayed therein, belonged to him. Sometimes, he even took their pets, preparing them to be part of special meals delivered to families grieving over the loss.

When Edmund retired in 2100, James remodelled the entirety of the hotel to allow himself access from his office to all the other rooms by means of secret passageways. These are accessible on one end through doors disguised as the enormous portraits hanging in each room and on the other end through the passageway behind the grandfather clock, which also allows access to a ladder leading to the basement. These passageways are used not by the staff but to fuel and obscure Burnes' dark secret.

James' mother Penelope died when he was young, and his father constantly struggled to maintain the business, leaving the bulk of raising his sons to his servants. Isolated due to his disease and a lack of real friends, James grew up distant and cold. He saw his father's failures as a warning sign of what happens when one does not have complete control over one's life. Determined to learn from those mistakes, even at a young age, James sought to obtain control in any situations he could. He viciously beat the family's dogs when they disobeyed, and he berated the servants and staff of the hotel when their incompetence proved costly. When he was old enough, he often struck those in his father's employ, as well, revelling in the feeling of dominance—what could they do, lest they risk their livelihoods in angering the elder Burnes?

Even so, the escalation from abuse to murder was born out of desperation as much as James' growing need for satisfaction through total control of another. At the age of twenty-three, only a few years after taking over management of the Great Northern, James injured himself while spying on a young woman, incurring a severe cut. He received a transfusion at the local hospital, but it was a close call, one which rattled him to his core. Above all, the lack of control over his own fate terrified him. James obtained equipment for the storage of blood, which he keeps in his private basement lair, but he could not gain the blood he needed from the hospital. Determined to never allow such a thing to happen again, James chose a young man passing through Peterborough, a student on the way to visit his family, as his first victim. That night, while he slept, James stole into his room, chloroformed him and dragged his body through the hidden passages and down to his lair.

At first, James could not bring himself to make the kill stroke after the student, bound and dazed from the drugs, awoke and screamed. He made furtive cuts, inflicting pain, drawing blood, but striking no lethal wound. And he discovered a thrill therein, as the man lay helpless before him, to live or to die at James' whim. He began to target his attacks, intentionally inflicting superficial wounds. He relished the agony it caused and the control it gave him over not only his own life but also that of another. Then, at last, he cut the man's throat and collected the blood he sought.

James exulted in the pumping blood washing his face and hands with crimson. His own weak blood seemed to sing in his veins as he collected the dead man's blood carefully into a glass for further observation. More importantly, he found the challenge his life had always been lacking. Even after compensating for the mistakes of his father, asserting his control over the operation of the hotel, there was nothing to excite him, until he discovered the art of killing another. Any maniac could plunge a knife into someone's chest or squeeze a trigger; to truly dominate the victim, to assume complete control over their fleeting life, that was something to ignite a man's passion. Since then, he has slowly grown more obsessed with the blood of his victims, sometimes drinking it like some would-be vampire stealing the life of his victims (which often makes him sick) and sometimes collecting samples that grow foetid in sealed jars, the sight of which comforts him between killings. All

Victims

The latest victim of James Burnes' murderous proclivities is Eliza Wesley, 36, an up-and-coming industrialist from an old-money family. The local constabulary fed the Wesleys the story that Eliza was run over by a train as she incautiously crossed the tracks. While the family doesn't fully believe the story, they do believe that she was in Peterborough to meet a secret lover, and thus, wishing to avoid a scandal, they haven't pursued the matter further—officially, at least.

Eliza's brother, Richard, might approach the player characters, especially if one is a private investigator, and thus involve them in these matters.

Any player character in fit condition might attract Burnes' attention. If none qualify, Burnes might attack an NPC the players encountered earlier.

of Burnes' workers suspect he has a proclivity for murder, knowing of James' power trips, the disappearances of hotel guests, and the secret passageways. Only Mariah O'Malley knows for sure; she does what must be done after Burnes does what he feels he must do. Luckily for him, Burnes also has a few policemen in his pocket through a combination of bribery and blackmail gleaned through clandestine surveillance from within his hotel.

James Burnes

Calling: Aristocrat

Vitality: 3

Coordination: 2

Wit: 2

Intellect: 4

Will: 3

Charm: 4

Prowess: 4

Actions: 1

Skills:

Arts: 2, Etiquette: 4, History: 2, Language (French, German): 2, Law: 2, Melee Weapon: 2

Feature:

Blue Blood, Deference, Intrigant

Stunts:

Familiar Grounds, Personage of Distinction, Social Predator, Viper

Combat Stunts:

Deadly Skill, Preferred Weapon (Knife)

Corruption Path:

Drive 4 (Killer Instinct)

Qualities:

Business (5 point): Great Northern Hotel Credentials
Private Library (2 point): Murder Mysteries
Resolve
Trusted Servant (Mariah O'Malley)

Impediments:

Fastidious
Haemophilia
Spendthrift

More important than silencing his workers or keeping corrupt policemen in business—at least in Burnes' eyes—is his lair. Bare light bulbs hang from the ceiling, and the instruments Burnes uses to fulfil his needs reflect their glare. The lair's walls and ceiling are a dull-grey stone which absorbs the screams of his victims, keeping them from reaching the hotel above, while letting them echo in a symphony of agony. Dark stains, impossible to scrub from the stone, paint grisly pictures of past murders. Bookshelves kept meticulously clean of dust hold books on anatomy and interrogation practices. There are even tables pushed to one side of the room that hold chemistry equipment used in failed attempts to produce synthetic blood for him to use in case of injury.

The same soulless, grey stone comprises the tunnel leading down to the slime-encrusted sewers, where Burnes disposes of his victims' remains. Often he needs O'Malley's help to efficiently move the bodies. He has worked out a deal with the local ghoul tribes: they don't question the origin of their gifts and he asks none in return. The passageways leading from Burnes' lair are red brick and plaster, only just wide enough for the somewhat portly Burnes to walk in comfort. Any guest who hadn't visited the hotel before James took over management wouldn't even notice the reduced size of the rooms, and those who frequented the Great Northern in Edmund's day simply chalk up the differences to necessary renovations. Guests sometimes speak of strange sounds in the night, but most chalk them up to the staff performing necessary functions out of sight.

Burnes rarely kills more than once a month, and he almost always chooses a lone traveller. James will usually incapacitate his victims with chloroform before dragging him to his lair. He is also adept at administering sedatives by means of his victims' food. Typically, Burnes will slice his victim's throat and hang him upside down, letting him bleed out and collecting the blood to sate his needs. Burnes stores the blood in sterilized jars, kept in a small storage niche in the tunnel leading to the sewers. Burnes prefers healthy game. As such, he observes his potential victims to make sure they are fit and not prone to drug or tobacco use. He knows to avoid prey likely to hurt or kill him or escape, such as travelling soldiers or policemen, though the denial of such prizes sits uneasily with him. Sometimes, he simply makes lots of non-lethal cuts on the victim's body, collecting blood while leaving the unfortunate alive but weakened, to be fed to the ghouls.

After Burnes has killed his victim and taken the blood to his personal cache, he leaves the rest of the cleanup to O'Malley.

Mariah O'Malley

Mariah O'Malley is the reigning queen of the hotel's housekeeping, and she rules over her staff with a cold yet authoritative air. Barely thirty but beginning to grey, she takes care of anything that must be done, including cleaning up after Mr. Burnes' more unsavoury dealings.

Once upon a time, Mariah lived in Dublin with her mother, who was the housekeeper and mistress to Lord Howe. Mariah was given the special honour of being a playmate for the Lord's legitimate children. However, as it became increasingly obvious that Mariah bore a resemblance to Lord Howe, the lady of the house arranged for O'Malley and her mother to move to London, where poverty drove them to settle in the East End. Forced to work on fishing vessels, where she was abused and subsisted on twisted, unwholesome fish,

Mariah O'Malley

Calling: Criminal

Vitality: 4

Coordination: 4

Wit: 2

Intellect: 3

Will: 2

Charm: 2

Prowess: 6

Actions: 2

Skills:

History: 2, Language (Rhyming Slang): 2, Law: 2,
Performance: 2, Seduction: 2, Streetwise: 3, Unarmed
Combat: 3

Feature:

Flash Thief

Stunts:

Confidence Man, Negotiator, Spies the Mouse

Combat Stunts:

Brutality, Improved Knockout, Trip

Corruption Path:

Desire 2 (Defiler)

Qualities:

Criminal Associations
Love (1 Point) (George Barrow)
Murder of Crows
Nondescript
Reputation — Street
Time Sense

Impediments:

Illiterate
Superstition

Mariah's mother died of overexposure to the toxic Thames. Fearing the same fate, O'Malley relocated to Peterborough as a young woman, where Burnes discovered her working for a pittance at a lower-class aristocratic manor and offered her a better option.

O'Malley has enforced a strict set of rules concerning the conduct of the help at the Great Northern, making her none too popular with her working-class fellows but very well-liked by Burnes. While the staff dislikes O'Malley, George Barrow, a stable boy at a nearby stable, has been infatuated with O'Malley since her arrival at the hotel and has repeatedly announced his intentions toward her.

O'Malley doesn't care for Barrow but keeps him around to ward off suspicion of her adoration of Burnes. This dedication is what Burnes uses to keep O'Malley quiet about his sadistic games, along with the same quietly veiled threat that is held over all the hotel employees.

Since her arrival, O'Malley's job requirements have shifted from the initial responsibilities of running the hotel's daily functions (such as tea, fresh sheets, and regular filter cleanings) to include picking up after Burnes' monthly "transfusions." She cleans up Burnes' lair, sterilizes fresh glass for blood, and keeps his instruments free of rust. She is the only person who assists Burnes in his transfusions.

Contrary to her impoverished roots, Mariah is surprisingly well-educated in both law and the history of Peterborough and the greater London area. After Mariah expressed an interest in Burnes' collection of books, he taught her to read. She studied voraciously, determined to better her life compared to her mother's. Burnes keeps a collection of criminal law as well as history books, along with the fiction he enjoys, and Mariah learned much from these works.

Mariah is also responsible for maintaining relations with the ghoulish tribe, as Burnes finds the degenerate creatures and their dietary habits thoroughly revolting. Stern-minded O'Malley, therefore, takes care of this task, and the ghouls are certainly rather fond of her; it would take quite the offer to convince them to turn on her. After every kill, Mariah ritually cleanses herself with some of the blood of the deceased, believing it will prevent the ghost of the victim from haunting her.

The Ghouls

The ghoulish tribe residing beneath Peterborough are a pitiful bunch, a mere dozen individuals, "led" by an elder who has developed a taste for fine clothes and the accoutrements of upper-middle-class wealth. These items used to be in short supply, which led to some rash and desperate actions in an attempt to sate the elder's strange desires, but with the fortuitous advent of Burnes' murders, they have suddenly found themselves with fairly easy access to both the garments and flesh of the middle class.

The ghouls might be turned against Burnes if they can be convinced that Burnes is keeping some of his victims' bodies for himself—which he does occasionally for experimental purposes, as Burnes

hopes to coax the dead flesh into producing fresh blood for him. Of course, they will swiftly come to regret such an action, as their supply of fresh human flesh will run out.

If their elder were to die, the deal they struck will suddenly become that much less vital to them, and they might be convinced to turn on Burnes if promised an increased supply of human flesh.

The Staff

The serving staff at the Great Northern Hotel were all handpicked for their ability to keep a secret, as well as their malleability to Burnes' ideals. The staff realizes that something is terribly, horribly wrong at the hotel, but they aren't quite sure what it is. They know that their master is an evil man but not quite the depth of his depravity.

In addition to retaining the staff primarily for their weakness of will and their cowardice, Burnes has thoroughly terrorized them into complete submission. Their wills are broken, and their own immediate safety and survival are paramount to them. They know their lives can be forfeit at the whim of their master; they know that any servant who draws his attention is likely to be doomed quickly; and they know that they aren't the first set of servants to tend to his needs. Burnes keeps information on the families of his staffers, and both he and Mariah have made subtle insinuations that they would track down rogue employees.

A servant who believes his life is forfeit might approach any group of well-armed strangers begging for protection. The servant will not be able to reveal much, but his fear alone should suffice to convince any players that something genuinely is wrong here.

Part Four: How the Other Half Lives

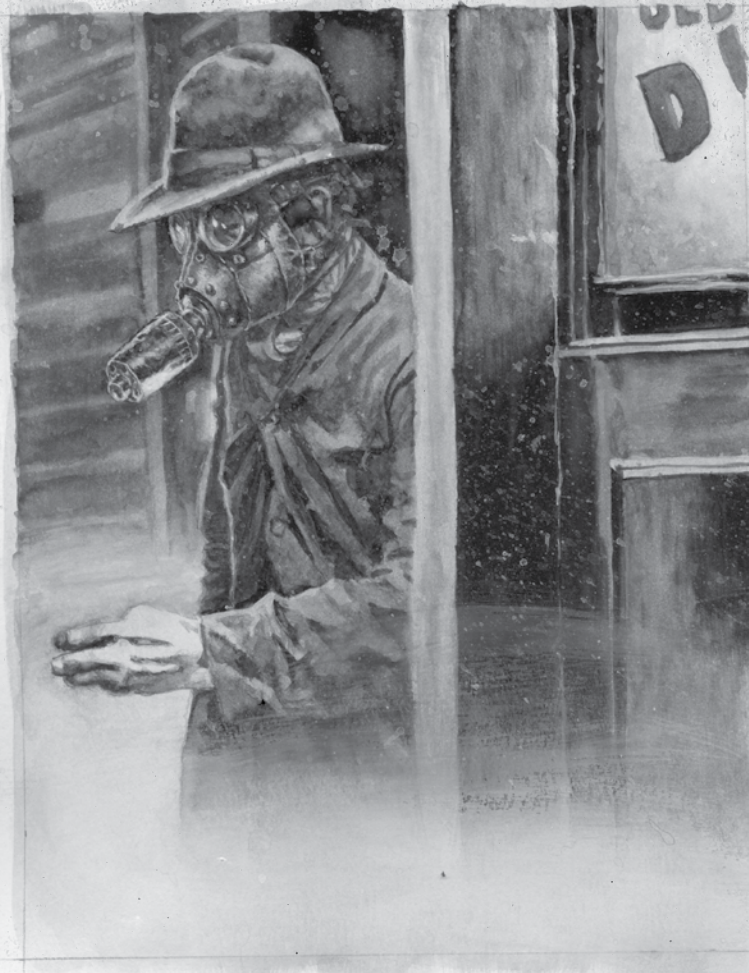
New Intrigant Stunts

Neo-Victorian businessmen are not reliant on wealth alone to achieve their goals. Indeed, many of them have formidable skills and social resources at their disposal. For in the end, the individual's will is the only thing that matters. After all, the industrialist muses, will is what got him here in the first place—will, intelligence, and ruthlessness.

Characters of the Aristocrat Calling may choose from the following new Stunts when choosing Intrigant Stunts.

Business Sense

The successful businessman hasn't gotten there simply through starry-eyed optimism and honest hard work. A keen sense of



risk evaluation and a willingness to take chances is also required, along with a predatory eye for weakness in both those more and less successful than oneself. The capitalist knows how to make or break a business, whether through strict education, instinct, or experience, and he also knows how to wield that knowledge as a lethal weapon more precise and subtle than a dagger or poison. Provided the Aristocrat knows enough about his enemies to target their businesses specifically, he may work to sabotage the enemy's companies over a number of weeks equal to the Wealth rating of the Aristocrat's target. After this time, the character and his target make a contested Wit roll. If the Aristocrat succeeds, his target loses 1 rank of Wealth and leaves the company open for purchase. If the Aristocrat fails, his target may make a second contested Wit roll. If the target succeeds he learns the identity of the Aristocrat. The Aristocrat may also target a specific business with no knowledge of who owns it, though he might find he has inadvertently crippled a friend or ally or even a family member.

Familiar Grounds

An aristocrat might spend his entire childhood being groomed for rank and title, while a sibling not important or fortunate enough to be in line to inherit mastery of the estate is left to his own devices. Fascinated with the family history and often left in the care of servants, the youth wanders the grounds of his estate so often that he comes to know it better than even the employees. Shielded by the

sheer power of aristocratic influence from a life of want, when he becomes an adult and rules over the estate on behalf of his aged parents or an older sibling residing elsewhere, the blue-blood views his estate as his fortress, wherein he is untouchable and his word is law. Eccentric aristocrats have hidden passages and chambers built into their mansions, secret underground bunkers on the grounds, and even hidden routes to local waterways, where boatmen are kept at the ready for a swift escape. For those aristocrats, the familiarity with their homes and the security it brings lends them confidence and a definite advantage on those grounds. When at home, the Aristocrat may reroll failed Etiquette and Shadow rolls. Each failed roll can only be rerolled once due to Familiar Grounds. Additionally, the character gains a +1 bonus on all contested rolls made against those less familiar with the estate than the Aristocrat.

Libertine

The character spent many a wild night in his youth indulging in the more hedonistic aspects of moneyed lifestyles. At parties and private social gatherings, the character partook in so much drink and recreational drug use over the years that he is immune to amounts of toxins that would fell lesser men. The character may consume twice as much alcohol as other characters before suffering any ill effects (see *Unhallowed Metropolis, Revised*, page 212), and gains a bonus of +2 to Vitality rolls when rolling to resist the effects of poisons and other toxins, including rolls to resist alcohol poisoning (see *Unhallowed Metropolis*, page 212). He can also avoid some of the deleterious effects of drug use, reducing penalties suffered by 1 and halving their duration, where applicable. This talent can come in handy when alcohol loosens lips and the character wishes to appear more under the influence than he is. Characters who have this Stunt almost always have the Hedonist Corruption Path.

New Flash Thief Stunt

Characters of the Criminal Calling may choose the following Stunt when choosing Flash Thief Stunts.

Spies the Mouse

Any thief worth his salt is always aware of his surroundings, of potential dangers, and perhaps more importantly, potential marks. A life of learning to hide things and learning where people keep their valuables hidden has given the thief an uncanny knack for spotting the usually unseen. The character gains a +2 bonus when the Narrator calls for a Wit – Perception roll to notice something hidden in the environment, whether it is a secret door, item cache, or a would-be assassin lurking in the shadows.

New Social Qualities

False Nobility, 5 Point Social Quality

Through falsified documents, paid record keepers, social skill, and possibly some planted evidence, the character successfully pretends to be an aristocrat. His false nobility will hold up well under scrutiny, allowing him to withstand the rigours of high-class games of power. He must be careful when engaging in activities unbecoming of the gentry, however, for his standing is as vulnerable, or perhaps more so, as that of true nobles. The character begins the game with Wealth 7, and other noble families will treat him as they would any member of the aristocracy in good standing. Characters with the Aristocrat Calling cannot take this Quality.

Old Money, 2 Point Social Quality

Breeding will tell, they say. Be that true or not, a character with this Quality comes from old money, and thus is considered a breed apart and superior to the plebeian run-of-the-mill industrialist. While he may never truly be considered part of the aristocracy, he can probably point to a knighthood or two in his family history to assuage those who question his pedigree.

This Quality grants a +1 bonus on Etiquette rolls when dealing with members of high society.

Characters with the Aristocrat Calling cannot take this Quality.

Honoured Past, 3 Point Social Quality

One of the character's parents was knighted; or maybe the character was a nobleman all along, but the records were lost in the Plague



Years; or the character simply chose a way of life that caused him to be cast out by his family. In any event, he belongs to the aristocracy even if he is not an Aristocrat.

This Quality allows characters with a Calling other than Aristocrat to purchase Aristocrat-specific Qualities and Impediments. This Quality requires the Upper Class and Credentials Qualities and does not allow a character to take Intrigant Stunts.

New Social and Mental Impediments

Spendthrift, 3 Point Social Impediment

For some people, economic security is an obsession. They see potential ruination in everything, shepherding their precious money, ensuring nothing bad happens to it. Such an individual will not spend money unless it's absolutely necessary and even then, only grudgingly. While such a quirk might be accepted as simple eccentricity in some, there is a point where refusing to follow fashion or make use of one's wealth becomes a source of derision. And, of course, if one is already unpopular, miserliness does nothing to better a reputation.

A character suffering from this Impediment incurs a -1 penalty to Etiquette rolls made when interacting with the upper class, and their disposable income is calculated as if their Wealth was 1 point lower than it is.

Characters with the Wastrel Impediment cannot take Spendthrift.

Wastrel, 2 or 4 Point Mental Impediment

Not everyone is made to have money. Some people simply can't keep it in hand—the gold flows out of their bank accounts, and then it's gone. This character is one of those people. Whether the money is frittered away on clothes and pleasurable company or spent to service an opium addiction or simply is the result of someone who is overly quick to buy into charlatans' schemes, this character is headed for ruin, fast, unless he can build his wealth faster than it vanishes.

The character loses 1 Wealth point per year, automatically, above and beyond any other penalties the Narrator might impose; if this Impediment was taken for 4 points, 1 rank of Wealth is lost per month, instead.

Characters with the Spendthrift Impediment cannot take Wastrel.

Appendices; Or, an Overview of Materials Useful for General Purposes

Several other subjects in which the gentle reader might take interest present themselves over the course of the preceding two sections, and following, such topics will be expanded upon. This section, then, is dedicated to materials useful for Narrators and players, who might not elect to play their games within the confines

of Peterborough, its station, and the Great Northern Hotel alone, or even at all. Herein are found details on the industrialists and other members of the upper class of the British Empire: how they ensure the loyalty of their servants, the hidden doors and secret hallways that mark the places where they spend their time, and the trains that service the cities of Britain.

The Loyalty of Servants

A servant is often privy to many of their master's deepest, darkest secrets. When his employer agrees to deals that the pure-blooded aristocrat would never condescend to entering, it is the servant with the feather duster who overhears it; when the blood must come out of the carpet, the cleaning maid is summoned. The wealthy and powerful may occasionally underestimate the intellect of the serving class, as many a philandering baronet has found to his sorrow. It is for this reason the wise master or mistress prizes loyalty and devotion above all other traits a servant might possess. For, as they say, good help is hard to find.

So how does one go about ensuring the staff's loyalty? A servant who respects the gentry is a loyal servant. Love, or fear, is the root of respect. A good mistress or master must either make the servants too afraid to think of turning coat or too fond to wish harm. Long service may do this, as may kindness. Although, a master who is lax may instead find he has earned the staff's contempt. Part of achieving loyalty is using insight into human nature: certain servants are predisposed towards loyalty, whether out of a keen sense of duty and propriety or simply out of a kind and generous nature. A shrewd employer can thus gauge prospective hires and stack the deck in his favour. And, of course, long and faithful service is the greatest credential of all.

The State of the Industrialist Class

Neo-Victorian society is one built on strict social divides. Curious as it may seem, there exists two separate upper classes in England, and both regard themselves as the true heart and soul of their nation. While the aristocracy dwells in its crumbling estates, upholding an outmoded way of life, slowly degenerating into nothing under the weight of inbreeding and decadence, the industrialists' star is rising.

These two equal societies exist apart, mingling rarely beyond the superficial social encounters and pleasantries. The ethics and morals of the nouveaux riche bar them from ever achieving true acceptance from the paranoid and propriety-conscious aristocracy, as the industrialists believe in status based on achievement and competence rather than simple social clambering or breeding. They believe in this because the majority of industrialist families were once commoners, having reached their exalted state through hard work and cunning. And they are not satisfied yet—they wish to see their own descendants climb higher still. This is the wedge that has kept the two upper classes from fully integrating. But the industrialists cannot thrive without noble patronage and connections, lest they be swept up in the power plays of the nobility, and the aristocracy cannot maintain their leisurely lifestyle without credit and the businesses of the industrialists to support them. And thus, the eternal waltz of the two goes ever on.

The industrialist class is caught between two rival desires: ascendancy to aristocracy and creation of a meritocracy. There

are no formal factions behind these philosophies, or even true names given them, but meritocrats generally support the Liberal party, whereas the would-be aristocrats support the Conservatives, so they are often simply called "Liberals" and "Tories." Thus, internal strife among these groups marks the empire as a whole. Most industrialists, however, believe in and espouse both ideals, not seeing the basic incompatibility or choosing to ignore it.

Driven by a need to prove their superiority, the self-made men of the British Empire are propelled to spend lavishly. And, indeed, the more successful industrialists' sheer wealth eclipses that of even the richest aristocrat, thus prompting quite a bit of jealousy and suspicion. As the aristocracy finds itself unable to compete financially, they mutter darkly about infernal dealings and sold souls to explain why their rivals, and not they themselves, sit upon this marvellous trove of wealth.

Industrialists buy estates and manors to suit their standing, often having them constructed or completely renovated where nothing suitable already exists. As without, so within—the insides of their homes can be no less lavish and rich than the exteriors, so the merchant barons usually spend more, making the interiors even more opulent. Seeing their homes as a reflection of their status, they have them decorated in Gothic, Oriental, and Rococo styles, often including touches of cutting-edge technology to amaze and inspire envy in their guests, for guests they have. Having spent so much time and money on making their homes perfect, they must be shown off!

Furthermore, one cannot afford to let one's clothing or means of transportation, or even one's food or tobacco, reflect poorly upon one's station. Hence, industrialist families ride in ornate private rail cars, carriages, or personal cabs awaiting their pleasure; they dress only in the newest fashions, made of the finest materials, with the most exquisite jewellery; and they dine only on the finest foods, except perhaps when eating in private. This exhausting pressure towards spending often leaves less-shrewd industrialists quickly ruined, as they can't see where their more successful compatriots cut corners.

Houses with Secret Passages

The Neo-Victorian world abounds with hidden passageways and compartments, priest holes or chambers built to hide secrets or family fortunes. Nary an estate can be found which contains none of these spaces, whether their origin lies in nefarious motives or desperate ones, and most play host to a few that even the masters of the house have forgotten. But how do such spaces come to be?

The most mundane are those that occur as artefacts of construction. During construction of a house, it is rare that every square inch is in use. Spaces exist between walls; aesthetics demand that a wall be placed just so, leaving a good two square feet empty between rooms; sloppy craftsmen skimp on building materials, leaving what was supposed to be solid construction faulty, often to the point of being dangerous, unnoticed by anyone as the unfaithful workmen cover up their miserliness.

More exotic are those spaces that develop through the passage of time. Doors are boarded up and painted over. Wallpaper is applied over the paint. Entire rooms or suites can be lost in this manner. Basements are disused; the once-accessible trap door in the

kitchen now hidden at the bottom of a closet constructed over it. Servants' hallways in the basement, designed to be inconspicuous, are never revealed to the mansion's purchasers and their newly-arrived staff, who simply assume the house lacks that amenity and make do without. Old laboratories, deemed not worth the effort of reclaiming due to chemical spills, foul smells, or less mundane circumstances, are locked permanently, and a bookcase is mounted in front of the door.

Then there are the ones created deliberately. As noted above, servants' presence among the wealthy is generally considered improper, and so they are assigned to hallways hidden from visitors, to facilitate their travel from task to task without being seen. A paranoid industrialist had a tunnel dug from his family's chambers and out past the manor's walls, fearing assassins in the night. A reanimist doctor found it necessary to hide her laboratory, and had an attic constructed over her bedchambers where before there was open space two-floors high.

The reasons for these secret spaces vary from the legitimate to the nefarious. Most simply, one might simply want not to be disturbed. Similarly, an owner might wish to hide something away from thieves, or a promising young scion of the line might desire to hide from a hired killer. A paranoid lady might even sleep in a hidden chamber nightly, preferring her safety and secrecy over the comforts of being attended by servants. On the other hand, there is the most notorious use of secret passageways: hiding away one's dark secrets. The most time-honoured tradition regarding such oubliettes is keeping a deformed child of the family from being discovered by the outside world, thus warding the entire line from questions concerning the quality of their bloodline. There are also charnel chambers where bodies are stowed, laboratories delving into sciences man was never meant to know, libraries of proscribed tomes, the resting place of a vampiric dame, and less-mentionable things far more common than the average citizen could, or should, ever suspect.

Trains

In the Neo-Victorian world, trains are shaped by two eminently practical concerns: The animate threat and the needs of industry. The threat of animate attack requires a train to be defensible, to clear its own path, and to be independent of any external power source. The latter means that a train, instead of being powered by Tesla arrays, is powered by coal. The Neo-Victorian train is pulled by a very reliable steam engine, as few railroad companies can truly afford an engine failure in the middle of the wasteland.

The requirement to clear its own path means that trains are equipped with long, sharp pilots to sweep any road block—especially of the undead sort—off the tracks. The underside of such a pilot is lined with rigid steel brushes called guard irons, which prevent any sort of debris from building up on the tracks.

Trains are universally heavily armour-plated, with barred windows and reinforced compartment doors. In case of trains carrying passengers to heavily populated cities, prior to departure, a special Deathwatch car is attached, wherein between ten and fifteen Deathwatch Penal Corps soldiers stand ready and their arms are stored. In most cases, the Deathwatch simply ride along the train or sometimes man way-stations along the way.

If something does go wrong—if a track breaks or there's an obstacle that can't be easily cleared by the train—the train is ordered to reverse direction and head back to safety and the Deathwatch Penal Corps is called out. Armed with shovels, guns, and other tools, these unfortunates are sent out on a special maintenance railcar to set the rails back in order. Death tolls on these details are catastrophic. Hence, only expendables such as these could possibly perform it.

That is not to say that a passenger onboard a train is safe, though. Quite aside from the external dangers, trains are fertile grounds for all manner of crimes. Confidence men scam travellers with such base tricks as thimblerrigging and card games; pickpockets and cutpurses abound; certain ladies would blackmail careless gentlemen through accusing them of improper advances; even muggers and murderers flourish in the cabins and corridors of the Empire's railways. Thus, the wise traveller keeps company at all times

Animate outbreaks on a train can be understandably devastating for the passengers. Enclosed spaces can combine with little opportunity to escape, if the train is moving at high speeds, or over a bridge, or simply through uninhabited wasteland, to create a situation wherein an outbreak quickly spreads. Fortunately, there are ways to help stem the spread of the Plague on a train, and even the Penal Corps soldiers are trained in the containment tactics. Sealing off cars, even detaching them in an emergency situation, is a standard practice, whether or not any living remain aboard the afflicted cars. If the train cannot be stopped with convenient haste so that the Plague-ridden cars can be detached and purged, Deathwatch soldiers will stand guard in cars adjacent to the afflicted ones, ushering passengers into other cars, removed from the animate threat.

If the opportunity presents itself, especially if the outbreak is small, the Deathwatch will force their way into the afflicted car. The lead soldier moves in behind a special tower shield kept onboard for just that purpose, blocking the doorway while soldiers behind him shoot down nearby animates to allow advancement into the car. Needless to say, the tactic is a dangerous one, and used only when necessary.