

# "A Grasshopper Story"

*The Present Truth* – October 8, 1896

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When I go to London, I always stand at the corner of the Bank of England for a minute or two, watching the crowd of busy men hurrying everywhere. What thousands of cares they carry! How many anxieties!

Then I look at the Royal Exchange. It is pleasant to see the London sparrows, though they are a little black and grimy, chirping on the massive cornices, as free and happy as possible, above the din and awful hurry of the great city.

They have no cares, no anxieties. They seem to know what the great letters mean, which are out in the stones on which they hop: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." God keeps the sparrows, and they are happy. I wish the busy city men would watch the sparrows, and read the great city text.

But the sparrows and the text are not the most attractive things about the Exchange, and I am sure if you look at it, you will think as I do that the weather-cock is the most singular and curious thing about the building. It is not like any other weather-cock in England, or, I should think, in the world; and I'll tell you how it came to be there.

About three hundred and fifty years ago [remember, this was written in 1896], a woman, with a little baby in her arms, was trudging along a country lane. Presently, after looking to see that no one was watching her, she climbed over the gate into the field, and wrapping the baby in its little shawl, she laid it down in the grass, so gently as not to awaken it, and then, never even looking behind her, she climbed over the gate again into the lane and went on her journey.

The baby soon awoke, and began to cry; and it cried for a long, long time. And at last, tired and hungry, and hot with the sun, for it was a fine summer's day, it was wearied out, and dropped off to sleep again. But God had "heard the voice of the lad," and see how simply He brought help for the little one.

By and by, down the lane came a school-boy. He was whistling away, as happy as ever he could be; he had come out of school, and was going home. He lived at the farmhouse a little way farther up the lane. Now he gathered a few primroses; now he scampered after a butterfly; now he had a shy at a bird; but just as he came to the gate over which the woman had climbed, he heard a grasshopper chirping away also so loudly that he sprang over the gate to catch him, and there was the baby, fast asleep. Far more pleased than if he had caught a hundred grasshoppers, the boy took up the little fellow, and ran home with his prize. The kind farmer's wife, although she had many children of her own, at once determined to keep the little orphan who had been saved by a grasshopper.

GWM Editor's Note:

The following is from <https://londonist.com/london/secret/why-is-there-a-giant-grasshopper-on-the-royal-exchange>

The grasshopper was the personal emblem of Tudor financier Sir Thomas Gresham (c1519-1579).

Sir Thomas was a hugely influential figure in 16th century London. He founded the first Royal Exchange in 1565, which helped turn London into a global centre of finance. A bequest in his will set up Gresham College, which still puts on regular (and popular) public lectures to this day. And you may well have wandered down Gresham Street by the Guildhall, named in his honour.



But why did this sober man of finance choose a golden grasshopper as his personal emblem?

Legend has it that Thomas's ancestor Roger de Gresham was abandoned as an infant in the marshlands of Norfolk. The rejected orphan was finally discovered after a woman was attracted by the sound of a chirruping grasshopper.