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HAD THE MAN walked upright, he would have been tall, perhaps three or four inches over six feet; but he stooped, his shoulders hunched forward as though hunger drew the bones of his body closer together. The light was fading and the early spring sun had put little heat into the crumbling, smoke-stained brick of the buildings. In the shadows it was already cold.

The man's dress, although not in character with Houndsditch, was ignored by most of the inhabitants. His robes, dirty and torn, were wrapped close around his thin body, and the turban which covered his head, with its end draped loose across the lower part of his face, was not an uncommon sight in the city's streets. London of the mid-eighteen hundreds was the broth pot of the Empire, and within its stews mingled denizens of a hundred nationalities. They earned no more than passing glances

from equally grubby and disreputable Englishmen, and received no less of the usual brief courtesy of the tradesmen. Cosmopolitan London, home to foreign whaling fleets who employed such strange harpooners and crews as moon-faced Greenlanders and exotically tattooed Pacific islanders, and with trading ships of every nationality bringing with them men who spoke in strange tongues and with odd manners and dress, could afford little time to be more than superficially curious.

Houndsditch, barely half a mile north of the Thames wharves, was accustomed to nightly invasions by the sailors of many races who sought their entertainment in the whore-ridden drinking gaffs of Gravel Lane and Cutler Street.

The swarthy-skinned man walked slowly, as though he had not yet decided upon his destination. He carried a tattered and mouldering carpet-bag, wore no socks, and below his robes his thin brown ankles were encased in a pair of boots several sizes too large for him, one with its sole almost completely parted from the upper. Neither of the