

WILD OATS
AND
DEAD LEAVES.

BY
Richard
ALBERT SMITH.
"

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NOTE.—The following pages were all in type at the time of the death of my late brother, and, with the exception of three or four articles at the end of the book, had all been corrected by him for the press.

I have received communications from several friends, kindly expressing their desire to add a preface and a memoir to this volume. I have declined these proposals, for the reason that I wished it to be presented to the public exactly as it would have been presented by my brother himself. Fortunately, I found the preface here printed (in his handwriting) only a few days ago. As it bears date in May, it must have been written but a very little while before he died.

I look forward, at a future time when I may feel equal to the task (I am very far from feeling equal to it now), to write some little memoir of my brother. Meanwhile, I trust it may not be considered out of place if I here offer my heartfelt thanks to the very many unknown friends who have expressed deep sympathy with me and those others who were dearest to him.

ARTHUR SMITH.

August, 1860.

P R E F A C E.

FOR the last ten years I have been so little before the world in my literary capacity, that it is just possible the taste of the light-reading public may have altered—no less from the inevitable change of opinion which that lapse of time exerts over everything, than from the overworking of a style holding out such great facilities for imitation that the mere reputation of a “comic writer” has become the last that a literary man at present would wish to possess.

And, therefore, it is with some diffidence that I send this volume before the public. All I myself can say in its favour is, that several of the sketches, commencing in 1840, were received with a degree of popularity that gradually led me to more important work. They were my earliest attempts at magazine writing when I was quite a young man, with very little trouble and very great spirits,—when I never had to “think” of a subject, or to hammer it out when once conceived. And I do not believe that I upset

many conventional notions, or created many angry thoughts by their publication.

They have remained undisturbed in their different repositories for years. Some of them are altogether out of print—others have turned up as new to me upon revising them for this edition as I have no doubt they will be to many of my readers. No attempt to redress great wrongs, alter existing institutions, advance progress, or provide “intellectual food for the masses,” will be found in them. There are many great minds—compared to my own as the Coliseum at Rome to a percussion-cap—who take these matters under their own charge. But believing that of every dozen people who take up a book, eleven do so for amusement, I “doubtingly” offer this to the majority.

ALBERT SMITH.

NORTH END LODGE, WALHAM GREEN,
May, 1860.

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WILD OATS.

I.

THEFTS FROM THE PERCY RELIQUES.

1.—THE BOY AND THE MANTLE.

IN a very agreeable little volume of our English Nursery Rhymes—which will entertain all who love to have the days of their tranquil childhood recalled in this grown-up, anxious, wearing struggle for existence—compiled with singular care by Mr. Halliwell, there is this metrical historical information :

When good King Arthur ruled this land,
He was a goodly king,
He stole three pecks of barley-meal,
To make a bag-pudding.

A bag-pudding the king did make,
And stuffed it well with plums ;
And in it put great lumps of fat,
As big as my two thumbs.

The king and queen did eat thereof,
And noblemen beside,
And what they could not eat that night,
The queen next morning fried.

Were we addicted to putting forth those hazy speculations and attempts to make facts out of nothing—as the biographers of Shakspeare and other great people delight to do—we might, perhaps, in time glean the whole events of King Arthur's somewhat unsatisfactory career from our nursery tales. Starting

from this point, it would not be a task of much difficulty to prove that the monarch and his consort were identical with the royal pair who counted out their money, and ate bread and honey during a domestic wash (in which the maid was attacked by a savage bird) and after that singular meal, whereat the dainty device of the two dozen blackbirds in the pasty eclipsed all that Soyer ever conceived. But we would rather come to facts; and, therefore, with admiration for the king's "goodliness,"—who, not being at all proud, stole the materials for a banquet, cooked it himself, and displayed, through his spouse, a most praiseworthy spirit of economy with respect to the *débris*,—we plunge at once into our legend, premising that, like everything else in the literary line at the present time, it is copied from something that has gone before.

It was at "merry Carleile" that the king, and queen, and noblemen of the ballad were assembled; and in the sunny, smiling, leafy May of "once upon a time"—for we have no such Mays now. The seasons have gradually been falling back, like the time of an uncared-for clock, and the year wants fresh regulating.

And merry indeed was the rout that had met together at Carlisle in the castle, and a glorious time they had of it. Queen Guenevere was a fair young hostess; and not exactly the one to stop any fun once started; indeed, perhaps it is as well for her character that the chronicles concerning her are somewhat of the haziest; since, for a married woman and a queen, she was a desperate flirt. But her bright sparkling eyes were the loadstars that drew together a capital set of men; who, following the newly-introduced fashion of the king, wore long hanging sleeves of all fabrics and colours, and made the court very gay indeed. And since they could not all pay attention to her at once, there were be vies of handsome women to keep them from getting "slow"—fair-haired, blue-eyed ladies of the pure Saxon race, with noble heads and chiselled features, and exquisite figures, and tiny hands and feet—all which attributes have been handed down to our noble lords and ladies of the present day, making even an American believe that there is something in blood and lineage after all, in spite of all that penny-a-line philanthropists and professional routers-out of the great wrongs of The People can find to the contrary.

Certes, here was a goodly party of knights. There was of course Sir Launcelot du Lake, who sat next to Guenevere at

the round table, and whose mailed foot a page, who had crept under the table for some missing jewel, saw lightly resting upon the queen's; and Sir Bevis also came out uncommonly strong; and Sir Bedivere, and Sir Kay, and also Sir Gawaine, all with handsome ladies. And there was such a rattling of armour when they sat down to dinner that it seemed as if all the Lord Mayor's show had attended, including the Horse Guards. Wine was as plentiful as house beer at a club; roasted peacocks with their tails displayed quite obscured the opposite guests; for, independent of the king's pudding, there was something more on the table than the old conventional apples and ale-glasses of theatrical and pictorial banquets. Knights, for lack of knives, carved with their daggers for effect; and ladies, for want of forks and dislike of fingers, picked up their food with bodkins; and such toasts were drunk, and compliments paid, and very fair jokes made for the time of day, that, what with the laughter and chattering, and unheeded music of the bards, the hall was quite like a playhouse when a heavy legitimate drama is over, and people are awaiting the ballet or burlesque. Two only of the company were not altogether so noisy as the rest—and these were Sir Caradoc and his lady, who was one of the prettiest persons there. But they had lived in the country nearly all their lives, and felt unequal to meet the ready wit of the Londoners, so they kept to themselves, very quiet but very comfortable, smiling at what they understood, and wondering at what they did not; and thereby filling very useful parts in society. For without a due proportion of smilers and wonderers, your diverting guests are sadly put out of conceit; and if you make a party of all clever people, it is sure to be a failure. They will either affect dignity and do nothing, or all be funny at once, which is a more grievous affair than the other.

Truth to tell, Queen Guenevere did not much like Sir Caradoc and his lady. The former did not pay her attention enough, and she was jealous of the beauty of the latter. But Sir Caradoc was a wonderful fighter, and upon need, could slit foreigners into slices, like French rolls for rusks, so they could not be openly offended; and Sir Caradoc and his lady, on their sides, were delighted, as country people, to be at the board of royalty—just as much as rural patricians at the present day. For although years effect great changes in organic things, the natures of men and women remain pretty much the same—in the inundation of A.D. 1846, as in the flood of B.C. 2000. Never-

theless the queen talked *at* them now and then, not afraid to say a sharp thing or two to Sir Launcelot at their expense; and Lady Rose—that was Sir Caradoc's bride's name—now and then blushed deeply at some equivoque, that only made the queen's eyes sparkle more brightly.

All sorts of wonderful people had been drawn together at Carlisle by the king's sojourn there;—more gleemen, and joculars, and minstrels, and extraordinary tumblers, than even Strutt himself ever dreamt of, as well as the Northern Scalds, who held that place in poetry which, ages after, the Scottish Burns appropriately enough filled. They came in and out as they listed; nobody questioned them; and so nobody was surprised when, one day after dinner, before the ladies had left the table, an odd small boy entered the hall, and walking straight up to King Arthur, made an obeisance to him.

He was a strange, quaint little fellow, and reminded one of a conjuror seen through the wrong end of a telescope; looking young and old at the same time, as the stunted trees did in the Chinese Collection. He was something like Mr. Wieland when he played an imp; more like a dwarf one remembers to have seen for a penny on a third floor in High Holborn; but most of all like Rumpelstilskin, where he has thrust his foot through the floor, in the comical old German tale of that name. He did not appear at all abashed, but having quietly saluted the company, said:

“God speed you, King Arthur, and fair Queen Guenevere. Thy holy wish comes, leaving me well at present, as I hope it finds all you in return.”

Whereupon he gave a frisk, cut six in the air, went head over heels, and then alighted on his feet again, as cool as an oyster at home during a hard frost.

“Gadso!” exclaimed the king, “you are a strange wight to regard, but an excellent one to perform. What else can you do?”

“More than you would perhaps like me to,” answered the old boy. “I can make every lord in this hall shiver in his armour.”

“You don't look like it,” said Sir Kay, who was in the Anglo-Saxon Blues, and wore a heavy corslet, and, if possible, heavier mustachios, which, when he was excited, almost curled up into his eyes.

“Pooh! stuff! nonsense!” added Sir Launcelot du Lake, as

he crossed one leg over the other, with a noise like a hundred fire-irons all tumbling down into the fender at once.

"I should like to see you," said Sir Gawaine, with a spasmodic laugh. Sir Gawaine was not very young, but he wore a wig and false mustachios, and his greaves were padded. Many old "Sirs" of the present day do the same.

The boy made no answer, but his eyes twinkled like an open casement in the sunshine on a windy day, as he drew forth a walnut from his scrip, and laid it on the table, simply adding—"There."

"Well," said King Arthur, pulling up his hanging sleeves as he stretched out his hand to lay hold of it. "I see nothing here but a walnut. We have finer ones at table. This is a joke."

"Crack it," said the stranger.

King Arthur did as he was desired, and pulled out a little doll's cloak, very bright in colour, and very fine.

"Observe," said the little man, taking it from the king; "you see how it stretches out. You would say it was india-rubber, only there is no such thing known at present. Now, elegant as it is, no lady who is not true of heart to her liege lord will be able to put it on."

There was a great fluttering among the beauties present, and some of the knights looked uncomfortable. Indeed the pause became oppressive, for nobody would venture to try the mantle on, until the king requested Guenevere to set the example. But if he had seen the look she gave Sir Launcelot out of the corners of her beautiful eyes, as she rose, he would not have done it.

A dead silence reigned as the queen approached the odd visitor and took the mantle from him. She made all sorts of objections to its form and colour, and was sure it would not become her; and, wonderful to relate, all this time the mantle kept changing its shades like a chameleon, which the spectators attributed to the silk being artfully shot. At last Arthur got impatient, and put it on his wife's shoulders himself.

But no sooner had he done so, than it crackled with a noise that set everybody's teeth on edge, and shrivelled up round the queen's neck like a piece of parchment in the fire. Guenevere blushed, as though all the scarlet had gone from the mantle to her cheeks; the king nearly choked himself in trying to wash down a morsel of his own pudding with some hippocras;

Sir Launcelot uncrossed his legs nervously, with another loud clang, and everybody was aghast. Then Guenevere uttered the naughtiest word that had ever left her rosy lips, and throwing the hideous mantle on the ground, rushed off to her room.

"Come, Sir Kay," said the boy, maliciously, "you're a stalwart man and chivalric; prove your lady's allegiance."

Sir Kay's mustachios completely turned into spirals, like that nasty green stuff on twelfth cakes, as the stranger addressed him. But it would not do to refuse before so many people, so he told his lady to stand forth. Pale and trembling, she obeyed. The mantle, which the owner had stretched out again, on being thrown over her, rustled, and fluttered, and flew about, although not a breath of air was stirring, and at last flapped over her head, and hid her face from the assembly. This was lucky, for not holding Kay's lady in such dread as they did the queen, the others laughed and winked until she had thrown down the mantle and bolted after Guenevere in great confusion. And then Sir Kay's mustachios, in his agony, stuck right out from his face, as lobsters' feelers would have done, and he began to drink dreadfully.

The same thing happened to almost all. Some came up as bold as that audacious alloy, brass; some trembled like aspens—knights as well as ladies; and Sir Gawaine even tried to tamper with the stranger, offering him twenty marks and his keep for a year if he could make the mantle become his lady. But it was all of no avail; the cheapest advertising tailor of the present day could not have made anything, with all his ingenuity, that fitted anybody worse than the mantle. And so, one after another, they fled in disgrace to their rooms, and the knights looked as silly as might well be.

And now there was only left Sir Caradoc's wife, Rose, and she was going to her chamber, finding that she was the only lady at the round table; when the others insisted that she also should undergo the ordeal, for they longed for the chance of annoying the pair.

"The mantle shall belong to whoever can wear it," said the boy, to get up a little new excitement.

"Win it, Rose," whispered Sir Caradoc, "win it and wear it, sweet wife. I know you can."

The lady came fearlessly from the table, and took the little cloak from the stranger. As she did so, it quivered and crinkled like a living thing; and all the knights winked at one another

except Sir Gawaine, whose wig was so tight that it would not let him. Sir Caradoc felt uneasy as one by one he saw the other ladies stealing back again, in the hopes of witnessing Rose's discomfiture.

"For shame, mantle," said the lady, boldly addressing the robe, "there is no cause for this, for I have never done amiss."

"Never?" asked the little visitor, with emphasis.

"Never!" replied Rose. "Oh, yes! once, perhaps, I might; and then I kissed the mouth of a gallant single knight under a green tree at home."

All the ladies and knights made eyes at one another, and nudged, and twitched their companions, and laughed, as they crowded eagerly round to hear the confession.

"And who was that, Lady Rose?" asked the boy.

"He was my husband afterwards," she replied, as her blue eyes swam round towards him; and she smiled in acknowledgment of the pressure which his gauntlet inflicted on her little hand. Ladies did not wear gloves then.

No sooner had she made this confession than the mantle, which she had put over her shoulders, turned to a beautiful deep blue, with a pile on it like that of the richest velvet. Gems sparkled out one after another all over it, as the golden stars appear in a twilight sky; and it grew longer and longer until it fell down to Rose's very feet as a gorgeous mantle, in which she looked so very beautiful that the bystanders could not suppress their admiration. This was very remarkable, the more especially that one or two of the ladies were called upon to praise some one prettier than themselves, and this, with ladies generally, is a grievous trial.

But the antics of the boy who had brought the mantle soon abstracted their attention. For he jumped, and capered, and frisked about; not paying any respect to Queen Guenevere, who stood sneering at Sir Caradoc and his lady; nor Sir Kay; nor Sir Gawaine; nor Sir Launcelot; but flourishing round all of them in the maddest manner, kicking his legs and heels about as though he had been pulled by a number of strings, and hanging here and there like a fantoccini, until finding himself under an open skylight, he gave a final leap through it, and never came down again. The others all looked after him a long time; but he was clean gone away, and vanished.

The gentle Lady Rose bore her honours very meekly, and Sir Caradoc loved her more deeply than ever. The mantle was

kept for many centuries; and tradition says that it is somewhere, even now, in Wardour-street, but that its real value is not known, as some great family who once possessed it, being in difficulties, took off all the precious stones, and filled up the places with Bristol diamonds.

But this by the way; for we never believe anything connected with Wardour-street and old furniture—we do not even believe ourselves when we are there. The court of King Arthur was equally incredulous; but, like animal magnetism and the ether insensibility, although people vapoured about and pronounced it all a humbug, they could not exactly explain it to their satisfaction. There was an old, maniacal, grey-bearded bard, however, called Orovoso, who had whilome burnt a daughter named Norma for forming an improper alliance with a pagan; and, going mad in consequence, was kept about the court to amuse the guests of Arthur by his soothsayings. And he said that the old boy's mantle was nothing more than an embodiment of an easy conscience, which, whatever external appearances might be, would not accommodate itself in any wise to frames in which guilt and deception lurked. And so the Lady Rose's truth had won it; and, in the words of the real story,

Everye such a lovely ladye,
God send her well to speede.

2.—SIR ALDINGAR.

WITHOUT doubt you have chanced in your lifetime to see the Lord Mayor's show.

If you have done so, you will recollect how the procession got confused with the mob, and the mob with the procession, until you could not tell which was which; how the military gentleman who headed it, balanced himself for dear life, in great fear, upon his horse; how the banners always overpowered the watermen and their props who bore them; how ignoble things fell into the tail of the procession—advertising-vans, coal-waggons, and long apple-stalls upon wheels; and especially when it stopped, as it frequently did, you will call to mind how fearful was the want of respect paid towards the ancient knights by the mob; how the smallest boys chaffed the mailed and

mounted warrior with the tall brass blanc-mange mould on his head, and recommended him "to get inside and pull the blinds up to be out of sight;" how the more matured intellects asked him "what he weighed in his own scales?" how they called out to know if he was "Alderman Armour?" and how, there-upon, the ancient knight got so fearfully irate that he would have done terrible things to his persecutors, only that, in the first place, he could not turn his head, and in the second, he could not get off his horse without the aid of a crane.

Just in this position of impotent rage was another ancient knight, Sir Aldingar, when our story begins. He had no other cognomination: he enjoyed his simple name and title, as Sir Peel, Sir Bulwer, Sir Clay, or Sir Hobhouse, do in the French newspapers of the present day: so that whether it was his christian or surname we cannot exactly make out. However, that is of little consequence: Sir Aldingar was in a most awful rage, not the more bearable because he did not very well see how he could vent it.

Six hundred years ago, Sir Aldingar was steward to the King of England, and Queen Eleanor was his royal mistress—the sweet and gentle lady who followed her husband to the Holy Land, and drew the poison from Edward's arm with her own rosy lips. There was some love and affection, you see, in these old times, rude and bearish as we are apt to consider them.

King Edward was a capital fighter, and loved a battle row above all things; but he was weak in arithmetic, so that Eleanor conducted all the household accounts, and checked Sir Aldingar's entries. He was, however, ever ready to go over the household expenses with her; for if the truth must out, he admired her exceedingly. Her kind and gentle manner he mistook for encouragement; and one day when an illegible item in Sir Aldingar's book of slates caused them to bring their faces very closely together to make it out, he wickedly said to himself, "Here goes!" and kissed her.

How did Queen Eleanor behave? She did not scream, nor ring the bell, nor call in any of those who waited without. She did not tell the king; for there were such diverting punishments in those days—such culinary variations of hanging, broiling, drawing, boiling, spitting, and mincing criminals, that her woman's heart shrank from what she knew would be the result of so doing. But she gave Sir Aldingar such a box on the ear that it was red-hot the whole day; and when he went to bed

it seemed as if his head was spinning round so fast that it hummed again like a top, with the exception that it never slept. And being of a bad disposition, he passed the time until morning in planning vengeance against Queen Eleanor, and seeing how he could best hunt her down and ruin her with safety to himself.

As he looked down upon the town of Windsor from his bedroom loophole, at which he was shaving himself with his dagger, he saw a wounded, limping man-at-arms, with tattered surcoat, and very bad shoes, having walked all the way from Palestine, begging alms of the holy passengers who were starting for Slough, accompanying himself on a species of banjo of the middle ages, which the musical Crusaders of the time are legended to have carried. This was the little song he sang; with a lithographed frontispiece, it would have enjoyed great drawing-room popularity at the present day :

Y^E WARLYKE TROUBADOURS.

O! I'm y^e warlyke Troubadoure,
 With my hey downe and willowe!
 When y^e crie is raised in war,
 Then I touch my lighte guitarre,
 Fal, lal, la! Fal, la!

When y^e battel fyghte is won,
 With my hey downe and willowe!
 Home I haste from Palestine,
 Singing lovelye ladye mine,
 Fal, lal, la! Fal, la!

“Now Gadso, grammercy, by my halidame, i' fackins! thou hast a pretty wit,” said Sir Aldingar, speaking after the approved manner of the middle ages, as he approached the limping troubadour, “and a voice like a merle. Wilt be heard by royalty?”

“I am not much in condition to go to court,” replied the minstrel, as he looked at his paletot of seedy velvet, and his gauntlets, whereof the top scales were gone, so that his finger-ends protruded.

“Beshrew thee for a faint heart,” said Sir Aldingar, again talking *moyen âge* to him. “How dost call thyself?”

“I am named Alleyne the Throstle-throated,” replied the other.

“Well, come with me, Alleyne,” replied Sir Aldingar, “and you shall sing to the queen within an hour.”

Wondering at his good luck, the footsore and wounded minstrel followed his new friend, who, instead of going through the great gates, opened a series of little doors with a latch-key, until they at last reached the queen's private apartment. Here Sir Aldingar told him to stop, and then he started off to find the king.

Edward was working for health in the little garden at the foot of the Round Tower, as was his wont, dibbling potatoes with an old sceptre; but when he saw his steward hastening towards him, with a countenance expressive of much terror, he stopped, and asked him what was the matter.

"Alack the day!" replied the knight. "I dare not tell your majesty, unless you will pass your word not to harm me."

"Say on," said the king; "I promise you, you shall be safe."

"Honour!" asked Sir Aldingar, dubiously.

"Bright!" replied the king, emphatically. "Now, go-ahead."

"In a word, your queen is faithless, sire," said the evil-minded steward; "her paramour is at this moment in her boudoir."

King Edward let the sceptre fall from his hand, and stood for a minute speechless, for the tidings had quite taken away his breath. And then, as if he thought all the eyes of the potatoes were looking at him, he kicked away the basket that held them, and exclaimed,

"Now, look you, Sir Aldingar: if you have told the truth, I will reward you with whatever you like to ask; but if it is a lie, I will have you hanged to a gibbet so high, that you must go up a fire-escape to be turned off. Now, you know your fate: convince me."

The evil knight straightway led the king to Eleanor's boudoir, and there, sure enough, was the minstrel. Imagining that somebody had been brought to hear him, he put himself in an attitude, and was about to strike up a roundelay, when Edward knocked his light guitar into matches, and shook him so soundly, that the queen and her maids of honour, hearing the noise, ran into the chamber. They were all astonished—the minstrel especially so—and one of the prettiest damsels, Maude Aylmer, having caught sight of the minstrel, cried out, "Alleyn!" and fainted outright. But everybody was too much surprised to look after her; and so, as is providentially arranged

in similar cases, she soon came round, looking very pale, but very beautiful, and evidently knowing a great deal more about the intruder than she cared to say.

"You miscreant!" cried Edward, as soon as his rage allowed him to speak. "And you, madam; here's a sight for your parents; to take up with such a wretched, maimed, and shabby scrub as this—go to! go to!"

"To where?" asked Eleanor, perfectly bewildered. "What does this mean?"

"Mean me no means!" cried Edward. "I love you very much, Eleanor, but I really cannot overlook this affair. It is unpleasant, I know; but"—and here he shrugged his shoulders—"you must be burnt. I regret to see a lady and a queen in such a disgraceful position, and I hope it will be a warning to you."

He borrowed this last idea from what he was always accustomed to say when he was dispensing justice. The queen was almost petrified. At first she appeared paralysed with horror, then she went into hysterics, then she fainted, and next, upon recovering, she swore—not bad words—but oaths of innocence, appealing to all the saints she knew, in succession.

As her endeavour to tear her hair proved a failure—for it was very long, and strong, and beautiful, and the quantity she seized on would have pulled off her scalp—"Stop!" she cried (as she attempted to beat her breast with similar ill luck, by reason of the pins in her bodice), "I dreamt a dream last night!"

"A dream! Oh! then I see Queen Mab hath been with you," observed the king, with a scarcely suppressed sneer.

Eleanor had not read Shakspeare, so did not see the allusion; but she sang this ballad—the words of which Percy has handed down to us—to an extempore air. For it was a great thing with the ancient lyrists that they extemporised everything on the instant:

QUEEN ELEANOR'S LAMENT.

I dreamt in my Sweven on Thursday eve,
 In my bed whereas I laye,
 I dreamt a grype and grimlie beast,
 Had carryed my crowne awaye.

Saying there came a littel gray hawke,
 A merlin him they call,
 Which untill the grounde did strike the grype
 That dead he down did fall.

Giffe I were a man, as now I am none,
 A battell wold I prove,
 To fight with that traitor Aldingar:
 Att him I cast my glove.

The king was touched; for a pretty woman in tears, with a good contralto voice, can do a great deal. So he said he did not wish to throw cold water on her destiny (albeit she wished he might do so when the time came), but that he would give her forty days to find a knight; if she did not in that time, it would be his painful duty to weep over, what would literally be, her ashes. . . .

As soon as the grace was accorded, the queen sat up all night writing notes to her friends to do what they could do for her. And she sent out her heralds all round the country; but no one was found willing to come to the chivalric scratch. And so twenty days passed, and affairs were getting desperate, when her pretty maid of honour, Maude, came and said to her,

“Gracious lady, I fear that your heralds spend their time in wassail-shops, and forget your interests. I know it is not considered right for a maiden of eighteen to don man’s attire; but, an it please you, I will go forth, and try what I can do.”

The queen did not put much faith in the mission; but she consented. Whereupon Maude went to the guard-room, and by dint of her blue eyes and rosy lips, got the warder to fit her with some armour. It was a suit that had been made for one of the princes when he was young, and with a very slight alteration of rivets, it fitted tolerably well; and putting down her visor, she took the queen’s own white palfrey, and, unattended, rode forth with the combined feelings of Joan of Arc and Godiva. There was no one to attend her; and, with only her own good cause and spotless honour to protect her, she commenced her search.

It was a dispiriting journey; for she had many reasons for hoping to prove the queen’s innocence, but she found no champion. Day by day went by, and her courage sank within her, until the twentieth morning arrived, when, heart-broken and weary, she sat down by the Thames’ side, and unable to bear up any longer, began to cry. Do you know the river above Maidenhead bridge? If you do, you will be able to call to mind one of the fairest scenes that our sylvan England can boast of. Hanging woods so thick with leaves, that the sun-

light can scarcely quiver on the short and glossy turf below, come down to the very water's edge, until their lowest branches are kissed by the ripple, and the petals of their blossoms spangle the blue river in the spring tide. There are long climbing avenues of scented firs and cedars, dark even in blazing noon, and tortuous walks amidst gnarled and mis-shapen bolls of trees, that need every fibre of their withered roots to hold them to the slopes they start from. Here and there a cold spring of crystal waters forms a clear basin, and gurgles over blue, and white, and mottled pebbles, into the Thames. It is a pleasant thing in summer to gaze from the heights on the fair expanse of river and pasture far below, glittering in the afternoon sun, and hear light laughter and stray chords of music flitting through the woods. You might travel a long, long way further, and, after all your trouble, see nothing that would excite so much admiration as the leafy Clifden.

It was at this fair spot that Maude sat down to rest and cry and bathe her small white feet, which her armour had chafed and wearied, in the river. As her tears fell fast to mingle with the stream, she thought she saw a very tiny boy rise up from the spring. She did not like to look at first, for she could perceive that he was not encumbered with a great deal of clothing—in fact, he had only got a girdle on, to which a sword was hanging, and this is but a scant costume; but, recollecting she might look at him with an artist's eyes, if she did not with that of a common person, she took courage, and stared him full in the face.

"You look very miserable, damsel fair," said the tiny boy. "What is the matter?"

"Alack!" answered Maude, "you can be of no avail."

"Don't say so," said the child, "till you've heard me. I have brought you this sword. Take it, and fight Sir Aldingar with it yourself."

"I!" cried Maude, trembling with flurry. "Well, my goodness!"

"It is your goodness will protect you," replied the child. "And tell the queen to remember her dream—how a little merlin saved her from the griffin. Heaven will fend her: so mount horse, and away!"

Having said which, the little boy sank once more into the spring and disappeared, leaving not even a ripple on its surface. Maude was inclined to treat it all as a dream, but she

still had the sword; so she once more got on her palfrey, and rode back to Windsor at such a rate, that the wind whistled again through her helmet.

When she got to Eton she found the town quite deserted. She met nobody as she went on. There was no tollman at Windsor-bridge, so she rode through without paying. One person only was in the streets, and he was running up the hundred steps as though a mad dog, or a sheriff's officer, or any other dreadful animal, was at his heels. Just then she heard a trumpet sound from the castle, and she directly knew that the queen was in peril; so, without hesitation, she rode right up the hundred steps as well, just as you have seen horses at Astley's scale walls and climb mountains; and, at the top, she threw herself off, and ran through the cloister into the lower ward.

No wonder she had seen nobody in the streets. All the population had collected there awaiting the queen's ordeal. Eleanor herself, pale as death, and dressed all in white, was sitting on a very uncomfortable couch of fagots in the ring, before a great post; the troubadour, with his banjo hung round his neck by way of disgrace, was trembling under a gibbet of an awful height; the king was on a temporary throne; and Sir Aldingar, armed cap-a-pie and sword in hand, was marching up and down, waiting for the queen's champion.

"Tip them another blast, Baldwin," said Edward to his herald.

"They are not worth a blast, sire," replied the herald, not meaning anything wrong, although the king started.

"But for the mere form of the thing," said the king.

Whereupon the herald blew the last challenge, and then the people turned all their attention from the herald to the post. But the echoes had scarcely died away in the nooks and corners of the castle, when Maude jumped into the ring, as lightly as her armour would allow, and threw down her gauntlet at Sir Aldingar's feet, at which the people set up a mighty cheer. The false steward took up the small glove on the point of his sword, and said, contemptuously,

"What's this?"

"It is my gage," said Maude.

"Oh, well! if you wish to fight," observed Sir Aldingar, "there is mine." And he threw down his own large gauntlet, muttering some joke about the broad and narrow gauge to

prove his coolness. But the joke didn't go, for the people knew nothing of railways: they were anxious for the fun to begin; they did not care whether the queen was burnt, or the minstrel hung, or the combatants gashed and hacked into mincemeat, so long as they saw something.

The trumpets sounded, and Sir Aldingar flourished his large two-handed sword, with which he was reported to have spitted six Paynims to a tree in Palestine, when, in the twinkling of a bedpost, which is now an obsolete idiosyncrasy of furniture, Maude whirled her little sword and cut off both Sir Aldingar's legs at the knees, so that he fell down, so as to say, regularly stumped.

There was a huzza from the vast crowd, followed by a solemn pause of intense interest, broken only by the king, who, keeping his eye upon the turret clock, cried out, "Time!" But Sir Aldingar could not come up to it, not having the pluck of the renowned Witherington at Chevy Chase. He only called for a priest.

"I confess my guilt," he said, as soon as one came. "I told stories, and I have suffered for it. Good people," he added, addressing the crowd, "take warning by my sad example, which has brought me to this shameful end, and never keep bad company. I acknowledge the justice of my punishment."

In half an hour this dying speech had been turned into a "Copy of verses," and was printed, and sung amongst the crowd.

And now there was general rejoicing. The king flew to release Eleanor, and the royal couple then came down to ask to whom they were indebted for a champion; when Maude took off her helmet, and letting her long shining ringlets fall about her neck, showed them who she was. My heart! how the people shouted then! and how they threw her the nosegays many of them carried, in token of their approbation. And the king embraced her—not longer, though, than was proper before the queen, and told her she might command whatever boon she wished; upon which she asked for the post Sir Aldingar had just resigned, and it was immediately given to her.

All this time the troubadour had been quite neglected; but Maude no sooner received the appointment than she ran to the gallows and led him to the king's feet, exclaiming, as she blushed like sunset:

"Your majesty, he is my old sweetheart. We were be-

trothed before he went to Palestine. Forgive us, and we won't do so any more."

"Rise, sir," said the king, as he hit him with his sword; "we will have you under our especial eye. Eleanor, dearest love, I have wronged you, but trust I am forgiven. And if these kind friends," he added, coming forward to the front of his throne, and addressing the people, as if he had been finishing a play, "will overlook our errors, the performances shall never again be repeated."

There was loud applause; and the people called for the queen and cheered her; then they called for Maude; and then for the troubadour; and, lastly, hauled Sir Aldingar's body to the gallows intended for his victim. There was a tremendous banquet at night, at which all the chroniclers got so tipsy that they could never give a report of it; but they remembered, up to a certain period, it was excessively jolly.

So Edward loved his wife again, Maude was happy with her troubadour, and "God speed all this fayre companie!"

3.—THE LADY TURNED SERVING-MAN.

It is some little time before the reader of ancient romances—albeit he has a glossary at the end—can become quite reconciled to the notion of all the ladies of the old metrical stories living in "bowers."

And, indeed, our own ideas of bowers, viewed as ordinary dwelling-places, are anything but satisfactory, judging from the remains of these features of a former age still extant in tea-gardens. For we do not take a bower to be an arbour or a summer-house. It is a structure more purely vegetable and airy, such as you might have seen formerly in the realm of the Bayswater Flora, before the polypus arms of the new city of Hyde Park overran it; pleasant in summer, to be sure, with a thatch of clustering canariensis, and twinkling clymatis, and deep-tinged, velvety convolvulus, to keep off the sun—or even covered with hops or scarlet-runners, but still not suited to live in altogether. For the miseries attendant in the summer upon the humblest meals, even tea, taken in a place of this kind, have been made into comic songs; and the bare notion of any residence therein, in winter, is such an utter absurdity that it is not worth a second thought. Akin to this lackadaisical tenement is a "residence under the greenwood

tree;" we should imagine, if anything, several degrees more uncomfortable from the prolonged drip after a shower. With this, however, we have at present less to do; our business is with a "bower" more especially, and the bower of Lady Mabel Clifford.

A long time ago—in that gloriously uncertain period wherein the simple affirmation, at just starting, of some one having existed, is received as an authority, and shields you from all charges of anachronism—a long time ago, Lady Mabel Clifford lived on the Border. The Border was considered as the Field-lane of Great Britain. All sorts of vagabonds resided there, who were wont to rush out at certain times, pick and steal all they could, and then go back to their fastnesses, where they kept their goods until other stronger authorities, whom they were unable to resist, came and took them back again, occasionally leaving the thieves to dangle in the air from gibbets, as the thefts used to do in Field-lane.

The chronicles tell us that when Lady Mabel's father died—who was an old English baron—she became the bride of a young knight, and that he, in an architectural spirit of affection, "built her a brave bower," in which she lived gaily. Perhaps love made it always summer, which, for reasons stated above, was to be desired. For then a bower is not such a bad place after all, when the scent-laden air murmurs through the quivering leaves; and the white wings of the butterfly flash across its opening in the sunlight, which darts, here and there, through the light foliage wherever you can catch a glimpse of the deep sky, to gild the tinselled insects that hover about it. And then all around there is pleasant music of life and summer. You may listen to the murmur of unseen myriads high up in the air, whose song lasts until eventide; and, about, the buds and seed-pods burst and crackle in the glowing light. The river tumbles on and gurgles with fairer melody; the hum of the bee has a gentler sound of busy self-content, and every tree becomes an aviary that may not be matched for sweet minstrelsy by any art. For a hundred birds shall always sing in harmony, albeit they are heretofore strangers to each other. Perhaps it was a bower life, like this, that made Lady Mabel so happy.

But bad times came. Lady Mabel's husband's turn arrived to be set upon by the other borderers, upon some hunting question; for the game-laws, in these rude times, caused almost as

many men to be murdered in various ways as they do at present. And one night a great party of Scotch chiefs, including the Haggis, and M'Chivey of Cheviot, and the fierce Earl of Grab, and Sir Hugh Ullerbalow, made what they call a foray; and having fired the residence, they killed Lady Mabel's husband, and then burst open the cellar and began to drink, until they arrived at that pitch of intoxication assigned, by ancient comparison, to violinists.

Lady Mabel was very young and beautiful; and the borderers were very rude. As a woman, she knew the first of these facts intuitively; and she had learned the second by report. So she determined to fly at once, before they recovered from the fumes of their wine; and she sought her little foot-page to accompany her. Alack! her little foot-page had been hewn down as he unwittingly answered the door to the first summons of the marauders, and all her other servants had taken the warning and left their places at a minute's notice. It would not do to risk the journey by herself, just as she was; so she stole up to her page's wardrobe, and hastily dressed herself, weeping and trembling the whiles, in a suit of his clothes. They were not too small for her; for a woman of moderate stature in boy's clothes may pass for a very fair page.

Accounts of female sailors which appear from time to time in the newspapers—when the large gooseberries and showers of frogs have been too often worked—show us that it is still possible for the fair sex to pass themselves off as men. Else, supposing the stage to hold the mirror up to nature, we never should have suspected the "Little Jockeys," or "Eton Boys," or "Gil Blases," or "Little Devils," to be otherwise than what they really were; the pinched-in waists, preposterous figures, oddly arranged hair, and utter want of knowing what to do with the hands beyond putting them on the waist—an attitude a man is never seen in—entirely destroying all illusion. Lady Mabel, however, without any hesitation, cut off all her silky rippling tresses, keeping only such length as a page might be supposed to wear; and leaving them lying about like so many golden snakes upon the ground, fled from the house, she knew not whither.

Nor more do we. For the chronicle simply states that she "travell'd far through many a land," which is a direction as vague in locality as the period, "once upon a time," is in epoch. But we imagine that she arrived at last in one of those pleasant

legendary countries, with the costume and geography, and manners and customs of which Mr. Planché only is well acquainted—the fairy realms of the Countess d'Anois, in which we once so fervently believed—the loss of which belief has been the most chilling attribute of increasing years. Useful knowledge is all very right and proper; but its pleasures do not—cannot—equal the gilded ignorance of childhood. Well, Lady Mabel, all wearied with her toil, at last sat down to rest, and weep, in the middle of a mighty forest; and make a very frugal meal from beech-nuts and water. Her heart was very full—if it had not run over at her eyes, it would have well-nigh burst. Everything was gloomy around her. The trees of the forest were so tall and thick, that the sunlight never penetrated them; and there were black rocks and gloomy pools in every direction. She had parted, too, with all her jewels for food, and her shoes were beginning to wear away. It is terrible, at the present day, when the first decay of your pet boots evinces itself; but it was much worse in Mabel's case, for she knew not where to go for others, and her small white feet were not calculated to go without. She thought of all this as she lay against the mossy holl of a huge old tree, whose roots aboveground made a sort of rustic arm-chair, watching the ants running backwards and forwards on their highway, and almost wishing she was one of them, to have a home and companions, until, worn out with her great sorrow, she sobbed herself fast asleep.

She was roused by a great noise of shouting and blowing of horns, to which the stoppage at Cheam Gate, coming home from the Derby, was nothing; and, opening her eyes in great terror, she found that she was surrounded by a crowd of huntsmen and falconers, both horse and foot, and a bevy of beautiful ladies on palfreys, with long flowing trains of cloth of gold, such as they wear in a circus, when they dance a grand cotillion upon horseback. One of the gentlemen who were mounted was young and handsome, with a great deal more gold and bright things generally upon his dress than any of his fellows.

“Hillio!” he cried, as he saw Mabel; “wake up, knavelet, and tell us who you are. Some roysterer, I warrant, who has been up all night, and is taking it out of the noontide. Hillio!”

First impressions upon waking are usually very hazy affairs. Hence, at times, incoherent answers have been given in reply

to the servant's knock at the bedroom door, to her great bewilderment, touching on the subjects of the dream thus broken; hence, a doze during a sermon—which, although very wicked, cannot be battled with—induces wrong and hurried responses when none ought to be made, upon first waking up; hence, a friend to whom you are reading a five-act play of your own, will be apt to give loose opinions thereon upon being suddenly questioned. And hence, Lady Mabel's first impression was, that all her Border enemies had followed her to take her prisoner. So, as the horseman's bright dress was the first thing that attracted her, and he looked the chief of the party, she threw herself at his feet, and cried,

“Mercy! mercy! I implore you!”

“What for?” replied the king, for such he was—“what for, stripling? For going to sleep? Gad's my life! we don't punish people here for idle dreaming. If we did, all the trees in the forest wouldn't serve to make gibbets for our philosophers and poets. Who are you, boy?”

The last words somewhat reassured Lady Mabel; for they proved that she was not discovered. So she answered,

“I feared that I was trespassing. I am well born, but my family have been unfortunate; and I am seeking employment.”

“You are a comely lad and well built,” said the king; “turn round and let us look at you.”

Lady Mabel blushed deeply. She had beautiful legs, and could have held rose-nobles between her knees, calves, and ankles all at once; and knowing they were beautiful, she never much cared, in former times, when the wind ruffled her dress round the aforesaid ankles; but that was very different to having them stared at in a pair of red *moyen-âge* page's trunks. However, she did as the king ordered, but it was in some confusion.

“That will do,” said the king, somewhat prepossessed in her favour; and so thought Mabel, by the way, and wondered what he would have if it didn't; for she was a woman, and, as such, aware of her beauty.

“That will do. Now, what would you like to be? My esquire, to ride after me always? or the wine-taster, to attend on me in the hall? or will you be my chamberlain?”

Lady Mabel hesitated a minute. There were reasons for declining the first, and she feared her head would not stand the second. She therefore replied,

“An ’t please you, I will be your chamberlain.”

“Well, so you shall, boy, so you shall,” said the king. “Ho! lords and ladies, on with the hunt! Sir Widdicombe, let the stranger have one of your steeds, for he looks footsore.”

He addressed this speech to the Master of the Horse, who had lived with him, and his father, and great-grandfather, in that capacity. Mabel felt more uncomfortable than ever. She was a capital horsewoman, as all the Border ladies were; but her only notions of riding were connected with the crutch of a side-saddle; for she had never seen the *ecuyères* at Franconi’s. We must draw a veil over her embarrassment, and merely say that she was nearly ridden over in the chase, and before she got home, by the ladies, who were all anxious to get near the young and handsome stranger.

* * * * *

Time went on; the sand of his hour-glass passed like that of an egg-boiler, producing the whiles those eccentric actions which it does in the toys, only amidst real men and women—and Lady Mabel rose into high favour; for the king had not so faithful nor so gentle a servitor. The men about the court found fault with the young chamberlain, to be sure, for he would not drink with them, nor sit long at their banquets; but the women adored him, which made the men hate him still more; and seeing in the hunt he was ever first, or, if not there, by the king’s side, they so plotted, that one day they got him left behind.

Lady Mabel had some suspicion that this was unkindly meant. She watched the train depart somewhat sorrowfully, and then wandered over the castle to find a companion. But everybody had left to join the chase. Had the king been married, and blessed with a family, and all his relations gone a hunting, to get the rabbit-skin of nursery renown wherein to rock the darling baby, the party could not have been more universal. Even Blanche Angmering, the falconer’s daughter, who believed—poor simpleton—that the chamberlain was in love with her, because Mabel was fond of talking to her when her father was out, had scampered off on her pony with the rest. But as Mabel sat down awhile in her room to play with one or two of the tame hawks, her bright eyes fell upon a lady’s dress, a new one, just sent home for Blanche by the court milliner. In an instant, all her woman’s feelings re-

turned. She longed to put on a gown once more ; so, locking the door, she hastily undressed, and donned Blanche's new robe ; not without some trouble, though, for she had gone without stays so long, that it was only with the greatest pains she could make the hooks and eyes meet ; and then she put a wreath in her hair, and taking up a guitar, sang this little song, which we give in Percy's own words :

I.

My father was as brave a lord
As ever Europe might afford ;
My mother was a ladye bright ;
My husband was a valiant knight.

II.

And I myself a ladye gay,
Bedeckt with gorgeous, rich array :
The happiest ladye in the land
Had not more pleasure at command.

III.

I had my musicke every day,
Harmonious lessons for to play ;
I had my virgins fair and free,
Continually to wait on me.

IV.

But now, alas ! my husband's dead,
And all my friends are from me fled ;
My former days are past and gone,
And I am now a serving-man.

“ Bravo ! ” cried a voice outside, as the song concluded. Lady Mabel threw down the guitar in terror, as she heard the sound of applause from a pair of hands following the exclamation.

“ You can't come in ! ” she cried, as she ran to the door.

“ Can't ! ” exclaimed the intruder, whom she at once recognised as the king. “ Who says I can't go anywhere in my own palace, especially when such a voice invites me ? It was a fair challenge ! ”

And sending the door flying before his shoulders, he pushed it into the room, and found Lady Mabel fainting on the ottoman, which she had astonished Blanche by assisting to work. In her fear she looked more beautiful than ever. The denouement is quickly told. The king no sooner saw our heroine in

her proper habiliments, than he fell desperately in love with her. Evil tongues whispered that he had returned from the chase, under pretence of fatigue, to flirt with Blanche upon the sly, for he bore the character of being—what all young, handsome, single kings must be, if they have any spirits—*un peu roué*. It was furthermore asserted that, not being too constant in his attachments wherever a new beauty was concerned, he pressed his attentions somewhat too warmly upon Lady Mabel. But her behaviour was so noble, that the king bethought himself how admirably she would grace his throne; and, after a very short consideration, he offered her his hand and his heart. Both were accepted; and so, from a serving-man, Lady Mabel became a queen, and she and her royal husband, in the good old fairy fashion, “lived happily together all the rest of their days until they died.”

Now for the Moral: for if you care to look for it, you will find one in all our old legends, far more pleasantly and kindly set forth than by crabbed, acrid essayists of the present day. In the mantle of Lady Caradoc was shown a good conscience; in the sword of Sir Aldingar’s fair adversary, the cause of right; and in the adventure of Lady Mabel, the bright destiny, never far distant, when everything around us wears its dreariest hue.

II.

BEDFORDIA.

NEITHER Mr. Peter Cunningham nor Mr. John Timbs, in their excellent books about London, have done becoming justice to the varied district of Bedfordia. Why not "Bedfordia?" It has as much right to have a square for its sponsor as any other region more favoured by patrician homes. Belgravia is great in ancestral exclusiveness, and Tyburnia weighty in successful commerce, and Bedfordia is equally important—in its way.

I would define Bedfordia as somewhat freely bounded on the east by the Foundling Hospital, and on the west by that of Middlesex. Northwards, the New-road forms its frontier; and to the south, the rolling tide of Oxford-street prevents its respectability running astray in St. Giles's. Its inhabitants would repudiate Tottenham-court-road if they could, but it is impossible. It is the great artery of the quarter; and were it, in surgical phrase, "taken up," no other branches could carry on the circulation of vitality into the contiguous component members.

It comprises several squares besides the one from which it takes its name. The frigid Fitzroy, the respectable Russell, the bland Bloomsbury, and the two-windowed Torrington, ventilate its atmosphere. A large portion of its inhabitants live as they choose; an equally large portion live as they can. Russell-square is the region of the first class; Rathbone-place of the second.

Let us consider the first. Possibly nowhere else in London is the conventional mechanism of set social life so gravely observed. The heavy morning call in the heavier carriage—the *raide* routine of the society altogether—the grim grind of the dull dinner-parties—the belief that certain articles can only be procured at certain shops, and those the most expensive—the creed that establishes the importance of the tongue and brains of Gunter on the table over the tongues and brains of anybody round it—the immature French beans in April, only because

they are dear—the drawing-room table with the same books and articles on it, in the same places, from year to year—the loss what to say next in conversation, and the leaden platitude that it turns out to be when it is said—the pompous, empty arrogance of disbelief in the immeasurable self-relying superiority of artistic and literary life,—all these attributes, and thousands of others that their combined influence, acting together, produce, characterise “the Squares.”

I have terribly dull recollections connected with “the Squares.” I had all sorts of relations living all about them when I was a child at school, and I used to dine with one or the other on Sunday. It was not lively. However fine the morning might be, the heavy carriage always took us to the Foundling Chapel, which was close at hand; for, but for this, how could other people see the carriage? And I had, after this, to walk round and round long tables, and see small children eat graviless boiled beef off wooden plates; and my relations used to think it such a pretty condescension if they—being governors and coming in their carriages—tasted a piece of boiled beef and pronounced it very good. And having done this, they would look round and smile complacently, as if they had achieved a feat; in the same way as I have seen feeble persons do upon crossing the road, or entering an omnibus or railway. The sight of these little children dining would have been pretty enough once in its way, but it bored me on constant repetition. And it bored my relations, too; they did not derive a grain of amusement from it; but it is considered “the thing” in “the Squares” to go to the Foundling; and so they wished “to afford an opportunity to all classes”—as they say at an exhibition when it does not pay at a shilling and is reduced to sixpence—to see them there. Not, however, that reduction of price had anything to do with them. On the contrary, if their price of admission as a governor, as painted in the dull gold letters on the black board with the names attached, had been doubled, they would have liked “all classes” to have seen them better.

The ordinary books on the drawing-room table were always removed on Sundays, and replaced by religious ones, which, like their predecessors, were never opened. People called after luncheon, and then the *Observer*—that effete and musty old newspaper, which still seems to be taken in by people who prefer ancient mould candles to moderator lamps, and gives you an impression that the united ages of its editor, leader writers,

reporters, and correspondents, must amount to many hundreds—was put behind the sofa cushions. As the merest boy, I was struck with the twaddle the visitors talked; they told one another things that had been in the newspapers days before, and were especially particular in inquiring after persons I knew they did not care twopence about; and when at last they said, "Well, we must go now," I wondered how it was that the necessity of departure had not struck them all before. Some friends did not come in, but merely left cards; they were sensible people, and had considerably the best of it. The position of their cards in the large china dish depended, in a great measure, upon who they were. There was a fat, wheezing man, who had been knighted in the City sometime, with a full-blown lady, and who gave heavy dinners, and was very rich, and could procure anything for money except his h's. He was a great card, actually and metaphorically, and was always at the top of the dish. I dined once at his house; it was a solemn and dismal banquet. At one time, for three minutes at least not a word was said—not even a platitude was launched. The servants stalked round the table, and gravely croaked "Hock or sherry?" in your ear; and there was really nothing left, after you had crumbled all your bread away in desperation, but to drink; and so I took to it for the remainder of the feast. Once I tried to make a little diversion to the dreariness, by offering to bet that there was always more false hair at the Opera on the nights of "Don Giovanni" than at any other representation of the season (which there always is, and I can't tell why), but the attempt was a failure. When we went up-stairs, a lady who could not sing tootled out something, half inaudibly, at a piano that must have cost two hundred guineas at least. Then came a dead pause, and the mistress of the house said, "Oh, thank you—it is so very kind of you;" and somebody near the instrument, obliged to say something, asked whose song it was; and on being told, was no wiser. Then came another pause; and then, as I felt strangely inclined, from simple oppression, to stamp and yell, and smash the costly tea-service that the servant was bringing round, by kicking the tray up into the air, as a relief to my bottled-up feelings, I hurried out of the room, and hurrahed to find myself once more upon the free and common pavement.

Once leave "the Squares," and the population of the streets of Bedfordia is more varied than that of any other department in

London. It is, *par excellence*, the "Quartier des Arts." From the varied struggling for a livelihood in Rathbone-place, to the academical aspirations of Upper Charlotte-street, there is not a floor that does not boast an "artiste" as an occupant. Heaven only knows how a great part of these folk live! Not the painters who cut large bits out of the fronts of houses over the windows; nor the sculptors who have roomy studios behind, opening into the mews, with the same dusty old plaster heads, and big hands, and casts of human chines hanging about—of no earthly use but to look professional, as tea-dealers display mandarins and Chinese lanterns—not these clever folks, who are more or less established, but the "professors." Professors swarm hereabouts. They teach the accordion, and model in leather, and have classes for dancing, French, wax flowers, potichomachie, the guitar, photography, and dress-making. They sell cheap music, and clean gloves, and paint on glass, and dye dresses, and work in hair, and deal in Berlin-wool, and open and close small cigar shops, and retail fancy letter-paper and perforated pasteboard, and songs with piratical frontispieces, shilling books, whereof, like a dancing-show at a fair, the best part is outside, and fancy writing-paper. In fact, they would form, together, the storehouse of that hopeless suburban and semi-marine establishment known as a "Repository"—one of the havens provided for commercial wrecks. For as the Chinese proverb perhaps says, "the barber must be taught his calling, but the repository and the wine-trade require no apprenticeship:" a terse conception of that sagacious and practical people.

If I were asked to name the chief productions of Bedfordia, I should say, "Concerts!" The people who pay the half-guinea for tickets, and the professors who sell them, are alike natives of the district. With the exception of private teaching, this is the only case in which the two classes of the population have much intercourse with each other, and the results of this even are visible only out of the district, except the anomalous gatherings of the Music Hall in Store-street. The concert Bedfordia mostly approves is in the kindly-granted private house of the West-end: when the bedroom chairs descend to the drawing-room, and the more movable knick-knacks go up-stairs for the day in exchange: for safety from breakage, however, be it understood, rather than another danger.

I say "the Squares" mainly support these concerts. The

usual habitués of the mansion have been too often bored, and stifled, and crushed in the rooms; but when Lady de Robinson kindly allows Signor Dolce Feroce to hold his *matinée* at her residence, "the Squares" love to go, because, for the time, they fancy themselves on visiting terms with the establishment, and when they speak of it afterwards, they say "they were at Lady de Robinson's concert on Thursday," as if her ladyship gave it. The Signor is thus ignored altogether. But he gets, in this case, his guinea a ticket just the same; which, at first sight, may appear a great deal for three hours of heated harmony, occasionally supplied in greater perfection, and more commodiously, by St. James's, or St. Martin's Hall, for a small fraction of that sum; but as for every ticket sold, eight or ten are given away to eligible people with nice bonnets to "dress" the room and crowd it, and make it appear to the outer world that the Signor is run after by admiring mobs, the price per head comes to about the same thing in the end.

That Bedfordia is gradually decaying there cannot be the least doubt. It has been for some time the "sick man" of the London quarters. As the corners of its streets have gradually turned into shops, so has its commercial spirit extended, stealing on from house to house, as the dining-room windows are one after the other knocked into shop-fronts. I see more bills of "apartments to let" about, and I am told that boarding-houses are on the increase. I believe this to be true; for on fine afternoons I see at the drawing-room windows, not one, but two or three of those peculiar caps which only ladies at boarding-houses wear. If, however, this innovation forces new sentiments into "the Squares;" if it teaches them that Verey's ices are as good as Grange's; that dragging round the Park every afternoon is but a ghastly business of show-off, with the lovely environs of London available; that literary people are not all "strange sorts of persons;" that two or three of their favoured watering-places are only bare, chalky, glaring, leafless leagues of pretence, and that they might go to the Pyrenees for the same money; that heavy plate on the table does not compensate for heavier people around it; and that the vulgar old woman with the diamonds and rings who sits next to you is worlds and worlds below the nice governess who has not appeared, but is having a dreary time with the children in the schoolroom,—if the change effects all this, and much more in Bedfordia, no amount of administrative reform will ever equal it in value.

III.

A WINTER'S NIGHT WITH MY OLD BOOKS, CHIEFLY
CONCERNING GHOSTS AND PRODIGIES.

WHEN the weather is cold and the evenings at their longest—when the day closes in at half-past three, and one dines early, because one does not know what else to do; and afterwards piles up such a fire that, no matter how many candles are lighted, the flashing glow on the ceiling, and glass, and picture-frames overcomes them—at this cozy season I sometimes have a small party. My visitors are not numerous. They come at the minute I wish for them, and depart with equally agreeable rapidity. They do not cost me anything to entertain. They are not “fast,” up-to-the-time fellows, but grave, and even shabby in their appearance; such as many would not like to be seen in their rooms. We have, however, been friends for many years; and they have, in times of vexation and fretting, given me more consolation than several others upon whom I might with more plausibility have reckoned. In a word, they are a few favourite red-edged, round-cornered, musty old books.

I have not many; bibliomania is an expensive passion to indulge in, and will affect a large income; but where that income is fished with a steel pen from the bottom of an inkstand, with the same slippery incertitude that attends the spearing of eels in a muddy pond, the taste is, of necessity, entirely kept down. And so I am content with a very few, that have come to me as heirlooms rather than purchases, awaiting patiently, with the resignation of the Flying Dutchman's wife, the time when the long-expected ship shall come in that contains my fortune.

It so happens that the few old books I have treat almost entirely either of ghosts or prodigies. How our good ancestors contrived to live in full possession of their wits in those old haunted-looking houses, with so many accredited instances in their popular literature of unearthly visitors calling upon them at all times, is, in itself, a marvel. How they ever found themselves alone in their tall, ghastly beds, with the moon shining through the mullioned windows upon the tapestry, as she rose over the yew-trees of the adjoining churchyard, without dying

with fright then and there, is matter for serious discussion. Now, it is true, ghosts have somewhat declined in position; not but that I still devoutly believe in them, but circumstances are not so favourable to their appearance. In the country they would shun spots where the gleam and stream of the mail-train might disturb their importance; and in London they would hate the gas-light shining through the bedroom blinds; the rattling of the cabs going home with late roysterers; and, at this their own season, the waits playing the Eclipse Polka, as well as the cornet-à-pistons in the cold can imitate the great fluttering solo of Kœnig, Arban, or Macfarlane. Ghosts have never been in force in London. I can't tell what you might see if you were shut up all night by yourself in Westminster Abbey; but certainly they eschew the squares, and have a horror of hotels. To be in a cellar at midnight might formerly have been considered a favourable position for meeting one. Imagine the chance a spectre would have at twelve P.M., in the Cyder Cellars! But to our subject more directly.

The smallest of my books, looking like a withered old gentleman, is entitled, "Miscellanies, collected by J. Aubrey, Esq." Its title-page of contents, amongst which we find "Apparitions," "Omens," "Voices," "Knockings," "Corpse Candles," and other "shudderish" subjects, bespeaks its tendency. It is, I think, the only published work of the author.

Aubrey must have been on excellent terms with ghosts generally. It is somewhat strange, considering the high respect in which he held them, that none ever paid him a visit. He has, however, no story of his own to recount; but he evidently believes in all the narrations as though he had been the hero of them; and it was on this account that Gifford somewhat ill-naturedly called him "a credulous fool." One of his notes, under the head of *Majick*, will cause a smile. It runs as follows:

"In Herefordshire, and other parts, they do put a cold iron bar upon their barrels, to preserve their beer from being soured by thunder. This is a common practice in Kent."

Modern science has attributed this remedy to other causes than "majick;" indeed, "progress" has sadly upset the wizards. Mephistopheles himself, when he tapped the table to bring forth wine for the students, would have been quenched altogether by Robert-Houdin and his inexhaustible bottle. Take another:

"There was in Scotland one — (an obsessus) carried in the air several times in the view of several persons, his fellow-

soldiers. Major Henton hath seen him carry'd away from the guard in Scotland, sometimes a mile or two. Sundry persons are living now (1671), that can attest this story. I had it from Sir Robert Harley (the son), who marryed Major Henton's widow; as also from E. T. D. D."

And next to it:

"A gentleman of my acquaintance, Mr. M., was in Portugal, anno 1655, when one was burnt by the Inquisition for being brought thither from Goa in East India, in the air, in an incredible short time."

Wonderful as these events must have been at the time, a shilling will procure us a similar spectacle on fine summer Monday afternoons at Cremorne Gardens, when Mr. Green not only carries away one, but a dozen with him in the air. And certainly no Essex Inquisition would now think of condemning to be burnt all "intrepid aëronauts" who come in fifteen minutes from Chelsea to Chelmsford, for which latter neighbourhood descending balloons appear to have a great predilection.

Following up the "Majick," we have a less satisfactory receipt than that for the thunder:

"To CURE THE THRUSH.—Take a living frog, and hold it in a cloth, that it does not go down into the child's mouth, and put the head into the child's mouth till it is dead."

It is not here clearly explained whether the death of the child or the frog puts an end to the thrush. The following is more simple, and at all events harmless:

"To CURE THE TOOTHACHE.—Take a new nail and make the gum bleed with it, and then drive it into an oak. This did cure William Neal, Sir William Neal's son, a very stout gentleman, when he was almost mad with the pain, and had a mind to have pistoll'd himself."

The cure that an inflamed gum might receive from this rude lancing is not hinted at. Going on, we find it clearly shown why the steel horseshoe now hangs from the glittering châtelaine of our most fashionable West-end belles, to which enviable position, it will be seen, they have been promoted from the doorsteps:

"It is a thing very common to nail horseshoes on the thresholds of doors, which is to hinder the power of witches that enter into the house. Most houses of the West-end of London have the horseshoe on the threshold. It should be a horseshoe

one finds. In the Bermudas they used to put an iron into the fire when a witch comes in."

We do the latter thing in England, on the entrance of a friend, to give him a cheerful blaze. The next receipt, I think I may safely affirm, is no longer practised :

"At Paris, when it begins to thunder and lighten, they do presently ring out the bell at the Abbey of St. Germain, which they do believe makes it cease. The like was wont to be done heretofore in Wiltshire; when it thundered and lightened, they did ring St. Adels bell at Malmsbury Abbey. The curious do say that the ringing of bells exceedingly disturbs spirits."

It certainly exceedingly disturbed mine when I once lived opposite to a country church where the "youths" were wont to ring triple-major-bobs, or whatever they called them, twice a week. The subject is, however, worth investigation. Perhaps by it may be accounted for how it happens always to be such serene and lovely weather on the Queen's festival days, and a new fact in meteorology opened to us.

As regards matrimony, Aubrey had collected many secrets: "The last summer," he says, "on the day of St. John Baptist (1694), I accidently was walking in the pasture behind Montague House. It was xii a clock. I saw there about two or three and twenty young women, most of them well habited, on their knees, very busie, as if they had been weeding. I could now presently learn what the matter was; at least, a young man told me that they were looking for a coal under the root of a plantain to put under their heads that night, and they should dream who would be their husbands; it was to be found that day and hour."

Again: "To know whom one shall marry, you must be in another county, and knit the left garter about the right legg'd stocking (let the other garter and stocking alone), and as you rehearse these following verses, at every comma knit a knot:

This knot I knit
 To know the thing I know not yet
 That I may see
 The man (woman) that shall my husband (wife) be
 How he goes, and what he wears,
 And what he does all the days.

Accordingly, in your dream you will see him; if a musitian, with a lute or other instrument; if a scholar, with a book, &c. A gentlewoman that I knew confessed, in my hearing, that she

used this method, and dreamt of her husband whom she had never seen; about two or three years after, as she was on Sunday at church, up pops a young Oxonian in the pulpit; she cries out presently to her sister, 'This is the very face of the man I saw in my dream.' Sir William Somes lady did the like."

Under the head *Apparitions*, is the following paragraph, which is, perhaps, better known than most of Aubrey's collection:

"Anno 1670, not far from Cyrencester, was an Apparition; being demanded whether a good spirit or a bad? returned no answer, but disappeared with a curious perfume and most melodious-twang. Mr. W. Lilly believes it was a farie."

This is certainly unsatisfactory; the locality is hazily defined, and the detail not well filled up. But the fact that "Mr. W. Lilly" believed it to be a "farie" was quite sufficient. Hitherto we have selected the most ridiculous of Aubrey's miscellanies, but we now come to some which, at all events, are well authenticated. And first, under the head of *Dreams*:

"Sir Christopher Wren, being at his father's house, anno 1651, at Knahill, in Wilts (a young Oxford scholar), dreamt that he saw a fight in a great market-place, which he knew not, where some were flying and others pursuing; and among those that fled, he saw a kinsman of his who went into Scotland to the king's army. They heard in the country that the king was come into England, but whereabouts he was they could not tell. The next night his kinsman came to his father, at Knahill, and was the first that brought the news of the fight at Worcester."

Sir Christopher, in all probability, told this story himself to Aubrey; at all events, he lived twenty years after the publication of the book. The chronicler also received the following nearly first hand. There is, however, little that is supernatural in it, but its quaintness is most diverting:

"Dr. Twiss, minister of the new church at Westminster, told me that his father (Dr. Twiss, Prolocutor of the Assembly of Divines, and author of *Vindiciæ*), when he was a schoolboy at Winchester, saw the Phantome of a schoolfellow of his deceased (a rakehell), who said to him, 'I am damned.' This was the occasion of Dr. Twiss (the father's) conversion, who had been before that time (as he told his son) a very wicked boy. (He was hypochondriacal.)"

The one or two more stories that we shall steal from Aubrey

are of a serious character, really "ghost stories," well attested, and inexplicable :

"Anno 1647," he says, "the Lord Mohun's son and heir (a gallant gentleman, valiant, and a great master of fencing and horsemanship) had a quarrel with Prince Griffin; there was a challenge, and they were to fight on horseback in Chelsey-fields in the morning; Mr. Mohun went accordingly to meet him; but about Ebury Farm he was met by some who quarrell'd with him and pistol'd him; it was believed by the order of Prince Griffin; for he was sure that Mr. Mohun, being so much the better horseman, &c., would have killed him, had they fought. In James-street in Covent-garden did then lodge a gentlewoman, who was Mr. Mohun's sweetheart. Mr. Mohun was murdered about ten a-clock in the morning; and at that very time, his mistress being in bed, saw Mr. Mohun come to her bed-side, drew the curtain, looked upon her, and went away; she called after him, but no answer; she knocked for her maid, ask'd her for Mr. Mohun; she said, she did not see him, and had the key of her chamber-door in her pocket. This account my friend, aforesaid, had from the gentlewoman's own mouth, and her maid's. A parallel story to this, is, that Mr. Brown (brother-in-law to Lord Coningsby) discovered his being murdered to several. His Phantome appear'd to his sister and her maid in Fleet-street, about the time he was killed in Herefordshire, which was about a year since, 1693."

In the following is ground for a good romance :

"Sir Walter Long, of Draycot (grandfather of Sir James Long), had two wives; the first a daughter of Sir — Packinton in Worcestershire; by whom he had a son : his second wife was a daughter of Sir John Thinne of Longleat; by whom he had several sons and daughters. The second wife did use much artifice to render the son by the first wife (who had not much Promethean fire) odious to his father; she would get her acquaintance to make him drunk; and then expose him in that condition to his father; in fine, she never left of her attempts, till she got Sir Walter to disinherit him. She laid the scene for the doing this at Bath, at the assizes, where was her brother Sir Egrimond Thinne, an eminent serjeant-at-law, who drew the writing; and his clerk was to set up all night to engross it; as he was writing, he perceived a shadow on the parchment from the candle; he look'd up, and there appear'd a hand, which immediately vanished; he was startl'd at it, but thought

it might be only his fancy, being sleepy; so he writ on; by-and-by, a fine white hand interposed between the writing and the candle (he could discern it was a woman's hand), but vanish'd as before; I have forgot, it appeared a third time; but with that the clerk threw down his pen, and would engross no more, but goes and tells his master of it, and absolutely refused to do it. But it was done by somebody, and Sir Walter Long was prevailed with to seal and sign it. He lived not long after; and his body did not go quiet to the grave, it being arrested at the church-porch by the trustees of the first lady. The heir's relations took his part, and commenced a suit against Sir Walter (the second son), and compell'd him to accept a moiety of the estate; so the eldest son kept South-Wranchester, and Sir Walter, the second son, Dracot, Cernes, &c. This was about the middle of the reign of King James the First."

With one more we shall lay Aubrey aside; this is the more interesting, as it has relation to a well-known event in our history:

"One Mr. Towes, who had been schoolfellow with Sir George Villers, the father of the first Duke of Buckingham (and was his friend and neighbour), as he lay in his bed awake (and it was daylight), came into his chamber the phantome of his dear friend Sir George Villers. Said Mr. Towes to him, 'Why, you are dead, what make you here?' Said the knight, 'I am dead, but cannot rest in peace for the wickedness and abomination of my son George at court. I do appear to you to tell him of it, and to advise and exhort him from his evil ways.' Said Mr. Towes, 'The duke will not believe me; but will say that I am mad or doat.' Said Sir George, 'Go to him from me, and tell him by such a token (some mole) that he had which none but himself knew of.' Accordingly, Mr. Towes went to the duke, who laughed at his message. At his return home, the phantome appeared again, and told him that 'the duke would be stabbed (he drew out a dagger) a quarter of a year after, and you shall outlive him half a year. And the warning that you shall have of your death will be, that your nose will fall a-bleeding;' all of which accordingly fell out so. This account I have had (in the main) from two or three; but Sir William Dugdale affirms what I have here taken from him to be true, and that the apparition told him of several things to come, which proved true; *e.g.* of a prisoner in the Tower that should be honourably delivered. This Mr. Towes had so often the ghost of his old friend appear to him, that it was not at all

terrible to him. He was surveyor of the works at Windsor (by favour of the duke). Being then sitting in the hall, he cried out, 'The Duke of Buckingham is stabbed!' He was stabbed that very moment."

Next to Aubrey on my shelves—of the same octavo form, but far stouter in appearance, so that the two books look like an alderman and a genius side by side—is Glanvil's *Saducismus Triumphatus*. It differs from Aubrey's work, inasmuch as the former is merely a string of collected anecdotes, imperfectly arranged, and printed one after the other; whereas Glanvil devotes half his book to metaphysical arguments upon the possibility of apparitions: and in his collection of relations, to each of them he adds some comments. It is a regular, downright, hair-erecting ghost-book, one only to be read, except by strong-minded persons, in the daytime, and in company; and even then with the prospect of a bed-fellow. I was a child when I first read it, and at that time it was the most entrancing book I ever came upon. But I paid dearly for the interest it excited. For a long season I used to lie trembling in bed for hours, as I pondered on the awful stories it contained. They are mostly too long to extract here, but I remember the relation of the chest with the three locks, which opened one after the other at the foot of Mr. Bourne's bed just before he died; and also how the Earl of Donegal's steward, Taverner, riding home, was passed at night on the high road by the likeness of James Haddock, who had been dead five years, and who was now mounted on a horse that made no noise; how this spectre wished him to set a will case to rights; and how it haunted him night and day, alone and in company, until he did. There was also a fearful tale of the gashed and bleeding likeness of old Mr. Bowes, of Guildford, appearing to a criminal in prison, which led to the apprehension of the real murderers, as related by Mr. Onslow, a justice of peace in the neighbourhood. And another ghost (also at Guildford, of which place, by the way, I shall have to recite my own ghost story presently), who got back some land to the rightful people by appearing to the usurper at a stile, over which he had to pass one evening, going across a field. This last haunted me out of doors as well as within. There was a wooden bridge, with a stile in the middle of it, over a bourne, in the middle of the long, lonely fields, between Chertsey and Thorpe, which I always associated with the apparition; and when, as sometimes chanced, I was sent with medicine for

some urgent case at the latter village, and it was growing dusk at my return, my heart absolutely quaked within me as I got near the stile. I always expected to see a grey, transparent dead man opposing my passage; and this feeling grew upon me so, that at last I preferred to go round the long roadway, even skirting the dark fir copses of St. Anne's hill in preference; for one might meet a donkey-cart there by chance, or haply the postman; but in Thorpe fields, except on Saturday night, when the people came to our town to buy things, the solitude was awful. In the latter case they generally went home "jolly;" and the walk on such an evening then became a matter of great glory to me. My nightly fears, through reading Glanvil, were equally acute, and they lasted over a longer space of time. The only occasions on which I slept calmly, were when the people came to brew; and then the clanking of the pails, the chopping of the wood, and the poking of the fires, kept up all night long, made it very pleasant.

One of the most fearful stories in Glanvil's book is not in his narrations, but in a prefatory letter by Dr. H. More, who edited the work, and is well told as follows:

"About the year of our Lord 1632, near unto Chester in the Street, there lived one Walker, a yeoman-man of good estate, and a widower, who had a young woman to his kinswoman that kept his house, who was by the neighbours suspected to be about to become a mother, and was towards the dark of the evening one night sent away with one Mark Sharp, who was a Collier, or one that digged coals under ground, and one that had been born in Blakeburn-hundred in Lancashire; and so she was not heard of a long time, and no noise or little was made about it. In the winter-time after one James Graham, or Grime (for so in that country they call them), being a miller, and living about two miles from the place where Walker lived, was one night alone very late at the mill grinding corn; and as, about twelve or one o'clock at night, he came down the stairs from having been putting corn in the hopper, the mill-doors being shut, there stood a woman upon the midst of the floor, with her hair about her head, hanging down and all bloody, with five large wounds on her head. He being much affrighted and amazed, began to bless him, and at last asked her who she was, and what she wanted? To which she said, 'I am the spirit of such a woman, who lived with Walker; and he promised to send me to a place where I should be well look't to until I should come again and keep his house. And accordingly,' said the apparition, 'I was one

night late sent away with one *Mark Sharp*, who, upon a Moor (naming a place that the miller knew), slew me with a pick (such as men dig coals with), and gave me these five wounds, and after threw my body into a coal-pit hard by, and hid the pick under a bank; and his shoes and stockings being bloody, he endeavoured to wash; but seeing the blood would not wash forth, he hid them there.' *And the apparition further told the miller, that he must be the man to reveal it, or else that she must still appear and haunt him. The miller returned home very sad and heavy, but spoke not one word of what he had seen, but eschewed as much as he could to stay in the mill within night without company, thinking thereby to escape the seeing again of that frightful apparition. But, notwithstanding, one night, when it began to be dark, the apparition met him again, and seemed very fierce and cruel, and threatened him, that if he did not reveal the murder, she would continually pursue, and haunt him. Yet, for all this, he still concealed it until St. Thomas's eve before Christmas, when being soon after sunset walking on in his garden, she appeared again, and then so threatened him, and affrighted him, that he faithfully promised to reveal it next morning.*

"*In the morning he went to a magistrate, and made the whole matter known, with all the circumstances; and diligent search being made, the body was found in a coal-pit, with five wounds in the head, and the pick, and shoes and the stockings yet bloody, in every circumstance as the apparition had related to the miller. Whereupon Walker and Mark Sharp were both apprehended, but would confess nothing. At the Assizes following (I think it was at Durham), they were arraigned, found guilty, condemned, and executed, but I could never hear that they confessed the fact. There were some that reported that the apparition did appear to the Judge or the Foreman of the Jury (who were alive in Chester in the Street about ten years ago, as I have been credibly informed), but of that I know no certainty.*

There are many persons yet alive that can remember this strange murder and the discovery of it; for it was, and sometimes yet is, as much discoursed of in the North country, as anything that almost hath ever been heard of, and the relation printed, though now not to be gotten. I relate this with the greatest confidence (though I may fail in some of the circumstances), because I saw and read the letter that was sent to Serjeant Hutton, who then lived at Goldsbrugh, in Yorkshire, from the judge before whom Walker and Mark Sharp were tried, and by whom they were condemned; and had a copy of it until about the year 1658,

when I had it and many other books and papers taken from me. And this I confess to be one of the most convincing stories (being of undoubted verity) that ever I read, heard, or knew of, and carrieth with it the most evident force to make the most incredulous spirit to be satisfied that there are really sometimes such things as apparitions."

This horrible story is corroborated further by two of the witnesses on the trial, men of credit, before Judge Davenport. One of them deposed, on oath, that he saw the likeness of a child stand on Walker's shoulders during the time of the trial, at which time the judge was very much troubled, and passed sentence that night—a thing never the custom in Durham before. Those who have paid any attention to these matters, may remember, in our own time, that the body of Maria Martin was discovered in the Red Barn, at Polstead, in consequence of her appearing to her parents in a dream. Of course this was not mentioned at the trial of her murderer, Corder; but it was known to have been the case. There appears something more than nervous fancy or coincidence in this.

The greater part of Glanvil's book is taken up with accounts of the doings of witches, and of the disturbances in haunted houses; but they are mostly very silly. As regards the first, Lady Duff Gordon's admirable translation of "The Amber Witch" is far more interesting; and, for the second, the most circumstantial detail does not impress you with a hundredth part of the mysterious terror that Hood's Haunted House called forth.*

* In that fine poem were some half-dozen lines singularly descriptive of the scene, which, some time afterwards, the murder of the Duchesse de Praslin impressed so forcibly on the public mind. I do not think the coincidence was ever noticed. They ran:

The floor alone retain'd the trace of guilt,
Those boards obscurely spotted.

Obscurely spotted to the door, and thence
With many doubles to the grated casement—
Oh, what a tale they told of fear intense,
Of horror and amazement!

What human creature in the dead of night
Had coursed like hunted hare that cruel distance?
Had sought the door, the window in the flight,
Striving for dear existence?

What shrieking spirit in that bloody room,
Its mortal frame had violently quitted?

One more scrap of Glanvil before we leave him. Dr. More says he was accustomed to have an argument on the immortality of the soul with "an old gentleman in the country, an excellent justice of peace, and a piece of a mathematician; but what kind of philosopher he was, you may understand from a rhyme of his own making, which he commended to me on my taking horse in his yard, which rhyme is this :

Ens is nothing till sense finds it out :
Sense ends in nothing, so nought goes about ;

which rhyme of his was so rapturous to himself, that at the reciting of the second verse the old gentleman turned himself about upon his toe as nimbly as one may observe a dry leaf whisked round in the corner of an orchard-walk by some little whirlwind." And with this quaint anecdote we put old Glanvil by.

And from him we turn to a large folio of 1649, teeming with excellent woodcuts, whereof all the personages look as if they were ready dressed to perform in "The Huguenots," and in which the "figures" or "effigies" of the elephant and whale appear as wonders, although the well-defined tables of the human blood-vessels would scarcely disgrace the ablest anatomical demonstrator of the present day. This large book contains the works of Ambrose Paré, who was successively the bold and successful surgeon to the French kings, Henry II., Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III., who dressed the wounds of the unfortunate Coligni at the time of the terrible Bartholomew's Eve, and who, on the night before the massacre, was locked up by Charles in his own chamber, that he might not be murdered, albeit he was a Protestant. He says little about ghosts for a believer in the supernatural, but his "*Prodigies*" are of the wildest order. He gives pictures of all of them, which, I regret, cannot here be reproduced; and he has these illustrated from the slightest descriptions. What he would have made of the sea-serpent is difficult to tell. But Pontopidan had not then been born, nor had the Dædalus been launched; elsewise, in his chapter devoted to "the wondrous nature of some marine things," we might have expected an account as long as its object. One thing, however, is worthy of serious remark in his general "prodigies." Many of them, classed on a level with the rest in point of the marvellous, have had their fellows in our own time. He pictures a case parallel to that of the Siamese twins; and has also an account of a

child with two heads, similar to the infant that died in Paris in 1829. He moreover portrays a baby with four arms, four legs, and one head, a companion to which died in Westminster in 1838, and an account of it appears in the *Times* of September 17 in that year. Now, if it is possible for such monsters—which take high rank amongst his prodigies—to exist, may not the majority of the rest be also matters of likelihood?

But to his *marvels*: and out of compliment to the marine monster quoted above, who has made a little stir of late, we will commence with some of Ambrose Paré's ocean wonders. And first, of two ecclesiastical prodigies: "In our times, saith Rondeletius, in Norway, was a monster taken in a tempestuous sea, the which as manie as saw it, presently termed a monk; and Anno Dom. 1531, there was seen a sea-monster, with the head of a bear, and feet and hands of an ape; another, with a lion's head, and man's voice; and one like a man, 'with his countenance composed to gravity and his hair yellow,' but a fish from the waist downwards, who came one fine morning out of the Nile. Others are spoken of as with the 'head, mane, and breast of a horse;' and others, seventy feet long, with heads like swine's."

But in another story he is more plausible: "Whilst in my vineyard," he says, "that is at Meudon, I caused certain huge stones to bee broken to pieces, a toad was found in the midst of one of them. When as I much admired thereat, because there was no space wherein this creature could bee generated, increas, or live; the stone-cutter wished me not to marvel thereat, for it was a common thing; and that hee saw it almost everie daie. Certainly it may com to pass, that from the more moist portion of stones, contained in places moist and underground, and the celestial heat mixing and diffusing itself over the whole mass of the world, the matters may bee animated for the generation of these creatures."

Reporters who live upon enormous gooseberries and showers of frogs, might have amassed large incomes in his time; for he speaks of "great and thick bars of iron which fell from heaven, and presently turned into swords and rapiers;" and also of a stone that tumbled from the skies in Hungary, and weighed two hundred and fifty pounds. And we find, at three separate periods in Italy, it has rained flesh, corn, and milk and oil. If any turn in the weather would bring about a like series of showers in Ireland occasionally, what a great thing it would be!

Ambrose Paré's system of surgery and medicine was won-

derfully sensible for the time in which he lived; much of his treatment would hold good at the present day. Occasionally, however, we may put less trust in him. He says, "Of one tell an ass in his ear that hee is stung by a scorpion, they saie that the danger is immediately over." But, he adds, "Oft times there is no small superstition in things that are outwardly applied, such as to make pills of one hanged, against the bitings of a mad dog; for any one to bee free'd from the cough who shall spit in the mouth of a toad, letting her go away alive; or the halter wherein one hath been hanged, put about the temples to help the headache." He very properly deems all these as "superstitious fictions," albeit the devil will sometimes make them prosper, to keep the workers ensnared to his service. There are many other marvellous histories in Ambrose Paré, but as they are better suited to the medical than the general ear, they may be passed over.

Finally, I mentioned that I had a ghost-story, hitherto unpublished, to tell about Guildford. About twenty years ago, my brother, Arthur Smith, was a pupil at the grammar-school in that town, under the Rev. Mr. Bellin. The boys had been sitting up all night in their bedroom for a frolic, and, in the early morning, one of them, young M——, of Godalming, cried out, "Why, I'll swear there's the likeness of our old huntsman on his grey horse, going across the whitewashed wall!" The rest of the boys told him he was a fool, and that they had all better think about going to sleep. After breakfast, a servant came over from M——'s family to say "that their old huntsman had been thrown from his horse and killed, early that morning, whilst airing the hounds."

Leaving the reader to explain this strange story, which may be relied upon, I put my old books back on their shelves, and lay aside my pen. For it is very late; the clock is ticking with a ghostly sound, as if it was about to talk, and the furniture appears positively to be growing alive, whilst I cannot help thinking that whole hosts of spectres are behind the window-curtains. The candles, too, are burning with a most uncomfortable glare, and altogether I expect, if I do not get to bed whilst I can hear somebody moving in the house, the first thing that I see when I open the door to go, will be some dreadful apparition standing on the mat at the bottom of the staircase.

IV.

A REAL COUNTRY GHOST STORY.

“Graut Liebchen auch? Der Mond scheint hell!
 Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!
 Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten?”
 “Ach nein!—Doch lass die Todten.”

BÜRGER'S “LENORE.”

IF the following narrative were nothing more than a mere invention, it would have very little in it to recommend it to the notice of the reader; but detailing, as closely as possible may be, some circumstances which actually occurred, and which were never accounted for—no case of spectres found to be finger-posts or pollards in the morning, nor dim flickering lights seen in churchyards at midnight, afterwards proved to have been carried by resurrection-men or worm-catchers—it may form a fitting addition to the foregoing repertoire of unaccountable romances, which, taken from the pages of Glanvil and Aubrey, are narrated at this fireside period always in time to induce a dread of going to rest, and a yearning for double-bedded rooms and modern apartments.

For our own part, we believe in ghosts. We do not mean the vulgar ghosts of every-day life, nor those of the Richardson drama, who rise amidst the fumes of Bengal light burned in a fire-shovel, nor the spring-heeled apparitions who every now and then amuse themselves by terrifying the natives of suburban localities out of their wits. To be satisfactory, a ghost must be the semblance of some departed human form, but indistinct and vague, like the image of a magic-lantern before you have got the right focus. It must emit a phosphorescent light—a gleaming atmosphere like that surrounding fish whose earthly sojourn has been unpleasantly prolonged; and it should be as transparent and slippery, throwing out as much cold about it, too, as a block of sherry-cobbler ice. We would go a great way upon the chance of meeting a ghost like this, and should hold such a one in great reverence, especially if it came in the

dreary grey of the morning twilight, instead of the darkness which its class is conventionally said to admire. We would, indeed, allow it to come in the moonlight, for this would make its advent more impressive. The effect of a long cold ray streaming into a bedroom is always terrible, even when no ghosts are present to ride upon it. Call to mind, for instance, the ghastly shadow of the solitary poplar falling across the brow of Mariana in the "Moated Grange," as Alfred Tennyson has so graphically described it.

Once we slept—or rather went to bed, for we lay awake and quivering all night long—in an old house on the confines of Windsor Forest. Our bedroom faced the churchyard, the yew-trees of which swept the uncurtained casement with their boughs, and danced in shadows upon the mouldering tapestry opposite, which mingled with those of the fabric until the whole party of the "long unwashed" thereon worked, appeared in motion. The bed itself was a dreadful thing. It was large and tall, and smelt like a volume of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1746, which had reposed in a damp closet ever since. There were feathers, too, on the tops of the tall posts, black with ancestral dirt and flue of the middle ages; and heavy curtains, with equally black fringe, which you could not draw. The whole thing had the air of the skeleton of a hearse that had got into the catacombs and been starved to death. The moonlight crept along the wainscot, panel after panel, and we could see it gradually approaching our face. We felt, when it did so, that it would be no use making the ghosts, whom we knew were swarming about the chamber, believe that we were asleep any more. So we silently brought all the clothes over our head, and thus trembled till morning, preferring death from suffocation to that from terror; and thinking, with ostrich-like self-delusion, that as long as our head was covered we were safe. Beyond a doubt, many visitors flitted about and over us that night. We were told, in fact, afterwards, that we had been charitably put in the "haunted room"—the only spare one—in which all kinds of ancestors had been done for. Probably this was the reason why none of them let us into their confidence; there were so many that no secret could possibly be kept. Had we been aware of this interesting fact, we should unquestionably have added ourselves to the number of its traditional occupants long before morning, from pure fright. As it was, we left the house the next day—albeit we were on a week's visit—

with a firm determination never to sleep anywhere for the future but in some hotel about Covent-garden, where we should be sure of ceaseless noise, and evidences of human proximity all night long; or close to the steam-press office of a daily paper. But this by the way; now to our story.

On the left bank of the Thames, stretching almost from the little village of Shepperton to Chertsey-bridge, there is a large, flat, blowy tract of land, known as Shepperton Range. In summer it is a pleasant spot enough, although the wind is usually pretty strong there, even when scarcely a breath is stirring anywhere else; it is the St. Paul's Churchyard, in fact, of the neighbourhood. But then the large expanse of short springy turf is powdered with daisies; and such a few bushes of hawthorn and attempts at hedges as are to be found upon its broad sweep, are mere standards for indolent ephemeral dog-roses, dissipated reckless hops, and other wild and badly brought-up classes of the vegetable kingdom. There are uplands rising from the river, and crowned with fine trees, half surrounding the landscape from Egham-hill to Oatlands; one or two humble towers of village churches; rippling corn-fields, and small farms, whose homesteads are so neat and well arranged that they remind one of scenes in domestic melodramas, and you expect every minute to hear the libertine squire rebuked by the farmer's daughter, who, though poor, is virtuous, and prefers the crust of rectitude to all the entremets of splendid impropriety. The river here is deep and blue—in its full country purity before it falls into bad company in the metropolis, flowing gently on, and knowing neither extraordinary high tides of plenitude, nor the low waters of poverty. It is much loved of anglers—quiet, harmless folks, who punt down from The Cricketers, at Chertsey-bridge, the landlord of which hostelry formerly bore the name of Try—a persuasive cognomination for a fishing inn, especially with regard to the mighty barbel drawn on the walls of the passage, which had been caught by customers. Never did a piscator leave the house in the morning without expecting to go and do likewise.

But in winter, Shepperton Range is very bleak and dreary. The wind rushes down from the hills, howling and driving hard enough to cut you in two, and the greater part of the plain, for a long period, is under water. The coach passengers used to wrap themselves up more closely as they approached its boun-

dary. This was in what haters of innovation called the good old coaching times, when "four spanking tits" whirled you along the road, and you had the "pleasant talk" of the coachman, and excitement of the "changing," the welcome of "mine host" of the posting inn, and other things which appear to have thrown these anti-alterationists into frantic states of delight. Rubbish! Give us the railway with its speed, and, after all, its punctuality; its abolition of gratuities to drivers, guards, ostlers, and every idle fellow who chose to seize your carpet-bag and thrust it into the bottom of the boot, whence it could only be extracted by diving down until his inferior extremities alone were visible, like a bee in a bell-flower. When Cowley sent to invite his friend, Bishop Spratt, to Chertsey, he told him he could come from London conveniently in two days "by sleeping at Hampton;" now you may knock off eighteen out of the twenty miles, from Nine-elms to Weybridge, in forty minutes.

In winter (to return to the Range), the pedestrian seeks in vain for the shelter of any hedge or bank. If the wind is in his teeth, it is no very easy matter for him to get on at all. Once let it take his hat, too, and he must give it up as utterly lost—all chance of recovery is gone; and if the snow is on the ground and the moon is shining, he may see it skimming away to leeward for a wonderful distance, until it finally leaps into the river. And this reminds us that it was winter when the events of our story took place, and that the moon was up, and the ground white and sparkling.

It had been a sad Christmas with the inmates of a large family house near the village end of the Range. For Christmas is not always that festive time which conventionality and advertisements insist upon its being, and the merriment of the season cannot always be ensured by the celebrated "sample hampers," or the indigestion arising from overfeeding. In many houses it is a sad tear-bringing anniversary; and such it promised to be, in future, at the time of our story, now upwards of sixty years ago, for the domestic circle of the Woodwards, by which name we wish to designate the family in question. It is not, however, the right one. The eldest daughter, Florence, a beautiful girl of twenty, was in the last stage of confirmed consumption. Her family had been justly proud of her; a miniature by Cosway, which is still in existence, evidences her rare loveliness when in health, and as the reckless disease gained

upon her, all its fatal attributes served only to increase her beauty. The brilliant, sparkling eye, with the fringe of long silky lashes; the exquisitely delicate flush and white tint of her skin; the bright, arterial lips and pearly teeth, all combined to endow her with fascinations scarcely mortal.

“The beauty,” beyond all comparison, of every circle of society into which she entered, Florence Woodward had not remained unconscious of her charms. Her disposition in early girlhood was naturally reserved, and to those casually introduced to her, cold and haughty; and this reserve increased with her years, fanned by the breath of constant flattery. She had rejected several most eligible matches, meeting the offers of one or two elder sons of the best families in the neighbourhood with the coldest disdain, even after having led each of her suitors to believe, from the witchery of her manner, fascinating through all her pride, that he was the favoured one; and although, at last, they felt sure that their offers would be rejected, if not with a sneer, at least with a stare of surprise at such presumption, yet the number of her admirers did not diminish; in many instances it became a point of vanity as well as love. The hope of being, at last, the favoured one, urged them on, but always with the same result. She looked upon their hearts as toys—things to be amused with, then to be broken, and cared for no more.

A year or two before the period of our story, she met Frank Sherborne one evening at the Richmond ball. The Sherbornes had formerly lived at Halliford, within a mile of the Woodwards, and the two families were exceedingly intimate at that time. They had now left the neighbourhood some years, and Florence was astonished to find that the mere boy, who used to call her by her Christian name, had grown to be a fine young man in the interim. Whether it was to pique some other admirer in the room, or whether she really was taken, for the few hours of the ball, with the lively intelligence and unaffected conversation of her old companion, we know not, but Sherborne was made supremely happy that evening by finding himself dancing each time with the belle of the room, and when he was not dancing, sitting by her side, lost in conversation. He was fascinated that night with the spells she wove around him, and he returned home with his brain almost turned, and his pulses throbbing, whilst the thoughts which recalled the beautiful face and low soft voice of Florence Woodward excluded all other

subjects. His feelings were not those attendant on a mere flirtation with an attractive woman, in which gratified self-conceit has, perhaps, so large a share. He was madly, deeply in love.

To be brief, his intimacy with the Woodwards was renewed, and Florence led him on, making him believe that he was the chosen above all others, until he ventured to propose. In an instant her manner changed, and he was coldly rejected, with as much hauteur as if he had only been the acquaintance of a single dance. Stunned at first by her heartlessness, he left the house and returned home, without uttering a word of what had occurred to his family. Then came a reaction, and a brain fever supervened, and when he recovered he threw up all his prospects, which were of no ordinary brilliancy, and left home, as it subsequently proved, for ever, taking advantage of his mother's being a relation of Sir John Jervis to enter the navy on board the admiral's ship, and do anything in any capacity that might distract him from his one overwhelming misery.

No sooner was he gone than Florence found, despite her endeavours to persuade herself to the contrary, that she also was in love. Self-reproach, and remorse of the most bitter kind, seized upon her. Her spirits drooped, and she gave up going into society, and albeit her pride still prevented her from disclosing her secret to a soul, its effect was the more terrible from her struggles to conceal it. Day by day she sank, as her frame became more attenuated from constant yet concealed fretting. Winter came, and one cold followed another, until consumption proclaimed its terrible hold upon the beautiful victim. Everything that the deepest family affection and unlimited means could accomplish was done to stop the ravages of the disease; but although her friends were buoyed up with hope to the last, the medical men knew that her fate was sealed, from the very symptoms, so cruelly delusive, that comforted the others. She was attended by a physician who came daily from London, and an apothecary from a neighbouring town. From the latter we received this story some time back. He was a young man, and had not long commenced practice when it took place.

He had been up several nights in succession, and was retiring to rest about half-past eleven, when a violent peal of the surgery bell caused him to throw up the window and inquire what was wanted. He directly recognised the coachman of the

Woodwards upon horseback, who told him that Miss Florence was much worse, and begged he would come over to Shepperton immediately. Sending the man at once away with the assurance that he would be close upon his heels, he re-dressed hurriedly, and going to the stable, put his horse to the gig himself, for the boy who looked after it did not sleep in the house, and then hastily packing up a few things from the surgery which he thought might be wanted on emergency, he started off. It was bright moonlight, and the snow lay lightly upon the ground. The streets of the town were deserted; nor indeed was there any appearance of life, except that in some of the upper windows of the houses lights were gleaming, and it was cold—bitter cold. The apothecary gathered his heavy night-coat well about him, and then drove on, and crossed Chertsey-bridge, under which the cold river was flowing with a swollen, heavy tide, chafing through the arches, as the blocks of ice floating on it at times impeded its free course. The wind blew keenly on the summit of the bridge; but as Mr. J—— descended, it appeared more still, and when he got to the “gully-hole,” with its melancholy ring of pollards (wherein a coach-and-four, with all the passengers, is reported by the natives to have gone down and never been seen again), it had ceased.

We have said the moon was bright, more so than common, and when Mr. J—— got to the commencement of Shepperton Range, he could see quite across the flat, even to the square white tower of the church; and then, just as the bell of Littleton tolled twelve, he perceived something coming into the other end of the Range, and moving at a quick pace. It was unusual to meet anything thereabouts so late at night, except the London market-carts and the carriers' waggons, and he could form no idea of what it could be. It came on with increased speed, but without the slightest noise; and this was remarkable, inasmuch as the snow was not deep enough to muffle the sound of the wheels and horses' feet, but had blown and drifted from the road upon the plain at the side. Nearer and nearer it came, and now the apothecary perceived that it was something like a hearse, but still vague and indistinct in shape, and it was progressing on the wrong side of the road. His horse appeared alarmed, and was snorting hurriedly as his breath steamed out in the moonlight, and Mr. —— felt himself singularly and instantaneously chilled. The mysterious

vehicle was now distant from him only a few yards, and he called out to whoever was conducting it to keep on the right side; but no attention was paid, and as he endeavoured to pull his own horse over, the object came upon him. The animal reared on his hind legs, and then plunged forwards, overturning the gig against one of the flood posts; but even as the accident occurred he saw that the strange carriage was a dark-coloured vehicle, with black feathers at its corners, and that within were two figures, upon whom a strange and ghastly light appeared to be thrown. One of these resembled Florence Woodward; and the other, whose face was close to hers, bore the features of young Sherborne. The next instant he was thrown upon the ground. He was not hurt, but scrambled up again upon his legs immediately; when, to his intense surprise, nothing of the appalling equipage was to be seen. The Range was entirely deserted; and there was not a hedge or thicket of any kind behind which the strange apparition could have been concealed. But there was the gig upset, sure enough, and the cushions and wrappers lying on the snow. Unable to raise the gig, Mr. —, almost bewildered, took out the horse and rode hurriedly on over the remaining part of the flat, towards the Woodwards' house. He was directly admitted, being expected; and, without exchanging a word with the servant, flew up-stairs to the bedroom of the invalid. He entered, and found all the family assembled. One or two of them were kneeling round the bed and weeping bitterly; and upon it lay the corpse of Florence Woodward. In a fit of coughing she had ruptured a large vessel in the lungs, and died almost instantaneously.

Mr. — ascertained in an instant that he had arrived too late. Unwilling to disturb the members of the family, who in their misery had scarcely noticed his arrival, he drew the nurse from the room, and asked how long she had been dead.

"It is not a quarter of an hour, sir," replied the old woman, looking on an old-fashioned clock, that was going solemnly with a dead muffled beat upon the landing, and now pointed out the time, about ten minutes after twelve. "She went off close upon midnight, and started up just before she died, holding out her arms as though she saw something; and then she fell back upon the pillow, and it was all over."

The apothecary stayed in the house that night, for his assistance was often needed by the mother of the dead girl, and left in the morning. The adventure of the night before haunted

him to a painful degree for a long period. Nor was his perfect inability to account for it at all relieved when he heard, some weeks afterwards, that young Sherborne had died of a wound received in the battle off Cape St. Vincent, on the very day, and at the very hour, when the apparition had appeared to him on Shepperton Range.

We have often heard the story told, and as often heard it explained by the listeners. They have said that it was a curious coincidence enough, but that Mr. — was worn out with watching, and had gone to sleep in his gig, pulling it off the road, and thus overturning it. We offer no comments either upon the adventure or the attempt to attribute it to natural causes: the circumstances have been related simply as they were said to have occurred, and we leave the reader to form his own conclusions.

V.

MR. TONKS AND HIS GREAT CHRISTMAS FAILURE.

MR. TONKS was an eminent retail tea-dealer, as well known in the City as the Exchange grasshopper, the Bank beadle, or the generous gentlemen of the Hebrew persuasion, who used to do nothing all their lives but buy dressing-cases and pen-knives at the open auction in the Poultry. He was portly in his person, and spoke with an air of immutable reliance upon his own opinion. He was a smart tradesman, and very close-fisted, but his name was as good as any in London. In fine, Mr. Tonks was as much esteemed and disliked as any man in any kind of position—so long as it is a position—may expect to be.

The establishment in which Mr. Tonks daily amassed his wealth was something wonderful to behold; especially so to country visitors. There was tea enough shovelled about in the windows to make you believe that the four hundred and twenty millions of Chinese who made up the last census had been actively engaged, day and night, for a twelvemonth, without ever going to bed, in collecting it, and had not gone through their work even then. And the coffee-mill—there was a monster machine! It resembled one of those dreadful engines used in pantomimes to grind aged individuals into youths and maidens; and if the old man who was perpetually turning it had tumbled in by accident, nobody would have been at all surprised to have seen him come out a little boy, in a paper cap and shirt sleeves, at the spout, after a single revolution.

The rows of gaudy canisters were vividly embellished with scenes of every-day life in the Celestial Empire. Mr. Tonks said, they explained the process of tea-growing; but he might have said, with equal truth, of the ladies and gentlemen so cunningly limned, they portrayed writing for shares, conjuring, or doing penance. Their chief occupation seemed to be standing in uncommonly painful and dislocated attitudes, as if they had got something down their backs they did not like: watching their friends and relatives carrying pails and gig umbrellas; or

sitting down to a table with nothing on it except a teacup, an article not giving great promise of rollicking festivity.

And then the young men—real gentlemen, without doubt—perhaps officers come to distress—why, bless you, they attracted as many people inside the shop as the bowing mandarins in the window arrested the passers-by without. You could see them through the open doors putting up endless pounds of the orange-flavoured pekoe at four shillings (which there was such a struggle among the nobility to possess), writing upon them, banging them about on the counter, and then pitching them into the division for the phantom consumers in the imaginary Dulwich district, where the visionary van would go on Tuesday, in a careless manner, that quite looked as if they regarded the tea no more than the humblest leaflet that ever trembled on its hedge-stalk. And the balloons so brilliantly lighted at night; the caddies and card pools; with the old noblemen addicted to corpulency lolling their tongues, as they reposed on heaps of congou; and the emaciated dervishes, who were posted about the mounds of hyson, altogether made an opposition Chinese Collection, which had the additional advantage of being a gratuitous exhibition entirely.

Well, in this sumptuous establishment, Tonks and Company—the “company” consisted of his wife and daughter—flourished several years; for they were well to do, and better each Christmas. Their notions expanded. Gravesend gave place to Margate, Margate to Ramsgate, and Ramsgate to the French coast. Miss Tonks was moved from the day-school in the Hackney-road to Miss Turnham’s academy at Chiswick, and then to Miss Burton’s “Pension” at Boulogne. Then, Mr. Tonks became various great things in the City; he used to talk a little and eat a great deal at Guildhall, and once went before the Queen; and at last retired from trade altogether, and bought a large estate in the lower part of Surrey, where he determined to reside, and for the rest of his life do the Old English Gentleman line of business.

The house he purchased was a fine old place; it had long been the home of one of the county families now extinct. It had tall twisted chimneys and heavy mullioned windows; a porch, a terrace, and a large hall; a staircase that you might have driven a coach-and-four up—if the horses had been Astley’s platform ones, and didn’t mind climbing—and weathercocks, my goodness, what a lot! If each wind from

every point of the compass had taken one as its own private vane, not to answer to any other, which was the case with most of them, there would still have been several to spare. The old patriarchal one over the hall appeared to have blown to seed, and all the atoms had taken root on the tiles, and sprung up by scores wherever they chose, their total immobility reducing the amateur in meteorology to the primitive process of throwing up straws to satisfy his curiosity—an established and, at the same time, a diverting experiment.

Mr. Tonks had money, which the extinct family who lived there before had not; and the house was soon put in order. Relics of Elizabethan furniture were manufactured for him by the old curiosity dealers, at a day's notice; and more ancestors took their departure from Wardour-street than had ever before migrated from that musty locality. The most important of these, Sir Humphrey de Tonkes, who fought at "Azincour," was put at the top of the staircase, and his armour was set up in the hall on a dummy, supposed to represent the warrior, which had a propensity to lean forward in rather a drunken attitude than otherwise, giving a notion of the knight as he might have been supposed to have appeared when trying to keep on his legs with the aid of his spear, in the lists, after violently indulging in strong drinks, according to the fashion of the dark ages. The other relatives, preserved in oil, were hung here and there, and about; the most reputable paintings holding the best places—which is not always the case in picture-hanging—as may be seen any fine day in summer for a shilling, in London. And so they made a goodly line, from the great Humphrey just spoken of, to the small children in quaint straight dresses, who looked as if they might all have been taken up and rung like so many hand-bells.

The people in the neighbourhood soon began to call. First the doctor came, then the clergyman, and afterwards some of the families. These last were more tardy; for country aristocracy is cautious, having very little, in the abstract, to assume high ground upon, beyond conventional position, and consequently being fearful of more easily jeopardising it. But old Lady Hawksy, who hunted up everybody from whom available advantages were to be pumped, or otherwise secured, called at last, and all the rest followed, like ducks going to water, or sheep through a hedge. And then Mr. Tonks made up his own mind, as well as his wife's and daughter's, that it was time

for the Old English Gentleman to come out strong. Annie Tonks—it was not a very pretty name, but that could not be altogether considered as her fault—was very nice-looking; I don't know how it is, but I never knew an Annie that was not. I may be prejudiced, but I can scarcely think so. Her father already calculated upon her making a good match—good, that is to say, in point of connexion—in return for which he would advance money. And, accordingly, he gave days of shooting to all eligible young men, and got them to his house afterwards. But Annie, though exceedingly courteous, never gave any of them the slightest encouragement, at which her father was first surprised, and then annoyed. Possibly he would have been more so, had he known that a certain young lawyer, whom his daughter had met at that paradise of autumnal philanderings, Ramsgate, stood a far better chance—in fact, the *affaire du cœur* had almost been put beyond one—of becoming Annie's future husband, than the son of the sheriff, or Lady Hawksy's nephew, or any other elder brothers that Mr. Tonks wished would enter his family. And this young lawyer, whose name was Frederick Walcot, was the most impudent fellow imaginable. He would come to the house, in spite of all Mr. Tonks's gruff receptions; and never took hints to go, or that he was not wanted; and always kept so close to Annie, that there was little room for anybody else to come near her. In fact, with him the young lady was as effectually guarded as the showman who, in describing his view of the battle of Trafalgar, points out Lord Nelson to have been, "s'rounded by Captain Hardy." In former days, there was only one line of Old English Gentlemen to take up; now there are several. There is the virtuous-indignation Old English Gentleman, who makes speeches about the "wrongs of the poor man," and "nature's nobility," and maintains the right of the labourer to knock down fences, trespass on preserves, and steal game that he has no right to, whenever he pleases: the Old Gentleman in question not having any preserves of his own, of course. Then there is the Young England Old English Gentleman, who, being as proud as Lucifer, gives a ball once a year to his servants and tenants, and apes humility in a manner wonderful to behold, but keeps his own circle about him most religiously, with the silver forks and superior soup at the top cross-table, to show the common people, after all, that this is but condescension on his part, and that the clay of which they are formed is but crockery to the porcelain of his own set. Then

there is the Squire Old English Gentleman, who can talk of nothing but dogs and horses, shouts and bawls whenever he speaks, makes his friends drink as much wine as he chooses to swill himself, and appears to put his children and pet animals all on the same level—a descendant of the Western genus still existing. And there is the High Church Old English Gentleman, and his opponent the Low Church Old English Gentleman, with a score more, if we cared to name them. And lastly, the Old English Gentleman, properly so called, who belongs to a good family, keeps up a good establishment, cultivates good connexions, but at the same time shows great attention to many who are a step below him on the ladder of station, who adopt the courtesy and refined manners of his circle, handing them in turn still lower, and so diffusing in all grades that etiquette without which the barrier of society would be knocked down altogether, and “nature’s nobility” might honour us with their company to hob and nob whenever they pleased—which would be a great and glorious thing in the eyes of a philanthropical high-pressure epithet literary gentleman, but not altogether so agreeable in reality.

Mr. Tonks debated for a long time what sort of Old English Gentleman he should be, and at last thought an amalgamation of certain features from all these classes, with Young England uppermost, would be the best of all. And as the year was drawing to its close, he decided upon giving a Christmas entertainment to his neighbours in the old style at a great expenditure; and so assume a place with the best of them, and marry Annie to the son of the sheriff, or Lady Hawksy’s nephew, or any other of the elder brothers.

By the assistance of “Hone’s Every-Day Book,” and the four-and-sixpenny edition of “Strutt’s Sports and Pastimes,” Mr. Tonks soon found out how Christmas ought to be kept. He determined upon having mummers, a fool, and a wassail-bowl; there would be also a yule-log, a hobby-horse, and a dragon; and he also decided upon a “wode-house,” or a “salvage man,” who, according to the book, should “dysporte himself with fireworks” amongst the company. But this latter character was discarded at the express desire of Mrs. Tonks, who thought squibs and book-muslin dresses, “which as they kiss consume,” would not go very well together; and that, although violent delights might be thereat produced, they would have equally violent ends, and die in their triumph.

Old Lady Hawksy was the first who accepted the invitation ; in consequence of which, by a bold stroke of policy, the Tonkses put their carriage at her disposal for a week, that she might drive round to all her acquaintances and say she was going, whereby they would be induced to come. And this had its effect ; for whether from curiosity, condescension, love of gaiety, or politeness, everybody " had great pleasure in accepting," &c., and the heart of Mr. Tonks swelled with pride, as that of his wife did with maternal speculation, when they thought of all their guests comprising all the gentry of the neighbourhood, and those designated in circulars merely as " inhabitants ;" especially Lady Hawksy's nephew, who was in the Guards, and whom Mrs. Tonks hoped would bring some brother officers, and that they would all come in their soldiers' clothes, and look as ferocious and imposing as their partners would permit. No invitation was to be sent to Frederick Walcot ; this was expressly insisted on, and yet, somehow or another, curiously enough, he contrived to know all about the party, as we shall see.

Mr. Tonks was determined for once to make a splash. The supper was to come down in light vans from Gunter's ; the music from Chappell's ; and the mummers and hobby-horse from Nathan's—at least, their outward gear.

The guests were to dance in the hall, and refeit in the dining-room, whilst the fool was to say clever things everywhere all the evening. For this purpose, Mr. Tonks engaged a witty man at a salary of thirty shillings, who was an actor at one of the minor theatres, and used to conjure and show a magic lantern at his parties when Annie was a little girl. The frame of Sir Humphrey de Tonkes was decked out with holly. His armour was polished up until it looked so new, that you would never have believed it had been worn at Agincourt ; and the feathers from Mrs. Tonks's own bonnet were put in the helmet—handsome drooping ones, quite ready to go to court on the shortest notice. And so, at last, all was ready, and the evening arrived.

Frost and snow are no longer attributes of Christmas. They used to be, but fog and floods have long since taken their places, and did so more especially on the evening of Mr. Tonks's party. But most of those invited kept carriages—he sent his own for Lady Hawksy, but her nephew preferred driving over in a dog-cart from the barracks—and those who did not, got flys from

the nearest town, so that all arrived pretty well. Mrs. Tonks received the guests in the drawing-room. She had been at Guildhall on various Lord Mayor's days, and took her ideas of receptions generally from the ceremonies observed on that occasion, in consequence of which she exhibited much dignity; and when this was done they passed on to the hall, admired the pictures, made cutting remarks in a low tone, and waited for what came next. But the worst was that, for a long time, nothing did come. The young people had all got engaged—that is to say, only for the dances; and Annie was to open the ball—which is a ceremony we do not precisely understand, seeing that a ball is generally opened by twenty young ladies simultaneously, in the first quadrille—with old Lady Hawksy's nephew; but the music had not arrived. What could be the reason? Chappell was a man of his word, and Mr. Tonks had expressly engaged him on an evening when Covent Garden would be occupied by those kind-hearted gentlemen who are going to give everybody quartern loaves for a halfpenny apiece. And he had, moreover, arranged that he should put the band in the hall gallery, where they might have crackers, double-barrelled guns, horsewhips, red fire, and a cat and a terrier in one hamper, to give the effects to Jullien's various quadrilles with proper force, as well as the garden engine for a new set called L'Orage, in the finale of which a real shower of rain was to fall on the heads of the guests, to be followed by the Parapluie Polka. What could have become of them? It was very odd!—so it was. However, something must be done, and accordingly the mummers were ordered into the hall to carry on time until the music came. But the entrance of mummers without music is in itself a slow proceeding, and not productive of much mirth. The young ladies looked at the odd dresses—mostly *moyen-âge* costumes with large heads, which preserved that comical expression of stereotyped hilarity, perfectly uninfluenced by circumstances, we notice in pantomimes, and said, "How droll, to be sure!" and the great neighbours looked coldly at one another, as much as to ask, "What does all this mean?" and then the excitement caused by their entrance was over. The absence of the music was the death of everything. The polka could not be danced between the Stag and the Railway King, who was to be dressed with a tall hat like the chimney of a locomotive. The Hobby-horse capered about the hall, and hit the people on the head with a bladder tied to a stick, at which

some laughed the first time, but voted it stupid the second; and the Dragon was very tame indeed. He kept in a corner of the room, close by Annie, all the evening, and appeared to be her own especial Dragon-in-waiting.

Mr. Tonks got frantic; he despatched everybody available from his house in all directions with lanterns and keepers' fuses to look after the music. He ran in and out of the hall upon fictitious business, and was at one time found cowering in the passage, all by himself, fearing to face the yawning company, who were gradually relapsing into solemn silence; and, at last, gave orders that the Fool should go into the hall and be funny. But the Fool proved as great a failure as everything else. Nobody cared to say anything to him to draw him out, and, if they had, the chances are that he would not have come. For he had formed his character upon the models offered by Christmas clowns, and when he had said, "Here we are again!" and "I'm a looking at you!" or "Here's somebody coming!" which were not witticisms productive of great merit upon frequent repetition, he could do nothing more but crow like a cock, a performance not altogether devoid of merit in its proper place—the House of Commons or the Opera omnibus-box, for example—but not calculated to throw people into convulsions in formal private society. Everything was now at a dead stand-still. The yule-log, which had been hewn from the freshly-excavated trunk of a tree, would not burn anyhow, but sulked upon the hearth, splitting and sputtering as though it was hissing the failure of the entertainments, and filling the hall with smoke. It was too early for the wassail-bowl, for the company had barely finished tea; and, although Mrs. Tonks rushed about with packs of cards amongst the guests, entreating them to draw one and form a rubber, everybody declined except old Lady Hawksey's nephew, who laboured under the impression that the mistress of the house was about to exhibit some conjuring tricks, and having taken a card, expected to be asked to look at it and return it where he pleased, previous to its being discovered in an egg, or a workbox, or, perhaps, a pancake. But on finding that this process was merely a trap to bottle him up in a room, away from everything and everybody except two or three bits of quality tumbled into decay, who were to make up the rubbers with him, he returned it immediately without looking at it, with much alacrity, assuring Mrs. Tonks that he never played anything but skittles, adding, that he

should be very happy to do so directly, if there were any that could be brought into the hall.

At length, in his agony of despair, Mr. Tonks assembled his retainers in the housekeeper's room, and asked if anybody could play any instrument whatever. Yes! one could: lucky thought! Tom the helper knew the fiddle. Tom the helper was the graceless ne'er-to-do-well of the village, and confined the sphere of his utility chiefly to the stables of "The Tonks' Arms," an hostelry adjoining the Hall, which had been promoted to an inn *vice* the beershop of "The Crooked Billet." On this eventful evening, Tom had come to the house to assist, and had so proved the hospitality of the kitchen, that, in his present state of self-glorification, he would have offered to have played anything, even if it had been the sackbut, or any other defunct instrument with the nature of which even the most ancient subscribers to the "Ancient Concerts" were unacquainted. As it was, he went and got his fiddle, which was a marvellous thing to look at, having been made by himself out of tin, for the sole use of the benefit club in the village; and being arrayed in a spare livery-coat, was put up in the gallery with an enormous jack of strong beer—which, by some perversion of his comprehensive faculties, he called "his rossum"—and told to begin whatever he knew.

But Tom's knowledge was limited. In vain the company suggested the Chatsworth Quadrilles, the Bouquet Royal Waltz, the Annen or Mont Blanc Polka; they might as well have called for the particular air to which Doctor Faustus caused his scholars, under fear of the whip, to perform that remarkable dance from Scotland into France, and subsequently into the Peninsula, before he whipped them back again; although how they contrived to surmount the various engineering difficulties on the route is by no means satisfactorily proved. But this by the way. Tom did not know these, but he knew the "Tank" and "Money Musk," together with a mysterious air, which he termed "Hunches of puddun and lumps of fat," and which nobody was bold enough to call for, the name being an unpleasant one, not to say offensive. So the "Tank" it was obliged to be; and before it had been played one minute, Lady Hawksey's nephew found out it was a capital Polka tune; whereupon he rushed up to Annie, and almost without asking her, he whirled her off in the back step across the hall, and was followed directly by a dozen couples, who had got wearied to death

from inactivity, and went into it like mad. But in the second round, the Dragon, who had all this time sulked in the corner, crept into the circle, and in the most awkward manner contrived to get right in the way of Lady Hawksy's nephew, and trip him over, which feat being accomplished, he crept back again to the corner, and Annie, by some means or another, hurt her foot in this very round, and could not dance any more, retiring to her old seat, and begging her cavalier would find another partner.

The people went on dancing; and it was astonishing what they adapted "The Tank" to. It was played on continuously for the quadrilles, but for the waltz was rather difficult, until somebody proposed the Valse à deux temps, which, just come in, not depending upon any tune at all, but being danced at the will of the company, was a good introduction. But all this time the "rossum" was doing its work; and after gazing at the dancers for some time in bewildered surprise, Tom threw his fiddle down into the hall, through the chandelier, swearing "he'd be jiggered"—the precise meaning of the participle was not clearly understood—"if he played no more; they beat all the club people he ever know'd!"

There was terrible confusion, and it is said that some young ladies who had eligible partners fainted right off in their arms. Mr. and Mrs. Tonks were aghast; they stood at first speechless, and then each called for Annie at the same time in some vague desire to collect their home forces around them, as if they feared an attack from the indignant visitors. But Annie was nowhere to be found. She had suddenly disappeared; and the Dragon had disappeared also; and all was speechless amazement, until they learned from the lodge-keeper that the apocryphal monster and the young lady had entered the sheriff's own carriage, and gone off through the floods as fast as Mr. Tonks's own postilion could take them, the sheriff's retainers being drunk in the buttery (as Mr. Tonks would call the wash-house), in which state they forcibly took possession of the wassail-bowl and emptied it.

The following morning Mr. Chappell's band was discovered, like Spenser's allegory of February, sitting in an old waggon in the middle of the floods, in which state they had been left by the treachery of the man who was to meet them at the nearest railway station, and take them all over to the Hall; and there they would have been much longer, had not the principal cornet

attracted the attention of the agricultural population—by a post horn without the galop—to their plight. And, singular to say, this traitor went on straight to the Hall, and took the part of the Dragon, who spirited Annie away, changing again, when in the sheriff's carriage, to no less a person than young Walcot, who forthwith accompanied the lady of his heart by rail to Gretna—following the force of high example—and came back penitent and married, before Mr. and Mrs. Tonks had recovered from the anguish into which the failure of keeping Christmas in the old style had plunged them.

There was the usual business to go through: the anger, the pleadings, and the forgiveness; and then, Mr. Tonks thought that Annie had perhaps done better, after all, than if she had caught old Lady Hawksy's nephew. For subsequent little rudenesses on the part of his guests disgusted him with society above him, and he began to think that, however much money he spent, he was only sneered at covertly by those whom he attempted to equalise himself with, and that, if his notions of doing good and being benevolent were real, and not conventionally chivalric, they could be carried out as well by the retired London tradesman as the got-up-for-the-purpose Old English Gentleman, to which position he had no pretensions.

VI.

THE BOYS IN THE STREETS.

1.—OF THE “PEOPLE”—THE SOURCE OF ALL BOYS.

WE have been some time making up our minds as to the real attributes of the class denominated “the people;” and who, in reality, “the people” are supposed to be.

A long time ago we imagined them to be something unpleasant, for their name was always coupled with a depreciative epithet. We heard of “horrid people,” and “strange people,” and “people nobody liked or visited,” and these were generally amongst the middle classes. Next, we set “the people” down as a mass of weak-minded individuals, from the things we saw especially addressed to them. Whenever anything was advertised for “the people,” it was generally some cheap rubbish that nobody else could be expected to buy. “The People’s Picture Gallery” was probably a reprint from worn-out plates, upon bad paper, of uninteresting subjects. “Holidays for the people” were chiefly characterised by crowds of the lower orders tumbling about the streets tipsy, at late hours on Monday evenings; meetings of thousands at dreary suburban festivals, ringing with the rude joyless riot, so nearly degenerating into absolute brutality, which, unhappily, characterises all the dull fêtes of the masses in England, compared to those on the Continent; sweltering in close meeting-houses at the end of dirty courts, or National Pantheons, or Athenæums, or other patriotic temples to swill weak infusions of cheap black tea, diluted with spoiled water, as they listened to the noisy gabble of uneducated professors of the “I’m-as-good-as-you” theories of social life; gaping through the British Museum, not from any interest they felt in the collection, but because there were thousands of things they did not understand to be seen there for

nothing; availing themselves of the permission to stream through the National Gallery and Hampton Court Palace, and stare at the pictures with precisely the same feelings with which they would look at the paintings outside shows, with the exception that they would like the latter much the best; or returning in the evening—with very, very few exceptions—dusty, tired, and quarrelsome. All this did not elevate “the people” in our estimation.

Anon came the epoch of “virtuous indignation” in literature, by which authors found they could turn their pens to as good account as the spouters on the same subject did their lungs; and various phrases, such as “the wrongs of the poor man,” and the “crimes of respectability,” were without doubt stereotyped, from the frequency of their occurrence, for their use. The professors travelled about to be stared at, having stirred up “the people” with their long pens until they got the freedoms of the towns presented to them in tin saucepans, or pipkins, or razor-cases, or lucifer-boxes, or other specimens of local manufactures.

And then we learned that “the people” never had any holidays at all, nor any amusements, nor any anything. And yet, by tracking them slyly into various resorts, we found they filled the uproarious galleries of the theatres; or composed the masses who shouted at the election of candidates, not having the ghost of a vote; who blocked up the streets on Lord Mayor’s Day, or swarmed round the Old Bailey scaffold. We then began strongly to suspect that the classes known to the old novelists and essayists by the certainly not too elevating titles of “riff-raff” and “tagrag and bobtail,” were “the people” of the Virtuous Indignationists of the present time.

Finally, we read what M. Michelet had to say upon the subject, and we left off in a greater haze than ever as to who “the people” were. We, therefore, thought it best to amalgamate the leading points of the various physiologies we have glanced at—and which seemed to be nearest the mark, from observation of the simplest kind—and form our own ideas of “the people” from them; and from this class, it seems to us, that the boys in the streets take their origin, entirely forming themselves “the people” of the next generation. We have begun at the beginning in endeavouring to give some idea of the stock from which spring the branches we are about to describe.

2.—THE EARLY DAYS OF THE BOYS.

THERE are several spots in which, with very little trouble, you may see the embryo boys to great advantage. During fine weather they swarm in broad paved courts, or culs-de-sac, in crowded neighbourhoods. Punch's show is a capital ground-bait for them, bringing a hundred instantaneously together, where not a single one was visible a minute before. On the broken ground about to be formed into a new street, or built upon, you may at all times make sure of them. The more irregular it is the more they love it, and if the cellar arches are already built, the attraction is paramount to every other, except, perhaps, the spot where wood pavement is being taken up or put down; for there they storm and defend forts, or make perilous excursions over mountains all day long.

The boys in this tadpole state—which reptile they somewhat resemble in their active wriggling and love of puddles of water—stand only in awe of one person, and that is the policeman. Their notions of his functions are somewhat vague; but they are certain he can take them up and punish them—for nothing, and from mere wantonness—whenever he pleases. They spy him out quicker than a crow in a field does a man with a gun; if you suddenly see a flying army of children bolting from a court or round a corner in terror, you may be certain that a policeman is close at hand. At a more mature age, they will chaff him and run away; but at present their belief in his greatness is unbounded. He would be the giant or the dragon of their nursery story-books; but, in the first place, they have no nursery, and, in the second, no story-books to read there. And, indeed, the reading is itself a question.

The children of the London streets are acute from their birth. The very babies, crawling on the kerb, or burrowing in the dust of a building plot, have a cunning expression of face which you do not find in the white-headed country infants; and, as soon as they can run alone, their sharpness breaks forth most palpably—they are never to be "done." In fact, as far as their wits are concerned, they are never children, but miniature men. We have said that it is only in fine weather you see them about; and then they come out like gnats, and are just as troublesome, especially if you are driving. We have no clear notions of what becomes of them when it is wet; we hardly imagine that the neighbouring houses can contain the

swarms that we have spoken of. If they do, we pity the other dwellers; we conceive on no other portion of the community can a continuance of rain bring so many discomforts.

The street children have no regular toys; they have seen them in small shop windows, and on stalls, and long barrows, but never possessed any: all they have they invent. Not that their playthings are the less diverting on this account; in any circle of life you may give a child the costliest toys with which it will only be amused for a time, to return to the mere furniture of the nursery. We question if the noblest horse and cart just bought from Mr. Myers, or Mr. Cremer, or in any of the bazaars, ever excited half so much whip-enthusiasm in the young charioteer as the footstool harnessed to the rocking-chair. No boxes of bricks would amuse the street child so much as the oyster-shells with which he makes a grotto; he would not care half so much for a trap and ball as for his little "tip cat" of wood, cut from a fire bundle; and he has no occasion to buy large marbles when the first heap of pebbles will find him in as many "boncers" as he wishes. You will seldom see these street children with dolls. They would not know what to do with them; for never having been nursed, fondled, dressed, or put to bed themselves, they are incompetent to exhibit the same attentions to sham infants. But they can set up ninepins of brickbats and broken bottles; and make carts of old saucepans to fill with rubbish and drag after them; and lay out banquets of dirt, dressed in various fashions, upon services of bits of tile and crockery, and tureens of old shoes. And as all these things can be immediately replaced when broken, and excite no sorrow when lost, their state is, in this respect, rather to be envied than otherwise.

And so, leading a life of all holidays, and turning the great world into a playroom for his especial enjoyment, the street infant passes to the boy.

3.—THE BOYS, PROPERLY SO CALLED.

THE "boys" are as characteristic of our London streets as the gamins are of the quays and canal banks of Paris. Let us consider a general type of their class.

He hath eight years of existence to answer for. He weareth a paper cap, or a cloth one without a peak, set forward on his head, which he considereth knowing. He standeth on his head with ease, and without apparent necessity to do so; and is out-

done only by the sable musician of Ethiopia, whom the gallery honoureth by the name of "Bones," in his handling the castanet bits of slate. He danceth to piano organs a measure not taught by any advertising professors; and, at times, waggishly turneth the handle himself, to the indignation of the Genoese performer. On being remonstrated with, he sparreth playfully at the foreigner, treateth his hat with insult by compressing it as though it were a French mechanical one, and then runneth away.

He loveth all street performances, but contributeth nothing to their support, albeit he taketh the front place. He followeth a fire-engine with ardour, and when nobody is looking, bloweth a lusty note through the metal hose-pipe; after which, he runneth to the opened water-plug, which he compresseth with his shoe, and causeth the stream to spirt over the passengers, which diversion he concludeth by pushing the little brother of some other boy into it. And then he quarrelleth with the other boy, and saith, "I should like to see you do it!" But on neither side is anything ever done.

He loveth the freedom of shirt-sleeves, and doth not think an apron beneath him, so that he tucketh it up. He returneth speedy answers, intended to wound the feelings of those reprov- ing him, and by this token it is dangerous to chaff him. He detecteth rapidly peculiarities in dress, and hath an ideal type, which he calleth "a swell out of luck." And he doth not think the question, "Does your mother know you're out?" at all worn out or passé, but still indulgeth in it, imagining thereby that he inflicteth a pang whose sharpness precludes reply. If he runneth against you, he will turn away reproof by saying first, "Now then, spooney! can't you see where you're drivin' on."

He hath the merit of being an indirect author of burlesques, albeit Blackwood did not formerly attack him thereon. For from him did Messrs. Planché, A'Beckett, Tom Taylor, Shirley Brooks, Brough, Talfourd, and another, with whom we are upon terms of great intimacy, borrow the lines and tunes which chiefly set the house in ecstasies. His whistle abroad (which, disguise it as they may, all composers covet) suggesteth the air that shall be enco- red above all others; his by-word of the day causeth the laugh which Mrs. Keeley, Miss P. Horton, and Miss Woolgar love to provoke; and, above all, his "Brayvo!" from the heights of the Haymarket, Lyceum, or Adelphi, chiefly

inspiriteth both audience and actors. For he is no mean feature as connected with "the present state of the drama." His voice keepeth the scene-shifters to their duty; his call, from the gallery, of "Higher!" hath power to raise the very skies; and he even commandeth the great Charles Kean to "Speak up!" when contiguous noise drowneth the sound of that eminent voice. And he often dispelleth the ennui of the audience during the entr'acte, by making his dangerous journey along the front of the rails from one side of the house to the other, when he wisheth to exchange greetings with a half-price friend. He believeth that the whole orchestra is composed but of fiddlers, for he mentioneth them all as "catgut scrapers;" and he crieth out perpetually, throughout the entertainment, for "Bill Simmuns!" whom he expecteth to join him. He is anxious that everybody who is noisy, except himself, should be thrown over, or turned out; but he liketh the commandatory rather than the executive power. He hath a merit of discovering ephemeral horsemen and livery-stable nags with a quickness scarcely inferior to that of a turnpike-man; and if he detecteth in the equestrian a nervous temperament, he calleth out, "You'd better get inside, sir!" or he kindly saith, "Mind his tail, sir, or else it'll be shook off!" or he facetiously recommends him "to lay hold tight by his ears." And to all coachmen he crieth, "Whip behind!" more especially when there is nothing to whip. Or he telleth John Thomas to "look sharp after his calves, or else they'll pull him off his perch!"

To coachmen, generally, he is a terror, and to none more than those who are waiting outside the theatres, half asleep upon their boxes, with their whips hanging over the pavement; for the thongs of these he tuggeth in succession, exclaiming, "My eyes! there's a bite!" as the lash flieth back, and possibly waketh the dozing Jehu with a cut across the face. And also by anglers at the Serpentine is he held in dread, inasmuch as he constantly recommendeth the fisherman to "Pull him up, sir!" when there is no necessity. Or he examineth the contents of the fish-kettle uninvited; or, if the bites do not arrive so quickly as he desireth, he maketh artificial ones by pelting at the float, thereby causing it to bob. And this hath been known to disturb the fish in no small measure, so that they incontinently depart to distant waters, and is, above all others, an intrusion which your angler cannot abide. But herein doth lie the boy's greatest pleasure.

4.—OF THE REASONABLE RATE AT WHICH THE BOY PROCURES HIS AMUSEMENTS.—OF HIS REFRESHMENTS.

THE sources of income of the boy are numerous, but, at the same time, the results are small; and so he is driven to patronise those sports and pastimes of the people of England which require the least outlay. His living is either earned or picked up. By the first, we mean that he may be in a regular place; but if he is detained in-doors many of his most striking characteristics are destroyed; for confinement to him is like a flower-pot to a forget-me-not. He must have air, and light, and water, and plenty of them, or he loses his richest attributes; and so, of the ways of living, he prefers the second. When you land at Hungerford, he is there, anxious to carry your carpet-bag the greatest possible distance for the smallest conceivable amount; or if you shoot a cab flying in the street, he opens the door, pushes you in, bangs it to again, and touches the place where his hat ought to be if he had one, before you know he is near you. He will run miles after your horse, even after saluting you as aforesaid, upon the chance of holding it; and were he certain that you would make a long call, he would endeavour to turn a few dishonest halfpence by letting the aristocracy of his class have a short ride. But this is a species of money-making attended with some risk.

All these payments, however, are a long time making up the sum of sixpence; and when he gets this together, he goes to the play on a Monday evening, not caring how early he arrives, or how long he waits at the gallery door. Indeed, his patient expectation at this post appears to be part of the evening's entertainment; for he will cluster there with his fellows sometimes as early as half-past four. And spending his money in this way, he has none left for promiscuous diversions; and so he studies in what way the greatest amount of amusement can be procured for nothing, or, at least, next to it.

All street amusements, depending for support on the voluntary contributions of the bystanders, we have before observed, he liberally patronises—with his presence; at times contributing to their effect by allowing the wandering necromancer to fasten the padlock on his cheek, or becoming the victim whose head is to be cut off the minute ninepence more is thrown into the ring, to make up the sum under which the decapitation, by some mysterious law of nature, cannot be per-

formed. But in this respect the boy is pretty safe; for the ring resembles in some degree the toy of Tantalus's cup: you may throw hundreds of coppers into it, without ever getting the sum to rise above sevenpence-halfpenny.

Generally speaking, all the enjoyments which those who have money purchase, the boy procures for nothing. He gets to the Derby by riding behind a number of vehicles, and changing them, as he is successively whipped off. He sees an execution from a lamp-post, even obscuring the view of those wealthy amateurs in such matters, who have paid a high rent for the first floor of the Lamb coffee-house. The crater of Mount Vesuvius at the Surrey Zoological Gardens is sufficiently visible above the palings to allow him to enter into all the glories of the rockets and eruptions from the road; and he sees much more of Mr. Green in his balloon from the public road, than any of the company who paid for admission to behold what is termed "the process of filling"—consisting of the diverting application of a gas-pipe for several hours to a valve at the bottom of the huge looming machine in question, and not being a sight, in the abstract, provocative of great joy or merriment.

At fairs and festivals, it has long been received as a fact that the outside of the shows is the best part of their performance; and this the boy enjoys to the utmost. He sees all the actors, and then, if he chooses, he can hear the dialogue of the tragedy, and the comic song of the countryman, by listening at the side of the canvas theatre. He gets a ride in the merry-go-round, by contributing his share of communicated force to impel it, or responding to the master's commands of "Holler, boys!" and raising a shout of enthusiasm to light up a glow of ardour in the breasts of waverers, who are debating between the hobby-horse and the halfpenny. And he sometimes, even, is admitted to the grand arena of equitation, as a reward for forming one of the awkward squad which Mr. Merriman drills on the platform. At races, he lies down at the feet of the people at the ropes, and gets a better view than anybody else; and at reviews he comes off equally well by climbing a tree.

Whatever the boy does not spend at the theatre goes in things to eat. For his consumption are those remarkable penny ham-sandwiches chiefly manufactured, as well as the numerous unintelligible comestibles sold on the stalls which border the pavement. In fact, the kerb is his club, offering all the advantages of one of those institutions, without any sub-

scription or ballot. Had he a few pence, he might dine equally well as at Blackwall, and with the same variety of delicacies, without going twenty yards either way from the pillars in St. Clement's churchyard. He might begin with a water souchée of eels, varying his fish course with pickled whelks, cold fried flounders, or periwinkles. Whitebait, to be sure, he would find a difficulty in procuring; but as the more cunning gourmands do not believe these delicacies to be fish at all, but merely little bits of light pie-crust fried in grease—and as, moreover, the brown bread-and-butter is, after all, the grand attraction—the boy might soon find a substitute. Then would come the potatoes, apparently giving out so much steam, that the can which contains them seems in momentary danger of blowing up; large, hot, mealy fellows, that prove how unfounded were the alarms of the bad crop-ites; and he might next have a course of boiled feet of some animal or another, which he would be certain to find in front of the gin-shop. Cyder-cup, perhaps, he would not get; but there is "ginger-beer from the fountain at one penny per glass;" and instead of mulled claret, he could indulge in "hot elder cordial;" whilst for dessert, he could calculate upon all the delicacies of the season, from the salads at the corner of Wych-street, to the baked apples at Temple-bar. None of these things would cost more than a penny apiece, some of them would be under that sum; and since, as at Verey's and other foreign restaurateurs, there is no objection to your dividing the "portions," the boy might, if he felt inclined to give a dinner to a friend, get off under sixpence. There would be the digestive advantage, too, of moving leisurely about from one course to another; and, above all, there would be no fees to waiters.

We believe that of late years the taste of the boy in the matter of street refreshments is altering for the better; and we are led to think so by the improvements which the travelling vendors of them are making in their establishments, and which now appeal to his artistic feelings rather than his idle curiosity. We remember the time when kidney-puddings—uninviting constructions of the size of small oranges—were sold in the New Cut; and the stalls were adorned with rude transparencies, to catch the eye of the boys. We recollect there was the courier of St. Petersburg riding six horses at once for a kidney-pudding—a small reward, it is true, after such a perilous journey, but characteristic of the contentment

of the Russian Empire; and there was Richmond winning the kidney-pudding from Richard III. by single combat, the viand, without doubt, being intended to typify England in general; and on another lantern was Mr. Grimaldi as clown, making a face, with a string of sausages hanging out of his pocket. The connexion of this with the subject was somewhat vague, unless it was intended to show him as he appeared after swallowing a kidney-pudding. If this was the case, the expression of his face was not favourable to the desire of following his example. But now all these things are gone: the vendor no longer makes a hole in the pudding with his little finger, and pours in something like lamp-oil and hot water shaken together, from a ginger-beer bottle. The stall is a portable kitchen in itself, with three elegant brass lamps at the top, in lieu of the paper lanterns: the kidney-puddings have yielded to entremets of a less ambiguous description. The neighbouring ginger-beer stand boasts elegant glass apparatus, and tumblers instead of mugs, and is even elaborately painted in arabesque patterns. One we saw, the other day, upon wheels, was green, and red, and gold; and on it was written "La Polka." The general effect was good, but the analogy was difficult to trace. However, one thing is certain: the merchants have found that boys now bestow the greatest patronage upon the most elegant stalls, and ornament them accordingly. But of all these eating-stands, the chief favourite with the boys is the potato-can. They collect round it, as they would do on 'Change, and there talk over local matters, or discuss the affairs of the adjoining cab-stand, in which they are at times joined by the waterman, whom they respect—more so, perhaps, than they do the policeman; certainly more than they do the square-keeper, for him they especially delight to annoy. And they watch any of their fellows eating a potato with a curiosity and an attention most remarkable, as if no two persons fed in the same manner, and they expected something strange or diverting to happen at every mouthful.

5.—OF THE FINAL DESTINATION OF THE BOYS.

WE believe that if birds or animals, who have been taken into private life, are again cast forth upon the world, their fellows directly insult—not to say pitch into—them in a cruel and heartless manner.

And it is so with the boys. The instant one of them is

thrown into society—by which we mean some position above that of the mere errand-boy or printer's devil, in either of which situations he is still, to all intents and purposes, the gamin we have been describing—that instant he is turned into game for his late companions. If he is a "page," they will ask him "what he'll take for his jacket without the buttons?" If he is a doctor's boy, arrayed in that comical conventional costume which medical men put their lads into—that sad struggle to combine the groom, footman, tiger, page, and knife-cleaner all in one—they will, if he is in a gig, shout out, "Ullow, doctor!" after him, to the indignation of his master; and if he is on foot with the oilskin-covered basket, they will stop him, attempt to bonnet him, and insist on looking into it. And here it sometimes happens that, instead of draughts and mixtures, they will discover half-pounds of tea, eggs, or, indeed, mutton-chops, for one of the earliest maxims instilled into the mind of the doctor's boy is, never to go out without his basket. It looks professional, and gives neighbours the idea of extensive practice, whereas three draughts carried in the hand bear four-and-sixpence on the very face of them. If he turns his thoughts towards learning the art and mystery of a baker, they will rap on his basket as he carries it on his shoulder, or even go so far as to call him "Doughy;" or at night, when they see him down in the hot lighted cellars, underneath the places where the pavement is always dry when it rains, and the snow always thaws when it falls, they will say, "I say, Joe, how are you off for hallum?" or allude to "bones," and "sally moniac," and other popular prejudices. If he is a butcher, they do not insult him except at a great distance, or when he has got a heavy tray of meat that he cannot well put down. For they know that in this state he is pugnacious; and that, unlike his threats in the boy state of existence, if he says he will punch their heads he is pretty safe to do it.

We have done with the boys as they grow up, for then they cease to be so, and we lose all interest in them. Few of their attributes remain; they become grave and dull; you would not recognise in the porter, the journeyman, or the carman, any of the eccentricities that marked their early career. The only positions in which their repartee remains of use to them, and is still cultivated, are those of omnibus cads, cab-drivers, and the touters at the pier-heads of rival steam-boat companies.

VII.

A FRENCH SCHOOL.

THE continual minor annoyances and ludicrous mistakes to which our knowledge of school French perpetually subjected us, induced us to think about some means of acquiring the language, not as we learn it in England, but as they speak it in France. We applied to several friends, touching the best means of attaining this end, and everybody said, "Go into a school for a short time; it is your only way." Thinking of the old adage, which teaches us what every one says must be right, we accordingly made up our minds to become a schoolboy once more, and started one morning in quest of an "*institution*" likely to suit our purpose. We called at several, but none had the least idea of what a parlour-boarder meant, at least in our sense of the word; and after splitting our boots to pieces in running up and down the Rue d'Enfer (whose miserably unpaved state entirely contradicts the statement that the "*descensus Averni*" is so easy, and shows Virgil had not Paris in his eye when he wrote the *Æneid*), we at length settled with one in the Faubourg St. Jacques, where we stipulated to have a bedroom to ourselves, to dine with the principal, and to be instructed in the French language for one hundred francs per month. Now, we had three reasons for going here. Firstly, it was cheap; secondly, it was near the Barrière Mont-Parnasse, to whose amusement on fête days we had a great predilection; and lastly (we blush to own our cowardice), the *élèves* were all "small boys" whom we could thrash into subjection if they were impudent, or halloo'd after us "*Rosbif Anglais*," "*God-dem*," or any other entertaining polyglot witticisms that the said "small boys" of Paris, there called *gamins*, were apt to indulge in at our expense.

It was a wet, dirty day, in the beginning of November, that we left our lodging at the Hôtel Corneille, Place de l'Odéon, and hiring a porter at the corner of the Rue Racine, paddled up the never-ending, and always dirty, Rue St. Jacques to our

new abode. On arriving, we entered the great gates, with which all French schools are embellished, and immediately carried our effects to our bedroom, which was a closet with a tiled floor, about eight feet square, and whose sole furniture was comprised in a little wooden bedstead without curtains, a deal chair, and a corresponding table, on which was a pie-dish to wash in, and a pint white jug for water. Had we been astronomers, the room would have had many advantages, since it was ingeniously lighted by a window in the ceiling, which, in fine weather, illumined our chamber very well, but in the event of a heavy fall of snow, left us nearly in total darkness. It was late in the evening when we arrived, so we went to bed at once, supplying the want of sufficient bed-furniture by an English great-coat spread over the counterpane, and a carpet-bag, emptied of its contents, made a sort of mat to lay on the ground and stand upon while we undressed.

Long before daylight the next morning we were aroused from our slumbers by a bell ringing to summon the poor devils of *élèves* to the commencement of their studies. We heard much yawning and scrambling after clothes, and then a silent and measured step as the usher assembled them, two and two, to march down stairs to school. About seven, the cook of the establishment—a dirty fellow, in a dirtier white nightcap—brought us a cup of milk and a piece of bread, which we were informed was to be our *first* breakfast; the other was at half-past eleven. Unfortunately for us, we always had a great aversion to bread-and-milk; we think it is neither one thing nor the other, and appears to hold an intermediate rank between tea and water. Although we remembered in our infancy to have possessed a book of nursery rhymes, written by some anonymous poet of the dark ages of infantile literature, where there was a picture of a little child, with very curly hair, dragging a respectable female, who looked something between a Sunday-school teacher and a barmaid, towards a cow feeding in a romantic meadow; and, moreover, some lines, which commenced, as far as our memory serves us:

Thank you, pretty cow, that made
Pleasant milk to soak my bread;

and followed by some well-founded cautions not to chew hemlock and other rank weeds; still, we repeat, in spite of all these associations, we do not like bread-and-milk. Accordingly,

when we found this was all we were to be allowed before noon, we were out of temper, and getting up very cross, we sauntered down into the playground to inspect our new residence.

The reader must imagine a large court, enclosed on three sides by buildings and walls, and on the fourth by some palings communicating with the garden. The edifices on the right hand were divided into numerous little cells, each having a door, and those were dignified by titles placed over the said doors. The first was called "*Salle de Musique*," and, in consequence, was fitted up with a cistern and leaden trough, where the *élèves* performed their morning ablutions, when there happened to be any water. Next to this was the "*Salle de Dessin*," or drawing academy; and some empty easels, with a very rickety form or two, showed a great deal went on there. Then came the "*Classe*," or schoolroom, where the *élèves* studied under the surveillance of two ushers, who ordained a rigid silence amongst their pupils, save and except such times as the said ushers were on duty as national guards. On the other side the court was the dwelling-house and bedrooms, with the "*Réfectoire*" of the pupils, where they fed; and in the middle of the playground, which, from having two trees in it, was denominated the "*Parc*," were divers gymnastic poles and bars, and a deep well, which supplied the establishment with water, when anybody was at leisure to wind it up—an operation of half an hour.

We were tolerably hungry at eleven o'clock, and were not sorry to hear the bell for the boys' breakfast, as we knew ours came after. The pupils silently marched two and two into their room, and took their places at two long tables, where each boy had a fork, cup, and napkin laid for him; tablecloths and knives were unknown. An allowance of *potage*, seemingly composed of cabbage-water and bits of bread, was first served out to each; after that, they had some *vin ordinaire* and water, but such wine—the only thing we could compare it to was ink and small beer mixed together—and when this was well diluted with water, we could imagine how delicious it was. A course of boiled spinach came next, and the breakfast concluded by a dab of currant-jam being distributed to each, which was eaten with their bread, of which, however, there was an unlimited supply. This meal was repeated at five o'clock, with such agreeable variations as the taste of the cook directed; but beyond small pieces of hard boiled beef, and little bits of calf's

liver, we did not see much meat. Potato salads, cold artichokes, and boiled lentils, appeared to be the staple articles of refreshment. The meals which we partook with the master and his family were about the same standard, except that the wine was superior, and some *côtelettes* of mutton and veal were occasionally displayed. The *élèves* themselves had none of the spirit of English schoolboys, and, indeed, it was not to be wondered at. We could not help often contrasting the washy mess they were eating to the wholesome roast and boiled joints of our schools. They appeared to have no regular games or toys of their own, and all their play-time was spent in running after one another, with no other end that we could perceive but to warm themselves; for although the weather was desperately cold, there were no fires, or even fireplaces, in several of the rooms. They never inflicted corporal punishment, but offenders were ordered to stand against a particular tree for half an hour, or be deprived of a dish at dinner. We thought it would have had a better effect to thrash them well, and feed them well.

As we may imagine, from their early rising, they were generally pretty well fatigued at night, and they were always in a deep sleep when we went to bed. As the way to our chamber lay through that of the *élèves*, we had frequent opportunities of inspecting it. It was a large bare room, with the beds arranged round it, and down the middle, like Roux's ward at the Hôtel-Dieu, only the beds had no curtains. Some of the boys had little round mats by the beds to stand upon, but the majority, who could not afford to *hire* these luxuries of the master of the school, had the gratification of planting their naked feet on a tiled floor every morning. A dim and solitary lamp burnt all night in the chamber, barely lighting its extreme ends; not an article of furniture but the beds themselves, and one chair for the usher, was in the room, and the windows all closed with that unattractive irreconcilability which is only known to the windows of the Continent.

We contrived to get through a month at our *institution*, and then we left. We had, it is true, picked up a good deal of French, but in point of expense it had not saved us much, for—the truth must out—we never got enough to eat, and, in consequence, generally dined again at the nearest *restaurant*; nay, more than once, we detected ourselves eating broiled herrings at a wine-shop outside the Barrière d'Arcueil.

VIII.

ALEXANDRIA TO CAIRO.

TRAVELLING on the Nile is not one of continuous poetic dreaming, when you do not come near any relics of antiquity. If you lose the Overland Mail transit steamer, as I did, from being kept in quarantine through a mistake, and have to hire a *kandjia* to go from Pompey's Pillar to the Pyramids, you must make up your mind to be bored, for five or six days and nights, beyond all endurance.

On Monday morning, the 8th of October, 1849, finding that there would be no steamer for ten days, I determined to get up to Cairo as I could, and went down with my servant (a clever Piedmontese attached to Rey's Hotel) to the water-side to select a boat. There are many always waiting to be hired here, and we selected one tolerably new and clean, fashioned something like a small City barge, but with two masts, fore and aft, and said to be a good sailer. The reis, or captain, asked four hundred piastres (a little more than four pounds) for the journey, but immediately took two hundred and fifty, with a promise of backsheesh if he and his crew behaved well. All the afternoon we were looking up our stores for the journey, which we packed in the useful, light, palm-wood crates, or *cafasses*, of Egypt. These consisted of the commonest knives, forks, plates, dishes, and glasses, a clay fireplace, a frying-pan, a coffee-pot, a wool mattress, and the crates full of fowls, eggs, and vegetables. We had also some luxuries, such as sardines, tea, two dozen of pale ale, and a bottle of cognac. Giovanni, the dragoon, added two fine old, long-muzzled, hard-kicking guns; and all these things, being heaped upon a truck, were taken down, by a guard of sun-baked, screaming little Arab boys, to the quay. We joined the boat just below Pompey's Pillar, and pushed off from shore about seven in the evening.

Alexandria is connected with the Nile by the Mahmoudieh Canal, a channel between high banks, forty miles long, terminating at the village of Atfeh. The story of the formation of this canal is an oft-told tale, but I suppose I shall not be the last by many to relate it. It was excavated by order of Mahomed Ali, and a terrible undertaking it proved. With the impetuosity which distinguished all his acts, he dragged two

hundred and fifty thousand of the wretched Egyptian peasantry—men, women, and children—from the villages on the Nile, and set them to work to dig this canal, or rather to scoop it out with their hands, for they had no implements to assist them. The poor creatures had only brought provisions with them for one month's consumption; and Mahomed Ali, determined not to allow them any more when these were gone, kept them at work, under the lashes and pikes of his soldiery, until the blood streamed down their limbs, even of the children of four or five years old. Maddened by pain and famine, they tore up the ground with an energy that only desperation could have given them; and the canal was made in the incredibly short space of six weeks; but averaging the accounts of different writers, more than thirty thousand of the labourers perished in this period from torture and starvation. The bodies were thrown up with the clay by their fellow-sufferers, and assisted to form the banks; so that the whole of the Mahmoudieh, between Alexandria and Atfeh, may be considered as one huge and ghastly cemetery.

As we pushed off, four of the Arabs—there were seven in the crew, with the captain—sat in pairs on the deck, taking up some boards to drop their feet into, and began to row. They also sang a monotonous chant. The captain gave a word or two, and the others added a refrain; it was to the effect that there was a fair wind, we were travelling famously, and everything was "all right." The wind was dead against us, and we were just moving. However, the East is said to be all romance.

We occupied the first half-hour of our journey in stowing away our goods. Every time we moved a board or a box, a great black spider scuffled out and instantaneously disappeared down some favourite crevice; and drawing the wooden blinds of the windows disturbed dozens.

We were not long in getting clear of the crowd of boats that form the "pool" of Alexandria; and then the Arabs left off singing, and began to tow. When they met with another *kandjia*, or came to two or three moored against the shore, they threw off their long blue shirts, and plunged into the canal, swimming dog-fashion, or throwing out their arms alternately, until they carried the rope round, and then they went on again. There was nothing to see during this part of the journey; one might as well have travelled in a railway cutting of dry dusky mud. About half-past nine the sail went up, on turning a corner, and then we began to move; and, not being particularly

amused, I "turned in," in nautical phrase, which consisted in taking off my coat and lying down upon a thin mattress placed on a broad shelf, and then I dozed for about two hours. I was waked up at midnight by the intense stifling heat, and, looking up to the window, I saw a rat, larger than an average-sized kitten, perched on the sill immediately over my head. He did not move when I sat up, and I had nothing to throw at him but my boots; so I pulled up the blind very suddenly, and thus frightened him so that he leaped into the water. And now a nuisance far more irritating arose: the mosquitoes came in such legions that I was nearly eaten alive. Clothes appeared to be no protection, and when I got up at last, half mad, and went and sat upon deck, they attacked me with tenfold spite. The moon was shining with a brightness I never witnessed in England, and in its light the deck and cabins appeared swarming with horrible things—cockroaches, beetles, spiders, and centipedes. Any more sleep was out of the question, and I sat upon a crate until morning, when the greater part of these abominations shrank from the heavy fog into their fastnesses, and then I tried to get a little more sleep.

Tuesday, 9th.—A dead calm, and the boat made very little way; the high, dingy banks still continued, and I was glad when Giovanni contrived from his rude kitchen to turn out a wonderful breakfast of cutlets, fowl and rice, potatoes, toast, and coffee. A wild dog, having smelt the cooking, followed us for miles; but, with the exception of a boy on a ragged camel, he was the only living thing we saw on the banks for three or four hours. The crew still threw off their clothes and tumbled into the canal on the least occasion, but were singularly quiet: they did not appear to speak to one another all the day long. I occupied myself in fitting up my cabin, driving pegs into the cracks to hang my watch, looking-glass, lantern, and "housewife" on, and running down the spiders, until two o'clock, when we passed some trees and arrived at Atfeh. This was a village of mud-huts, on either side of the canal, thatched with grass and fodder, without windows, but having irregular holes for the inmates to crawl in and out. Some had round mud towers built on them, swarming with pigeons. Half-naked women, and children entirely so, were selling coarse bread under huge umbrellas. Arabs were idling about in the dust and sun, which they seemed to prefer; and there was a complete "jam" of the most incomprehensible boats I ever saw, of which all the crews were screaming and swearing at the top

of their voices, banging one another with poles, breaking each other's rigging, or going coolly down to prayers in the middle of all the uproar. We had to wait more than two hours for some sort of passport, and, at last, got clear of the entangled thicket of boats, and, passing through the locks, swung out into the Nile.

I could see nothing ahead, astern, or around, but one boundless rapid current of reddish clay-coloured water, for the inundation was scarcely subsiding; but the expanse was a great relief after the confined pestilent canal. The stream was so strong, that, before we got up our sails, we were carried a long way down. However, there was a brisk north wind, and we soon began to rush through the water. Opposite to Atfeh we passed Fooah, a town with minarets and domes, which looked well in the afternoon haze, rising as it were from a mighty lake. Here the country got very desolate again, with a flat Essex-marsh sort of look-out on either side, and at dark the wind fell, and we pulled up under a bank for the night, if necessary. One advantage over yesterday was, that we had got rid of the mosquitoes. There were several ordinary gnats and flies, but I set a trap for them with great effect. This was very simple, and was formed by opening the door of the lantern, and hanging it near an open window: in the morning the bottom was half an inch deep in semi-consumed corpses.

Wednesday, 10th.—I found, on awaking, that we had been creeping on, almost imperceptibly, nearly all night; and at six in the morning we were nearly thirty miles above Atfeh. As the Arabs tumbled into the water upon the *kandjia* running aground, I tumbled in too, and had a good long swim. It was utterly contemptible, however, trying to compete with them: they shot through the water like waker-boats. All the day we kept gliding on, passing many more villages of mud-houses, looking like clumps of enormous thimbles; and now and then we saw several small processions of men along the banks on donkeys, asses, and camels; and here and there was a solitary palm; but with the exception of these, the scenery still maintained its Essex-marsh character.

The Arabs continued very silent. One of them was the cook to the party, and he was never away from the fireplace, boiling up lentils with coarse bread. This was their only food, and they drank the Nile water. I found to-day that the meat we had brought from Alexandria was touched by the heat; so

I gave it to the crew, who soon disposed of it. They threw lumps of it on the live embers, and so broiled it.

The mosquitoes had gone, but the flies were almost as bad. They took possession of the cabin, and would not be driven away, worrying me almost into a fever. At last I cut out one of the paper-net "fly-catchers," and hung it from the roof. As night came, they all settled on it; and then I gently moved it away, and sent it floating down the Nile, with its freight of intruders. This was all the excitement of the day; but at night there was a terrible skirmish amongst the rats, who, attracted by the fowls, appeared to be boarding the boat in all quarters.

Thursday, 11th.—The morning broke with a dead calm. Now and then the wind came in little puffs, and then died away again. The monotony of the voyage was broken by a fight between Giovanni and one of the Arabs, or, rather, my servant had it all on his own side. The man objected to get into the water to tow, upon which the dragoman gave him a good thrashing with a rope, and then he got overboard and worked away well.

About noon the wind came, and all the afternoon we amused ourselves with shooting hawks and ibises, of which there were great numbers. I also shot a *sicsac*; one of the birds reported to get into the crocodile's mouth and pick its teeth of parasitical water-animals. It had sharp points on the top of its wings, which the Arabs said were to keep the crocodile from closing its jaws. When the birds fell, the Arabs dashed overboard just like spaniels, and brought them back in their mouths.

It was curious to see how they watched us. Whatever we were about—eating, washing, or reading—they never took their eyes from us, but followed every movement. Their actions were singularly like those of a monkey: they picked up small things and examined them carefully, usually trying them first with a bite; and an old envelope I had thrown on one side was a matter of great scrutiny: they could not make it out at all; but after passing it round, and apparently offering many opinions on it, they put it by carefully under a board. Giovanni told me they were all thieves, but stole singularly minute things—odd bits of string, useless lucifers, knobs of sealing-wax, and such-like rubbish. At night a good rattling breeze came on; and whilst we were surging through the water, I amused them with some common-place conjuring tricks, from which time I was regarded as a great magician.

We anchored alongside a village at night, and I got rid of

the flies as before. About one o'clock I was lying awake, and hearing a throbbing noise up the river, I looked, and saw a light advancing. It came on, and in a few minutes I found it was the Overland Mail steamer, homeward bound. This little incident was very impressive. The boat came near enough for me to shout out, "Good night!" which was returned by one or two persons on deck, surprised, I have no doubt, at the familiar salutation from the moored *kandjia*. I watched this out of sight; and then, after a look at my crew, who had completely wrapped themselves up in canvas until they looked like mere bundles, and were lying about in the bright moonlight, I turned in to sleep.

Friday, 12th.—The people in the village commenced making such an unearthly riot at daybreak, that, as there was no wind, I made the Arabs tow us up some miles higher to another clump of houses. A large traffic-boat from Cairo had stopped here, crammed with peasants, many of them blind; the majority of them had but one eye, and all the children were suffering from ophthalmia. The passengers landed and bought bread, like pancakes, of other women who came down to sell it. The Arabs kept on towing, but very slowly. I do not think we made above a mile an hour; and at noon, with a suffocating hot wind dead against us, they pulled up at a village, and said they could not go on, because there was a shallow just above us right across the river, and that we must wait for a wind to take us over to the other bank. I was very angry, but to no effect; so we lay broiling under the sun until three, when they punted across, and we started again. They had only dawdled about from sheer idleness. In the afternoon a cripple, with limbs shockingly distorted, and hands webbed like fins, swam off from a hovel on shore to beg money. The wind now came on dead against us; the towing-paths were all under water, and the men really could not track the boat, as they did not know where they were going, and every now and then disappeared into deep holes; so we were obliged to come to a stand-still again, and made fast for the night under a bank of osiers. We amused ourselves and the Arabs by making little rafts of palm-wood, putting bits of lighted candle on them, and launching them off, one after the other, down the stream. As there was no wind, they burnt very steadily, and, when several were started, looked very pretty. The Arabs said the peasants would think they were devils. This night was the worst I ever passed in my life. The

foliage brought the mosquitoes again in overwhelming force; the rats came along the ropes from the land and scuffled about our very feet; the spiders and cockroaches were in full activity; and a man, or successive men, beat a drum ashore, in some religious ceremony, all night long. A verdict of "Temporary Insanity" would have justified anything that a man might have done under these inflictions.

Saturday, 13th.—I routed all the men up at six, and, as there was the usual lack of wind, set them to work. They grumbled at going into the water whilst it was so cold; but I soon settled this, and at seven we were fairly off. I was so heartily sick of the boat, with its delays and inconveniences, that we stopped at a village, and tried to get some camels or donkeys to ride on to Cairo, "across country." The people, however, were so miserably poor, they had nothing; and I was getting altogether out of heart, when a brisk wind sprang up and blew us along bravely, under a press of sail that almost lifted the *kandjia* out of the water. About noon Giovanni showed us the Pyramids on the horizon, and soon after we rounded the apex of the Delta. Provisions were running short, but it was not worth while to buy any more; so I had a "scratch" dinner of macaroni, potatoes, onions, and rice-pudding, all chopped up together and fried, which was really capital. The wind kept up, and by-and-by we came to the great works erected for the barrage of the Nile, which is to cost a great deal and not ultimately answer. Then villages came quickly after one another, and the people thickened on the banks. Anon palaces, *kiosks*, and beautiful gardens diversified the prospect; the crowd of boats increased; the Pyramids rose higher above the scenery. Then I saw minarets and towers, off and away on our left; and at last, just in time to save ourselves from being locked out for the night, the *kandjia* stopped at one of the landing-places of Boolak, the port of Cairo.

Giovanni soon procured donkeys, and, leaving the boat in charge of the Arabs, we rode off. We first passed through Boolak, with swarms of dogs yelping after us—as many as I had seen at Constantinople: then along neat Oriental streets, with picturesque wooden-latticed windows, and garden-walls, over which we saw dates and prickly pears growing; and at last, traversing a cool English-looking road, bordered with acacias, I entered Cairo at the Esbekeyah, and pulled up at the British hotel, delighted beyond all measure to have done, for at least some time, with the Nile and the *kandjia*.

IX.

A GO-AHEAD DAY WITH BARNUM

[The reader will see, by the date of the following paper (which preceded its appearance in *Bentley's Miscellany* by a few months only), that it was written long before Mr. Barnum himself gave his version of the day's excursion in his *Autobiography*. One or two of his companion's opinions were put into the mouth of Mr. Rossett in "The Scattergood Family," distorted to suit the circumstances of the story; but most of the following remarks are nearly word for word as the author heard them.]

WE saw more on Thursday, the 5th of September, 1844, than ever we did in our lives in one day; and this is how we came to do it.

For the first time for several years we found seven consecutive days that did not require our actual presence in London—an entire week, from the beginning to the end of which we could escape from the pen that we had been chained to, like a galley-slave to his oar, in the continuously painful process, or rather intention, of being always "funny!" And so we got off at once, not telling any one where we were going to, that no letters might be sent after us; and we determined upon having a week's scamper upon the railways, and see some of the large towns. For although we had twice walked from Geneva to Milan, we had never been above six hours' journey from London, in our own country. But this, we believe, is by no means a peculiar idiosyncrasy of English character. Well, we visited Bath, Bristol, and Clifton, Cheltenham and Gloucester, a day at each; and after seeing pins made at Phipson's, and buttons at Bullivant's, and papier-mâché ornaments at Jennings and Betteridge's, and electro-type articles at Elkington's, we came back to our hotel at Birmingham, and began to think gloomily about returning.

We were certainly very agreeably disappointed in the appearance of Birmingham. Before people see a person or a place, they always form an idea to themselves of what he or it

is like, and they are always decidedly wrong in their notions. We had pictured Birmingham as a town of narrow streets, bounded by dingy buildings, with blackened and many-paned casements, and surrounded by forests of tall chimneys that never had a holiday, but were taught to smoke as soon as they could be trusted alone, and never left off after it. And instead of this, in the first short stroll we took before breakfast, we found a large clean town, with a pure country air blowing about its handsome streets. No smoke, no forests of chimneys—no blacks to fly in at the window and pollute everything that was clean in the apartments; and the people, instead of the squalid, miserable race, that strong-penned humanity-mongers love to work up into an effect and an appeal to the sympathies, were a healthy, happy-looking set enough—fat and rosy if you will—even to the children who were going to their labour at the different factories. In good truth, we felt rather out of conceit with ourselves in the absence of that dirt and misery which we had determined was right and proper to be seen at Birmingham.

We were at breakfast in the coffee-room of Dee's Hotel, writing off a quantity of "slips" to London, when the head waiter, who had been regarding us some time with much attention, inquired:

"Ask pardon, sir. Literary gentleman, sir?"

The question was put with such civility, that at the risk of rendering him anxious about the spoons and forks, we said that we were something of the sort.

"Thought so, sir," he replied, "because I saw you only wrote on one side of the paper. Quite a treat, sir, to have a literary gentleman to wait on; don't mind nothing that I can do for a gentleman as can write a book. I've seen Sir Edward Bulwer write, sir."

"Indeed!"

"Ah! that I have, sir. Nice gentleman. He used to come and write at the hotel I lived at at Richmond. And smoke—how he did smoke!—a long pipe, sir; and then he went from the hearth to the table and put down what he'd thought of, and then come back again."

The conversation was here disturbed by an unwonted tumult and hum of voices in the street whereon some of the windows looked. There was also a similar riot in the yard; and in both places we found some three or four hundred people assembled,

apparently in eager expectation of seeing something wonderful. The mystery was soon solved. Two grooms opened the door of a coach-house with important gravity, the boys set up a great shout, and the Lilliputian carriage of General Tom Thumb drove out into the street amidst the turbulent cheers of the spectators. We directly found that the small General was sojourning in our hotel; and the waiter called our attention to a tall, active person who was arranging the cortége, and cuffing the more intrusive boys into order, saying he was also a literary gentleman—Mr. Barnum, Tom Thumb's governor. We had met him once before at M. Baugniot's, the artist's, and found him so very original and amusing, that we determined to renew the acquaintance. On his return we found he intended to go to Stratford the next day, and Kenilworth, if practicable, and we immediately offered to join him. But he said we must "go-ahead," and we certainly did.

At five o'clock next morning—a period of day we had only seen before when coming home with blinking eyes and jaded limbs from an evening party—Barnum was at our bedroom door, and at six we were at "The Hen and Chickens," in Newstreet, waiting for a coach. It soon came up—a pair horse one—with a regular old-fashioned English coachman on the box, a stout, jolly man, who was a most perfect type of that once numerous class which is fast departing from the earth in company with the legitimate drama, sedan-chairs, and North American Indians.

After leaving Birmingham, the road is, at parts, exceedingly picturesque, with occasional glimpses of fine old abbey-looking churches, and ancient villages.

"We've none of them old fixings in 'Merrekey,'" said Barnum; "they've no time to get old there."

We inquired how that was.

"Why, you see, a man never builds a house to last above a year or two, because he's gone-ahead in that time, and wants a bigger one. And go-ahead is our motto. Shut the fire door, sit on the safety-valve, and whop the sun. We've no bonds on airth that can keep us back."

We attempted a feeble joke about those of Pennsylvania, but it did not make a hit. So we said, "Are you all alike?"

"I reckon we are," said Barnum. "As Yankee Doodle says, the chief end of all men is to get money. So we don't 'swop even' in any case, but strive to have the pull always. If you

fail, you're called a 'Do;' if you succeed, you become a capitalist. There's just the same difference between a hung rebel and a crowned conqueror."

"But what does the world say to this—I mean America?"

"Well, that is the world, I reckon. Who cares what it says? The world's only a bugbear to frighten timid people. If you care for what people say, get lots of money, and then you can make them talk as you like. They call me humbug now. Very good, I can afford it. They won't, some day."

We had so frequently heard Barnum called a humbug, that we did not even venture the courtesy of saying, "Oh, no! you must be mistaken."

"I'd sooner be a humbug than anything," continued Barnum, "if it's what my experience leads me to believe it is. Humbug is, now-a-days, the knack of knowing what people will pay money to see or support. Anybody who's up to this is safe to be called a humbug by everybody who isn't."

As we approached the little village of Henley-in-Arden, it came on to rain very smartly, and we got wet through. We were all, however, in such good humour with ourselves and everybody else, that we laughed it away; and Barnum's principal laugh was against the coachman, who had been declaring all along that there was not the least chance of rain. Barnum asked him "if it always came down so in Warwickshire?" to which he replied, "Yes; he'd never known it come down from anywhere but the skie." Our friend was somewhat "riled" at being thus sold; but he had his revenge, for a minute or two afterwards, when the coachman inquired "if he was afraid of catching a cold?" Barnum answered, "Not at all, for the horses went too slow to catch anything."

In the village just spoken of we saw the name of "Shakespeare, hairdresser," over a little shop, and this gave rise to some more of our friend's speculation.

"Now if that barber was just to write a play," said Barnum, "it wouldn't be thought anything of, however good it was, till he'd been dead no end of years. You talk a great deal about your Shakespeare being the pride of England, but I can see nobody knew or cared a cent about him while he was alive, or else you'd have known more of him now. If he'd been a living author, and I'd had my exhibition, I'd have backed the General to have shut him up in a week."

We alighted at the "Red Horse," at Stratford-upon-Avon,

after our soaking journey. It was so cold and dismal we had a fire lighted; and during the time we were waiting for our breakfast we read Washington Irving's "Sketch Book," a copy of which is kept in the parlour of the inn. All that portion pertaining to it, and Stratford generally, has been so thumbed, and mended, and pencilled, and spliced, that we have some idea of starting a subscription to present the "Red Horse" with a new copy. For, being kept for public perusal, visitors cannot have a more kindly or pleasant guide to introduce them to the Shakspeare house and church than its good author.

As we were paddling up to the house in which "the divine Williams"* was born, Barnum observed: "The General's father Stratton, isn't a man of much reading. He always travels with us, and when we came through here before, from Leamington, whilst he was at breakfast I said to him, 'Come, make haste, or we shan't have time to see the Shakspeare room.' 'Oh!' says he, 'Shakspeare? Who's he? I didn't know the General was to exhibit here.' And then I found he thought Shakspeare was somebody who let public rooms."

The tenement in Henley-street is a humble-looking place enough, with a public-house on the right hand and a small abode, with a shed, on the left. It is inlaid with rough beams black with age; and there is a rickety, tumble-down board over the door, very like an inn-sign, which might be taken down with advantage. The room into which you pass from the street was a butcher's shop; the fittings-up still remain, but the business is not carried on. It also has a small shed before the window, and the floor is paved with irregularly-shaped stones.

We must confess—and it is, we know, only short of high treason to say so—that our enthusiasm was not in any way excited by entering the room, after ascending the flight of stairs from the dark back-parlour, in which "le vieux Guillaume," as Janin says, is reported to have uttered his first cry. There is not the slightest ground for the haziest supposition that he was born here; and hence we have not been so much cut up and utterly prostrated with indignation at the report that the Shakspeare house was going to be sold and taken to America—we believe Barnum to be the purchaser—as some of our acquaintance. He might just as reasonably have been born

* *Vide* French authors, *passim*, when they quote English.

at his father's copyhold in Greenhill-street, or, more properly, at Ingon, on the Warwick-road. Interesting, perhaps, the room is, from the recollection of the pilgrims who have visited it; and valuable, to the owner, from the shillings collected there—too valuable, we should expect, to be readily allowed to go into other hands. A decent elderly woman did the honours of the house. She had been there some time, and took great pleasure in pointing out the different names of note in the visitors' book. The worn appearance of the page on which Mr. Dickens put his autograph attested the curiosity to see it. It was followed by that of Mr. Forster. The old housekeeper recollected Mr. Washington Irving coming there twice, with Mr. Willis, Mr. Everett, Mr. Forest, and other Americans—indeed, their numbers predominated over those of other foreigners.

"I see you've got pictures here, ma'am," said Barnum, pointing to a portrait.

"Yes, sir," said the old lady, in stately tones, "that is the only one; a likeness of Shakspeare."

"Very good," replied Barnum. "It wants a companion. I'll send you a portrait of the General from Birmingham; and you can hang it up too, you know, the other side."

And then, having signed his name as "P. T. Barnum, U.S., Guardian of General Tom Thumb," in the book, where it may still be seen under the above date, he took his departure, leaving with the old lady a quantity of the little cards the General used to distribute at his levees, and begging her to tell the Shakspearian visitors that he was to be seen every day at Dee's Hotel, Birmingham.

From the house to the church is a walk of ten minutes, passing a very fine old specimen of ancient architecture in the street leading to the church, on the right hand, about one-third of the way down. The chancel is very picturesque, and had lately been restored. There are various monuments about, which elsewhere would be interesting, but all are here overlooked for the chief one. It is on the left hand, near the communion-table, eight or ten feet from the ground; and in front are some tombstones pointing out the last resting-places of several members of the poet's family, including his daughter and her husband, Mrs. and Dr. John Hall. There are two books in an adjoining chapel—one of which the clergyman owns—in which the visitors sign their names. We asked if Mr. Dickens's was here also; but the man sighed at the question—it was evidently

a sore subject. "No, sir," he at length replied, "it is not. I never knew it was Mr. Dickens until he had gone, for some visitors were here at the time. I ran after him, but it was no use." He was evidently much hurt that the house in Henley-street had an attraction superior to the chancel.

One of the latest names in the book was that of a lady of the Lucy family of Charlcote, whose ancestor provoked the lampoon from Shakspeare connected with the deer-stealing.

This brought up the anecdote.

"There again, now," said Barnum, as he prepared to wafer one of the General's visiting cards on the monument, saying it was for an advertisement—"there again, if he had been alive now, I reckon the critics would have pitched into him considerable. Fancy if your Sheridan Knowles or Douglas Jerrold was caught rabbit-stealing, what a row there'd be, and how they'd get it."

Returning to the inn, we went on to Warwick in a fly, our friend beguiling the journey all the way by anecdotes of his career as an "exhibitioner" in America. He is, it seems, the proprietor of a large establishment in New York called the American Museum—from what we could make out, something between Madame Tussaud's and the Polytechnic Institution; and to stock this place with wonders, next to spreading the renown of the General, were all his efforts directed.

"A man has quite a right to take in the public if he can," observed Barnum. "He's fighting single-handed against all creation, and it's the greatest credit to him if he whops 'em, for they are long odds."

We asked him what species of attraction he most relied on at his Museum.

"Oh, anything," he replied, "from Niagara to bell-ringers. I got the Falls up first-rate, I can assure you—all Croton water;* and I placarded the model as sending down no end of hogsheads a day. But the Croton Company were very steep, for they came down upon me, and says, 'How's this, Mr. Barnum? you contracted with us for the average supply to the Museum, and here you are getting rid of tons every day.' 'All right,' says I; 'let's bring it to trial.' And to a trial it came. 'Well,' says the company, quite prepared to shut me up, 'we find on such and such a day, several months back, you began to

* The Croton aqueduct supplies New York with water.

send down these no end of hogsheads a day.' 'So I did,' says I, 'but only once; for then I pumped them back again to the tank, and used 'em all over again.' You should have seen how the company looked: just as if it had had nothing for dinner but an appetite for the last six months. It shut them up, though.'

"But you said something about bell-ringers?"

"Oh!—yes—I should think so. They were the Lankayshire lads you had in London, but I called them the Swiss Youths. I engaged them here, and I said, 'Now let your mustachios grow, and you'll be downright foreigners by the time you get to the Museum.' 'But,' says they, speaking in their country fashion, which was uncommon grating, to be sure, 'how'll they take us to be Swiss?' 'Well,' says I, 'if you always speak as you're doing now, the devil himself won't understand you.' And sure enough, when they got there, nobody did; but they drew a heap of money to the Museum."

We found the borough of Warwick very lively as we entered, for it was the day of the races, and all the natives had turned out in their holiday costumes. After a luncheon at the Warwick Arms, where the table was kept laid out all day for droppers in—and there was a large piece of cold boiled beef, which almost made us believe the race of descendants from the renowned Dun Cow was not yet extinct—we walked up to the lodge of the castle. On knocking at the gate it was opened by an important old retainer in livery, who asked us if we wanted to see the castle.

"Well now," said Barnum, "what the devil do you think we came and knocked here for, if we didn't?" The old man looked very indignant, and recollected the affront.

We then sauntered through a shady alley, apparently cut through the solid rock, covered with climbing plants of every species, until we came to the castle. Our only notions of Warwick Castle had, up to this period, been connected with Mr. W. H. Payne, who so comically enacted the Earl Guy, in a pantomime, three or four years before, at Covent Garden; and when we peeped in at one of the wickets, we almost expected to see the awful guard with the unnaturally large head come out and bang us with the terrible club filled with spikes; or Miss Farebrother's beaming face appear at one of the casements. But nothing extraordinary occurred. There was no guard, no Dun Cow, no Guy, no Miss Farebrother. We passed

under the gateway perfectly unmolested, and were received by the butler at the entrance of the inhabited portion of the castle, and by him conducted over the apartments, most of which command the most enchanting views of the park and silvery Avon.

But, let us pause a minute in our day. Directly, we shall speak of Warwick Races, and how Barnum engaged a giant; his great "Washington's nurse" bubble; Kenilworth and Coventry; and, as a rider to the paper, the whole history of the "What is it?" deception, "from authentic documents," as they say in advertisements, "never before made known."

* * * * *

There is a great deal to see in Warwick Castle, and Barnum wanted to buy everything that struck him, for his American Museum. The New Yorkites ought to patronise it, for certainly no pains or expense are spared to make it attractive. He tried to bid for a pair of horns of a gigantic elk—dug out of some bog in Ireland—which adorn the hall. Then he was struck with some fine paintings of Leicester and Essex—the favourites of Elizabeth—and a Circe by Guido; and lastly, he saw a picture, by Rubens, of St. Ignatius.

"I reckon he founded them Jesuits," he said. "I've seen that picture in the 'Everyday Book,' and know all the story about him."

The story was, that St. Ignatius, being in the depth of winter at Cyprus, on his return from a pilgrimage, wanted to go to Venice; but the captain, disliking his seedy appearance, told him that if he was a saint, he could walk upon the water very well without a ship; whereupon Ignatius set sail upon a millstone, and arrived safely at Venice.

"Now, I don't believe that," said Barnum. "If it was trew, you'd see all your high-pressure Exeter-Hall people start off some morning with the tide for Gravesend, floating comfortably upon pavement flags; and, I calculate, that would astonish the steamers."

Upon leaving the inhabited part of the castle, we crossed the lawn, and ascended to the summit of Guy's Tower, stopping on the way to look at some guard-rooms in the interior. The view from the ramparts, as well as from the summit, was most enchanting; and the white canvas booths of the race-course, fluttering in the sun and wind, formed pleasing objects in the panorama. There were sly niches in the embrasures for arrows,

and other artful perches to shoot from, all the way up. Altogether, in its days of prime, Warwick Castle must have been a tolerably tough place enough to have attacked. Barnum himself allowed that America couldn't have taken it.

When we came down from the tower, another vassal, who appeared old enough to have recollected Guy himself, hobbled across the grounds with us to the greenhouse, wherein was placed the Warwick Vase. When he had assembled an audience, he got a stick, hopped upon the steps of the pedestal, and began its history in a true showman-like manner, and then we went back to the lodge.

In the left-hand tower, as you enter, are deposited the wonderful relics of the immortal Guy, and the old man who had let us in showed us the curiosities with great dignity. Besides ourselves, several country families, who had come into Warwick for the races, were the spectators.

"This," said the old gentleman, "is Guy's porridge-pot" (it was a large caldron two or three feet across). "When the late heir came of age, it was filled with punch several times, and taken on to the lawn. This is his flesh fork" (a sort of metal prong); "and this is his walking-staff. This is the armour he wore when he fought the Dun Cow, and this is the armour his horse wore. This is a rib of the Dun Cow, and this——"

"I say, old fellow," interrupted Barnum, "I should reckon you'd told these lies so often that you believe them to be trew. What'll you take now for the lot?"

The old man was very indignant. He had evidently never been spoken to so before.

"Just as you like," replied Barnum. "But I'll get up a better set than these within six months at my Museum, and I'll swear mine are the real originals, and bust up your show altogether in no time."

The idea of reducing the display of the relics to a mere show so hurt the feelings of the old retainer, that he did not condescend to address us any more, except when we gave him a trifle upon leaving. And this is an arrangement connected with the exhibition at Warwick Castle which might be improved with advantage. We were confided to the care of four guides, and they each expected a gratuity after they had led us over their different departments of the property.

"I don't mind the tin," said Barnum; "but it's too much,

and don't look nat'ral anywhere out of St. Paul's Cathedral and your other expensive religious peep-shows. We whop you to smash as a free and intelligent nation in that, I reckon."

From the castle, a walk of ten minutes brought us to the race-course, and amongst the shows he was in his glory; in fact, he never looked at the running.

"Ask the opinion of the respectable company who are now leaving the caravan," said the showman, as his audience departed.

We followed his advice; and, on being told that it was "uncommon good to be sure," we paid threepence each, although Barnum fought hard to be classed with the "servants and working people," a penny. But the show-people soon found him out as the governor of Tom Thumb, and the news was carried along the line of exhibitions as if a telegraph had taken it. Whilst we were waiting, there was another race, which provoked the following dialogue between the clown of the show and the proprietor:

Clown.—"Now, sir, let us have a bet upon the race."

Master.—"I never bet, Mr. Merriman."

Clown.—"Never mind, sir. I'll bet you a bottle of blacking, and you shall have first drink of it, upon the favourite against the field."

Master.—"Done, Mr. Merriman."

Clown.—"Then I've won, sir."

Master.—"How so, Mr. Merriman?"

Clown.—"Because the field's never moved at all."

The inside of the caravan was a compact little place, with the usual chintz drapery drawn across the end of it, a very bright brass fireplace, several mysterious lockers, made to sit or stand upon, bits of coloured glass let into the smartly-painted door, and a canary in a cage, singing through all the din outside. When it was full, the master showed us two gigantic females, nearly seven feet high; a pacific-looking African, with some cock's feathers stuck in his head, who passed to the Warwickshire lads and lasses as an Ojibbeway, and with whom Barnum was acquainted; a trained monkey, and some serpents, one of which the keeper was represented wearing, as a mighty cravat, on the picture outside.

We waited until the exhibition was over; and, when the people had left the caravan, the showman said to Barnum:

"I know a dwarf in Lambeth that Tom Thumb could put in his pocket; only she can't chaff like the General."

"No," said Barnum, "I reckon not. They're precious few that can. The General can chaff the sky yellow when he pleases. He's a regular screamer. But who's this dwarf—Emma Pattle?"

He appeared to know all about the dwarfs all over England—in fact, the exhibition wonders of every kind.

"That's her," said the man.

"Pooh!" returned Barnum. "Tom Thumb put her in his pocket! Stuff! none of them can touch him. They hire children that can't walk and ain't weaned, and put them into top-boots and cocked-hats to make Generals, but it's no go! Now, look here; do you know a good giant, who'd go out to Merrekey for my Museum?"

"Why, you've got one," said the man.

"Ah, but I want another, to get up an opposition against myself. Don't you see?"

"There's Bob Hales," said the Indian; "he's over seven feet, but he's got his own caravan, and it wouldn't be worth his while. I don't know where he is, too."

"Oh, he's in Leicestershire," returned Barnum, evidently acquainted with all his movements.

The Indian here mentioned another tall man of his acquaintance, in the last show of the rank. He had not spoken of him before, because the affair was an antagonistic one. So Barnum at once proceeded onwards.

"The giants know me," he said. "The last I had broke his engagement and set up against me; but I put him in prison, and there he is, safely kept until I want him."

The bargain was soon concluded. The giant was to start by the "Washington," which was to sail in a few days from Liverpool, and he was to have seven pounds a week for salary, besides a military suit to exhibit in. We then hired another fly, and went on to Coventry, pausing at Kenilworth in our way, and going through Leek Wootton, a small village, near which Edward the Second's favourite, Gavestone, was beheaded.

The ruins at Kenilworth are not on the main road, but a short *détour* is necessary to arrive at them. As our fly stopped at the modest wicket, it was literally stormed by children with eighteenpenny guide-books in their hands, which they struggled earnestly to dispose of, almost to the hindrance of our leaving the carriage. Then they offered to lend them to us for a very small consideration, and finally, when we were inside, the poor

things thrust them under the door, and threw them over the wall, with their handkerchiefs tied to them, as a last forlorn hope. Barnum could not withstand their perseverance, and he purchased one of a bright-eyed doll of seven years old, who, having disposed of her stock, scampered home across the common as fast as her little legs would carry her. Indeed, he bought everything everywhere, and it was all for the American Museum.

"I've sent them over the court suit that the General wore before her Majesty," he said.

We humbly suggested that we had seen it the previous day at Birmingham.

"So you did," he replied; "but the one I've sent over is so like it, that the tailor couldn't tell which was which. They'll crowd to see it; there's nothing like a bit of state or aristocracy to catch a Yankee, with all his talk."

We went on. On entering the ground, by the side of the great gatehouse, you first perceive a board, which informs you that "the old chimney-piece may be seen within for sixpence." This is well worthy of inspection, as well as the old wainscoted room in which it is placed. The greater part of the building appears to be used as a storehouse for meal and apples. Upon leaving this, you are left to wander where you please: an excellent arrangement, since nothing is more annoying than tagging about at the heels of a mechanical, calculating guide. It is this voluntary strolling that renders a visit to Hampton Court so agreeable. Kenilworth is, indeed, a ruin, but no ruin can be more noble in its desolation—for which it is more indebted, by the way, to the hands of Cromwell's officers, to whom the manor was given, than the ravages of time. Not a single chamber of the once magnificent pile remains; all are levelled to the turf or choked up with rubbish, which nearly everywhere affords an easy path to the top of the walls and towers, so that, without closely studying the localities, it is difficult to follow them in connexion with the novel. The lake has long been drained and filled up; the chase is built upon and cultivated; and the garden has fallen to an untidy and uncared-for orchard.

It was a lovely day. The old ruins glowed in the sunlight, which burst through the Gothic window-holes and embrasures to fall on the short turf below in flickering patches, as the wind gently moved the festoons of creeping plants and ivy that crossed them. The noble trees were waving in all their full

and deep autumnal foliage against the clear blue sky, bowing gracefully to the light breeze that played with their branches. But within the enclosure of the ruins the air was quite still. The wild flowers did not even tremble ever so gently on their stalks, and the insects poised themselves apparently in the same position, as no breath came to disturb their floating rest. In the space once occupied by the hall, a large and youthful party had assembled there for a pic-nic—a more beautiful spot for such a meeting it is impossible to conceive—and their loud merry laughter echoed again through the old arches and passages. At a short distance, in a recess of the “Cæsar’s Tower,” as it is foolishly called, a more quiet assembly had gathered, in a very Boccaccio-like group, round a young lady, who was reading Scott’s gorgeous romance of “Kenilworth.” Their rapt attention evidently showed that, following the author, they had again restored and peopled every part of the old castle, and that Amy Robsart, Varney, Leicester, Tressilian, and Elizabeth were once more flitting about the still noble pile around them.

“I took above a hundred pounds a day, in shillings, for the General at Birmingham and Manchester,” said Barnum, suddenly turning the train of our thoughts on to a down line. “Pretty steep business, wasn’t it?”

We could think no more of Amy Robsart, but, rising from our seat upon an old mossy window-sill, walked by his side towards the gate.

“It was all a chance, though,” he continued. “I brought over a thousand pounds from New York with Tom Thumb, and I spent every farthing of it in your country making him ‘go,’ and all with Englishmen; so you needn’t have screamed so, after all. The *Liverpool Chronicle* folks know it, I reckon, for they were the first I saw. The General didn’t draw, though, at first. It wasn’t till I got him to London, in Markwell’s private house, that he did anything. And then I made no charge; but I put a plate on the table, with a sovereign or two in it, and they took the hint first-rate.”

The road from Kenilworth to Coventry is very continental in its appearance, being straight, with rows of trees on each side, having bolls of earth heaped round the lower parts of their trunks. Regarding the route, there is an anecdote told of a dispute between two commercial travellers at an inn, as to which was the most beautiful ride in England, each offering that he knew best. At last a wager was made, and they were

both to write down the name of their favourite journey. On coming to the decision, it was found that one had chosen "from Warwick to Coventry," and the other from "Coventry to Warwick." The road, however, scarcely appeared to merit the eulogium.

As we rode on, Barnum told us of the most extraordinary "do" that had ever been practised on the public, of which he was the prime mover. He had, by some means or another, procured an old toothless negress, and by a series of consummate schemes, succeeded in passing her off all through America as "Washington's nurse." As the President was born in 1732, it may be conceived what age the old creature was reported to be. He wrote documents, dipped them in tobacco-water, hung them up the chimney, and rubbed the corners of them, to give them an appearance of age; he drilled the object into the part she was to play, created a *furore* wherever she appeared, and drew the dollars into his treasury faster than he could count them. At last the old woman died, and great was the fresh excitement in the medical world as to the state of the vascular system in a person presumed to be so old. High prices were paid to be present at the autopsy; the first American medical men assisted at it, and one, who was to conduct the post-mortem examination, gave a lecture beforehand upon the probable vast extent of ossification of the arteries that would be met with. But no—there was nothing of the kind (as well there might not be; for, after all, the poor woman was not above sixty), and the bubble was at once burst. The whole of the New York press opened their artillery upon Barnum, but his 'cuteness led them into their own fire; and a literal fortune was the result of the trick.

At last the carriage crossed the railway by the bridge of Coventry, on which Alfred Tennyson "hung with grooms and porters," and put us down at an inn in the street, at the corner of which Peeping Tom is represented as looking out upon Lady Godiva. Her costume is certainly not that of 1044, when the occurrence of her ladyship riding such a *pose plastique* kind of attire through the streets of Coventry is reported to have taken place; in fact, there are very good reasons for believing that the whole affair is a fiction, and that it arose in the madcap times of Charles the Second, when Lady Godiva first figured in the "Show-fair" procession, as it was called, dressed (or, more properly, undressed) in a style that quite accorded with the

licentious manners of the epoch ; and so we mistrust the memorial of the circumstance, which is said to have been preserved in stained glass in one of the windows of Trinity Church until about the fifteenth century, and, according to Dugdale, represented Leofric presenting to his spouse a charter, with these words inscribed thereon :

I Luriche for love of thee
Do make Coventrie toll free.

St. Mary's Hall and St. Michael's Church are well worth a visit. The latter, built in the early style of architecture, is, we believe, the largest parish church in England, at least so Barnum said, seeming to know all about it ; and it looked now exceedingly beautiful in the ruddy light of the evening. After this we walked about the city, noticing the method the butchers have of beautifying their meat by skewering little bouquets, so to speak, of fat about them, a custom we had not noticed elsewhere. Here Barnum entered into an arrangement with a wandering exhibition of animals of dissimilar habits all in one cage, that we met by chance, and he settled that they were to accompany the giant.

At a quarter past nine we quitted Coventry station, and arrived once more at Birmingham, at ten, heartily tired with our excursion, having, in one day, visited Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick Castle, the races, Kenilworth, and Coventry, by the united aid of coach, fly, phaeton, railway, and our own legs.

As we expressed our fatigue at supper, Barnum said, " Well, I don't know what you call work in England, but if you don't make thirty hours out of the twenty-four in Merrekey, I don't know where you'd be at the year's end. If a man can't beat himself in running, he'll never go ahead ; and if he don't go ahead, he's done."

X.

CERTAIN TOURISTS.

1.—WHICH IS MERELY THE SETTING FORTH; AS WELL AS TOUCHING THE HEAT.

THERE is something absolutely refreshing in this blazing, baking month of June—at least to ourselves, and, we trust, to you—in turning to the subject of this paper. There certainly never was such weather in England. It looks as if June had become rather tired of riding on the Crab, on which, according to Spenser, “he bent his force contrary to his face,” and had changed places with July, “boiling like to fire, that all his garments he had cast away,” in which primitive fancy dress he was now braving a *coup de soleil* about Great Britain.

There is no cool to be got anywhere. In town it is perfectly insane to look after it except in a sherry-cobbler, or a very large glass of claret-cup, and the reaction of this indulgence is something fearful. We believe the story of Bruce cooking his beefsteaks on the glowing rocks of Abyssinia, for the first time. We would wager on this present twenty-second of June, which is shamefully late for a magazine article, we confess; and harasses the printers; and, with reason, worries Mr. Bentley; and gets us a bad name; and must by no means be mentioned as a precedent for magazine writers—we would wager anything light and summary—a hundred-weight of congealed Wenham Lake, or a gossamer paletot; twelve tickets for Peerless Pool; a dozen of iced Seltzer water, or the wettest blanket of any one’s acquaintance, which, wrapped about a substance, might produce cold by evaporation—that we could poach an egg, or cook a Welsh rabbit, anywhere upon the pavement in Regent-street, whilst one of the sixpenny Lowther-arcade sand-glasses—which never do them correctly in the normal state of things—was running out.

The omnibuses are insupportable. Their roofs are like the hot plates that we are told foreign conjurors teach turkeys to dance upon; and their interiors are like ovens. There is no

shade anywhere; excessive heat seems to have warped the very sunbeams, and endowed them with the power of twisting round corners and far under colonnades. The very fountains are tepid—a few more degrees of Fahrenheit and they would emulate the Geysers; and the gold fish in globes appear to be undergoing a process of gradual parboiling. Nor is the country any better; the lawns are all turning to heaths; the grass is making itself into hay; the birds are too hot to sing, and nothing is heard amidst the gasping vegetation but the restless chirping of hot, thirsty grasshoppers. On the roads horses throw up clouds of dust, and large loose stones throw down horses. The meadows are gaping, in all directions, with model earthquakes, and the breezes are a great deal too lazy to stir themselves; there is not even a draught of air to be got in the third-class carriages on the railways. Everything, everywhere, is dying with heat, except Lascar street-sweepers, Bengal tigers, Lallybaloo Toll Loll, on a visit to England, and specimens of the cactus. All else must be commiserated, and most especially the poor Polar bear at the Zoological Gardens, who looks the impersonation of torrid wretchedness.

And on account of all this we find something refreshing in our subject. The sultry promenade of the gent, the blazing foot-lights of the ballet-girl, the close stifling room of the country medical man, and the arid dusty rubbish-heap of the boys in the streets, cannot be thought upon for a moment. But the idea of the tourist is suggestive of pleasant things just at present—of clear still lakes, too deep to be boiled by the sun; and cool rivers flowing through dark gorges, babbling and tumbling along forest slopes under impenetrable foliage; or falling, bright and feathery, for some hundred feet down the shady side of a mountain; of glaciers, too, which might contract safely to supply eternity with sherry-cobblers, could a sufficient supply of wine be relied upon, with the currents of iced water cutting their own channels, and their borders of wood-strawberries; of wild demi-civilised places where you may knock over all conventionality in dress, and scarcely know that such things are, as neckcloths, black hats, cloth coats, and gloves.

2.—OF THE INCENTIVES TO TRAVEL.

MIGHTY as is the rush from England, when the season is over, to strange localities, yet all are not influenced by the same mo-

tives. Many save up at home for nine months of the year, to squander abroad the other three; many more go off to pull in their expenditure. Some go—there are really invalids—for health; others, hypochondriacs, to see whether the foreign doctors cannot find something really the matter with them; others go to write books, and others to make sketches; but by far the greater proportion travel from motives of popular imitation, known commonly as fashion. Take the members of a family in whatever circle you please, and you will find that, however high they may themselves carry their heads, there is somebody whom they look up to, and studiously endeavour to imitate in every particular of their domestic or family existence. This feeling extends both ways in the scale of society, affecting every link of the great chain. Let us attempt to show, in a series of graduated examples, how it sends everybody travelling, as soon as the curtain of the opera has descended upon the last twinkling feet of the ballet, the last speech has provoked cheers or crowing within the walls of St. Stephen's, and the last grand *réunion* of the season has collected the long lines of private and lamped carriages along the sides of Piccadilly and the streets that *débouchent* into it.

Rank the First.

The Countess of Princeton is an acknowledged leader of the aristocratic circle. Her name is always amongst the ladies-patronesses of the most exclusive *réunions*, and the list of royal and patrician guests at her parties occupies half a column of the *Morning Post*. She has one or two daughters; the second, Lady Blanche Rosebud, is very beautiful, and the Right Honourable Viscount Hampton has paid her some attention during the season. He is young, and handsome, and very rich. So that when it is ascertained Lord Hampton is going in his yacht—the finest in the R. Y. C.—to Naples, Lady Princeton settles to go there as well, in the hopes that a twilight lounge in an orange grove, or a sleepy cruize along the bay, with the not unimportant accessories of skies, climate, and general associations, may bring about a proposal, and so we soon read amongst the departures—“The Earl and Countess of Princeton and Lady Blanche Rosebud, from Belgrave House, for Naples.”

Rank the Second.

Lady Wingfield reads the above paragraph, and forthwith

determines to go abroad. Sir John Wingfield is only a knight, but of tolerably good family; and his possessions and interest are so great in a county, of which it is in contemplation to start Hampton as a representative at the next election, that the Countess of Princeton finds it polite to notice the family. Hence they are invited to entertainments at Belgrave House, and the brilliant *fêtes* at the velvet-lawned, river-washed villa at Twickenham. Hence the Countess herself presented the pretty trembling Amy Wingfield at Court. *Par conséquence*, Lady Wingfield imitates the Princetons in everything; not servilely, but still she imitates them; and when she finds that they are going to Naples, and hears further that they will return through Switzerland to Baden, she determines to go to the latter place, and be thrown in their way without the appearance of hunting them up; and she knows, furthermore, that this will annoy The Haggis, a great Scotch chieftain, whose family turn up their noses even more than nationally at the Wingfields, but, nevertheless, have not the *entrée* at Belgrave House, and are going to Baden also. For in every rank of life there is a Mrs. Grundy; each sphere has its "Browns" to astonish; and so, in a day or two afterwards, there is another fashionable departure in the *Morning Post*, and the world learns that the Wingfields are gone to Baden.

Rank the Third.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown Holland visit Lady Wingfield. Their names were formerly Mr. and Mrs. Holland, but somebody left them some money and the name; and it is difficult to tell which they were most pleased with. Whereon they left Upper Bedford-place, Russell-square, and took such a house, one of the most elegant in the new city that has risen out of the ground between the Edgware-road and the Bayswater tea-gardens—all Louis Quatorze and candelabra. And they took some new friends with the house—the Counts Patchouli and Corazza, and Colonel Grab of the Spanish Infantry, and other distinguished persons, including crowds of scarecrow men in mustachios, whom nobody knew, and with whom their parties were always overdone. The Wingfields are the great people, however, of their acquaintance, and they determine upon following them at once to Baden, making no attempt to conceal the manner in which they imitate them, but thus expressing the sincerest flattery.

Rank the Fourth.

The Higgses are retired tradesfolks, and live at one of those houses at Clapham which you always see lighted up coming home from the Derby. Our friends above notice them, because Mrs. Higgs's carriage is at times very convenient for Mrs. Brown Holland to go out in; and Mrs. Higgs is too happy to lend it, in return for the patronage the lady bestows upon the Higgs's girls generally. There are three daughters, who have all been educated at Miss Burton's, at Boulogne, and so speak French very well; and as soon as Mrs. Higgs finds that the Hollands are going out of town, she tells Mr. Higgs that it is absolutely incumbent upon them to go too. Mr. Higgs does not at first see the necessity, but is obliged at last to consent, and Paris is determined on. They do not know much about Baden, and are not to be trusted a great way by themselves in the German language. Besides, Mrs. Holland persuades them from going there, as she does not altogether wish the Wingfields to see how intimate she is with the Higgses, and tells them that there is very little amusement at any of the German baths. So they finally settle upon Paris, by Mrs. Brown Holland's recommendation to an excellent hotel, stopping a little while at Capecure for bathing.

Rank the Fifth.

Whilst Mr. Higgs was in trade, Mr. Startin was his head confidential clerk, and in consequence of this, Mr. and Mrs. Startin, who live at Islington, and have more children than even married clerks in general are surrounded by, are asked once a year to dine with the Higgses, the party being arranged for the purpose. Be sure that the Hollands are not amongst the guests on this occasion. Well, the Higgs girls take Mrs. Startin into their room, and are quite affable, and show her the hothouse, and give her some flowers, and play new polkas to her, and ask her where she is going this year. To which Mrs. Startin answers she don't exactly know, nor indeed does she, for with her little family a change is not so easily managed; but this puts into her head that she ought to go somewhere; and so when she leaves at night with Mr. Startin, in a cab, which will be dismissed at the Elephant and Castle for the Islington omnibus, she tells him that they must really go out of town, or else "it will seem so strange!" Within ten days

they are all at Ramsgate—a start rendered more speedy by the complaint of Mrs. Startin that that nasty pain has returned to her chest, and she is sure that nothing but warm sea-bathing will remove it.

Rank the Sixth.

In the counting-house wherein Mr. Startin at present presides is a junior clerk, Mr. Tiddy. He lives somewhere up very high behind Crosby Hall, and dines at Bucklersbury during the week, and on Sundays very often strides up to Islington, where he finds a knife and fork at Mr. Startin's table always laid for him; and in the evening he takes the children for a walk along the New River. He believes in the family to the fullest extent, and pays the utmost deference to Mr. Startin's opinion in everything; so that when he finds that they are going out of town, he intimates that he ought to go as well. But as leave of absence is difficult for minor clerks to procure, Mr. Tiddy can only go within an hour or two of Mincing-lane, and therefore he takes a moderate bedroom at Gravesend, looking forward still to Sunday, for a glimpse of the sea, when he contrives to pay a visit to the Startins at Ramsgate, not a little gratified at showing them that he also can have a holiday.

And by these and similar influences are the autumnal tourists determined, acting on each other's opinions in such regular gradations, from the proudest to the humblest, that with very little difficulty a perfect "House-that-Jack-built" kind of rhyme might be formed upon their migrations.

3.—OF THE CONVENTIONAL TOURIST.

THERE is another class distinct from the ranks we have just enumerated, and that is composed of the tourists who travel, not from any particular enjoyment that it gives them, but because they think it proper to do so; just as people eat salt fish on Ash Wednesday. Mr. Julius Praps may be taken as a type of this class. We will describe him.

As August approacheth, he sayeth that he hath an invitation to shoot over ten thousand acres of moor, but that it is a bore, and he meaneth to travel. He letteth his mustachios grow thereby, and buyeth a handbook, a knapsack, and a pair of shoes; he ordereth a blouse, and pervadeth London after passports. He also getteth a journal, and a solid sketch-book; but

after the first week he useth neither; and thus he starteth for Boulogne, on his way to Switzerland and Italy.

At Boulogne he seeth much novelty, not having been on the Continent before. He speaketh frightful French, but, in his innocence, thinketh it the thing; he drinketh much brandy, because it is cheap, and also claret, and well-nigh getteth drunk. Being green abroad, he describeth a diligence that he hath seen, as a wonderful thing, to the company at the *table d'hôte*, and sayeth that it is droll to hear the children speak French; both which things have been frequently done before. He maketh a purchase of a pair of large fur gloves, not that he wanteth them, but he is struck with the novelty and price; and afterwards he knoweth not what to do with them.

Formerly he took a place in the *coupé* because it was genteel, and looked with disdain upon the "bad style of men" that loved the *banquette*, nor did he commune with them when they stopped for dinner at Abbeville.

At Paris he goeth to Meurice's, or Lawson's, and seeth the sights by rule, as they are put down in the handbook. He formeth his notions of Paris in this wise. He stayeth at an English hotel, and is waited on by English servants. He meeteth nought but English people at the *table d'hôte*; he hath an English *laquais de place*, and readeth the English papers. He buyeth even English things to take home with him, at shops where they write up "English spoken here," and speaketh English himself, all day long. And then he sayeth to himself, "When I get home I will write a book upon Paris and its people." He thinketh it right to dine once at Véry's, or Phillippe's, and once at the Trois Frères; and delighteth in ordering the dinner himself, albeit he maketh wild shots at the dishes, and if there is a party of three or four, amazeth the *garçon* by ordering a portion apiece for everybody. He doth not much like the French theatres, but goeth as a duty, and laugheth with the audience, as do many at the French plays in London; but he understandeth not a line he heareth; and therefore doth he prefer the *Cirque*. He findeth that his clothes, brought from London, produce not the effect he desireth in Paris, and thereon riggeth himself out in the Palais-Royal. But he doth not approach nearer to the Frenchman for all that, and when he goeth to the Chemin de Fer, and asketh, "Esker eel e ar oon train, mossieu, poor Genave?" he is disgusted to hear the clerk reply incontinently, "Yes, sir, every morning at eight o'clock."

In Switzerland he walketh much, but hath a guide to carry his knapsack, and telleth people at inns that he hath an intention of going up Mont Blanc. But the intention vanisheth as he approacheth Savoy, and at Chamouni disappeareth altogether, inasmuch as he there contenteth himself by saying that he knoweth a man who hath been up once. He buyeth a paper-cutter of white wood at the Righi Culm for his study-table, and a salad spoon and fork for his aunt, from whom he hath expectations, and who asketh him much on his return about William Tell, with whom she thinketh he must have been acquainted, her whole idea of Switzerland being confined to that apocryphal (as it really appears) individual, and the time of the Swiss Boy. But he knoweth little except that which he readeth in the handbook; nor doth he ever deviate from the route they lay down in the slightest degree. He goeth to Grindelwald, and sayeth that the Glacier is only a lot of ice, but still it is proper to see it, not as an amusement, but to say afterwards that he hath been there, which appeareth to be the great end of all his travels. And when he starteth for Italy, he crosseth the Simplon in the night, to save time, and get the quicker to Italy, whereby he doth not get a sight of any portion of the pass. But at Duomo d'Ossola he readeth all about it in the handbook, and his end is answered. And now he taketh care not to let anything astonish him, or at least to appear as though it did, thinking that he is an experienced traveller. And he joineth little in the society of the *table d'hôte*, but taketh notes as if on the sly, that the company may think him to be a great author, travelling in disguise, to write a large book. And, indeed, he hath an intention of trying to do something for a magazine on his return; but he findeth, to his disgust, that it hath been done before.

At Venice he hireth a gondola, and boasteth that he hath seen all the churches in one day; and he goeth through the ducal palace, not that he findeth interest in its associations, but because it is a place that must be visited solely to talk of afterwards. He stoppeth at Venice twenty-four hours; after which he pronounceth it the "slowest" place he ever was in, and declareth that it hath been much overrated. At Verona he goeth to the tomb of Juliet, whom he confuseth with some actress, but cannot call the tragedy to mind with distinctness: nevertheless, he buyeth a model of her tomb, and determineth to read it on his return, or go and see it acted. And then he visiteth every place mentioned in the handbook, the which he

yawneth over, as doth an admirer of Verdi at Exeter Hall; and when he seeth the amphitheatre, he sayeth to himself, "This is very fine, but not to be compared to the Cirque Olympique in the Champs Elysées, or even Astley's."

He devoteth two entire days to Florence, and is on his legs from six in the morning until ten at night, looking at every picture and statue, not to admire it, but to say that he hath seen it, on future opportunities. For, as far as enjoyment goes, he thinketh the Venus equally good which adorneth the shop of the ingenious Italian opposite the stage-door of Drury Lane Theatre.

Rome he liketh not, nor taketh pleasure in its remains; for he careth not for the ancients, his associations being alone connected with dog's-eared Virgils and ink-stained Commentaries. But his handbook directeth him to see everything, and he laboriously obeyeth it, albeit he findeth nothing so agreeable as our own Colosseum in the Regent's Park; and wisheth that the Pope would engage Mr. Bradwell to renovate the city. In his heart he voteth Rome a "sell," and hateth the ruins, from recollections of the cane and Latin mark.

And thus he yawneth and fatigueth himself for three months about parts of Europe, having become footsore to obtain glory at home, as pilgrims go to Mecca to be put on the free-list of the Prophet's paradise, and he remembereth nothing that he hath seen, no more than the passenger by an express-train can call to mind the stations that he shooteth by. But he believeth that he hath attained a higher rank in life by being able to talk of where he hath been; and he remarketh, at dinner-parties: "Once, when I was crossing the Simplon," or "During my residence at Florence," whenever an opportunity occurreth, and sometimes when it doth not. And if by luck he encountereth a tourist who hath not been to Florence, but speaketh highly of Danneker's Ariadne at Frankfort, he sayeth forthwith, "Ah, but you should see the Venus de Medici." Yet he recollecteth it but slightly, and the other he hath no notion of, beyond that furnished by a *pose plastique*.

But the greatest pleasure, after all, that one tourist knoweth is to talk down another, and to this end chiefly doth our traveller look for distinction.

XI.

MR. LEDBURY REVISITS PARIS, AND IS IGNOMINIOUSLY
EXPULSED FROM HIS LODGINGS.

WE have lately heard a little news of an old friend, with whom we were once upon terms of considerable intimacy for some time—Mr. Titus Ledbury, formerly of Islington. We should not have intruded this intelligence upon our gentle readers, had we not been frequently asked what had become of him; and as they ever evinced a disposition to receive him courteously, and looked upon him as a simple, kind-hearted creature, who, if he did not create any remarkably out-of-the-way sensation, never, at all events, offended those to whom he was introduced, we make bold once more to bring him into their presence.

The London season was in a confirmed state of rapid decline, so far gone, indeed, that immediate change of air to a more congenial climate was universally agreed upon by everybody. The carriages sensibly diminished in numbers in the parks and at the West-end; Opera orders were abundant, and sometimes people got a box who had never been in one before, and displaying their innocence thereof by buying a bill and hanging it over the edge, pinned to the amber satin, and mistaking Mario for Sims Reeves, and Balfe for Mr. Lumley. The concerts were all over, and the light halls of Willis and Hanover-square, and the dirty—we had well-nigh said “grubby”—room of Her Majesty’s Theatre, no longer bottled up well-meaning people, who had been guilty of no offence, and therefore did not deserve such treatment, from noon till dewy eve.

Fashionable entertainments, too, diminished. *Thés dansants* and *déjeûners à pied*—from lack of seats—were no longer chronicled. Stay-at-home unfortunates were promised more grouse by Highland marauders than all the moors could furnish; coloured shirts, of wild and wondrous patterns, hitherto christened “Regatta,” were suddenly converted into “Shooting;” and “Gents’ Once Rounds” retired into private life to

make room in the windows for "Balmoral Ties," as worn by the superior class at Perth, and other game pitches. There were no more *fêtes champ(aign)êtres*, no more marvellous exhibitions. Indeed, it became a question difficult to answer, where the wonders went to—the mannikins and Bosjesmen, the oxen, horses, and iceberg dogs—the living statues and waxen celebrities, that collectively drew the shilling from the popular pocket, as the loadstone rock of the "Arabian Nights" whilom did the nails from the argosies that came within the sphere of its attraction.

Whitebait got larger; in fact, it became as difficult to establish the line where the "bait" ended and the bleak began, as to define at which point of the Oregon of the mind instinct merged into reason. There were no longer the rows of "drags," and "traps," and mail-phaetons, bold barouches, and sly-looking Broughams outside the Trafalgar. Mr. Hart breathed again, and Mr. Quartermaine sat down—both for the first time since spring came in with the radishes. Flounders enjoyed their own cold *water souchée* in the river; and ducks to follow, simply followed one another on the tranquil inland waters of Blackheath.

Everything was getting dried up and dusty. Plants outside windows turned brown, and mignonette went very wild and was not replaced; for the long flower-laden barrows ceased to come round, the people having found out that their contents always died two days after purchase, in spite of every care. Even ladies and gentlemen appeared parched up for want of water, and betook themselves accordingly to aquatic districts; and shutters closed, and servants were put upon board wages, and nobody was at home any more for several months.

One fine afternoon, at this season of the year, Mr. Ledbury was sitting on a very high stool at his office, drawing Carlotta Grisi in "Esmeralda" on his blotting-paper, from the pattern of his shirt, on which she was reproduced many times in a chocolate tint, together with various other Terpsichorean planets, and humming an appropriate air for the edification of Mr. Biggs, the clerk, who had never been to the Opera but once—and then he was not admitted, from appearing in nankeen trousers, and a light pepper-and-salt tweed—when there was a ring at the bell. Mr. Ledbury pulled a string which opened a door, and who should come in but his friend and brother-in-law Jack Johnson.

"Hollo, Jack!" said Mr. Ledbury, stopping short in the middle of the "Truandaise;" "how d'ye do, old fellow?"

"How are you, Leddy? I'm all right, always. Isn't it hot?"

And in proof that he thought it was, Jack took off his hat, inverted it, spun it in the air, and then let it twirl, as he caught it on the point of his forefinger, to the great delight of Mr. Biggs, who always looked upon Jack as a marvellous person, and smiled humbly at everything he did.

"That's a wonderful shirt you've got on, Mr. Biggs," said Jack; "stunning!"

"I'm glad you like it, sir," said Mr. Biggs. "It has been much admired at Walworth."

"It is very appropriate," said Jack. "It looks as if you had ruled it yourself with red ink, and then ornamented the lines with wafers. It is exceedingly neat, without being gaudy."

Mr. Ledbury laughed.

"Mr. Biggs," continued Jack; "what do you drink this hot weather?"

"I think shandy-gaff is the most pleasant beverage," replied the clerk, mildly.

"Shandy how much?" inquired Jack.

"It is ginger-beer and ale," said Mr. Ledbury. "We will try some now. Mr. Biggs, bring me the cellar."

Whereon Mr. Biggs reached down a large tin-box, labelled "TITLE DEEDS," and brought it to Mr. Ledbury, who found some ginger-beer in it, which he marshalled upon the desk.

"Now, Mr. Biggs," said Jack, with mock politeness, "I think we must presume upon your acknowledged affability to request you will procure us some ale. Take that blue bag, and go and get it."

The vehicle was an odd one; but Mr. Biggs appeared to understand the order, and left the office.

"How's Emma, though?" asked Mr. Ledbury, inquiring after his sister, as if he felt he ought to have done so before.

"Very well," answered Jack; "and baby's very great. I think I shall make something of him. He takes a sight at the nurse capitally. There's a deal of fun in him, for he's always laughing. Only sometimes we can't make out his jokes. However, never mind baby just now. I've got something in store for you. What do you think of a rush over to Paris?"

"You don't mean that?" said Mr. Ledbury, in a doubt of delight. "Come now, Jack; no nonsense."

"On my honour, I'm in earnest, Leddy. If you like to come, as before, all expenses will be paid. It's about the Great Northern Railway. I must be back within a week, but you can stay on if you like. Will you go?"

"Rather, Jack," replied his friend. "The governor promised me a holiday. I'm game!"

"The Brighton, Dieppe, and Rouen's the mark," said Jack, "and we will be off to-morrow morning."

Mr. Biggs here returned with the blue bag, from which he produced a bottle of Scotch ale; and this being turned into a wash-hand jug, with an equal quantity of ginger-beer, Jack wrote, "Gone on 'Change—back in half an hour," on a slip of paper, and wafered it on the office door, which he closed inside.

And then they sat and discussed the new beverage along with Mr. Biggs, who, in his humility, from lack of tumblers, could scarcely be kept from drinking out of a new inkstand. But this the others would not hear of, so he was supplied with a hyacinth-glass, in which a bulb had been all the year getting to the similitude of a spring onion, and there stopped; and this did very well.

"Well, Mr. Biggs," said Jack, "what do you think of the railways?"

"They are the great arteries of mercantile and social life, sir, and place the knowledge gained by travel within the grasp of the poor man," said Mr. Biggs, humbly, quoting from some work for "The People," that he had read in a coffee-shop.

"Quite right, Mr. Biggs," said Jack, "and beautifully expressed. Here's 'May time never shut off your steam until you get to the extension terminus.' Come, Leddy; you must drink that."

"I beg your pardon, Jack," said Mr. Ledbury, whose imagination had already carried him to the Boulevards. "Mr. Biggs, may time never cut off your terminus—what is it, Jack? I didn't hear."

"Never mind," said Jack, and he continued: "Had you any shares in the railways, Mr. Biggs?"

"None, sir," said the clerk; "I am a poor man."

"Then you're a lucky fellow, if you knew it," said Jack. "The poor man never had so many friends as at present. I know a fellow—jolly chap he is, too—who writes for news-

papers and periodicals; knows what life is; never goes to bed, and lives upon pale ale and boiled bones."

"How very odd!" said Mr. Ledbury. "I thought there had been a great row lately about eating bones."

"Ah, they were raw," said Jack. "Well, this fellow took a wonderful start lately; set up a dog-cart, and lived in a house all to himself. So I asked him how he did it. 'Why,' he said, 'it's all the poor man; I'm sure I ought to be his friend, for his is the only dodge in writing that pays well, now. I don't know whether it does *him* much good, for pens and ink are not very nourishing; and that's all it ends in. But it's capital for *us*!"

Mr. Ledbury rather shook his head at this, for he believed in philanthropy and virtuous indignation; and Mr. Biggs was undecided how to look, until Jack plunged him into still deeper confusion by asking him to favour them with some popular ballad. Upon which Mr. Biggs said he would with pleasure, if he could, but he never knew one; whereon Mr. Ledbury pleasantly reproved him, and revealed how Mr. Biggs had told an untruth; and how he had one day heard him, from the back office, singing the foreign air of "Old Dan Tucker," and dancing a strange measure, as he tried to imitate the bones accompaniment with the paper-knife and some sticks of sealing-wax, until he broke the latter in his enthusiasm. Hereat Mr. Biggs blushed fuchsia, and said, "Oh, Mr. Titus—really!" and then Mr. Ledbury told him to put words to the "Post-horn Hymn," which a Genoese organist, of slow temperament, was grinding below the window, in a dilatory manner, that would have driven Arban mad had he heard it. But, finding that Mr. Biggs was too nervous to sing himself, they went on talking, until Mr. Ledbury, under the influence of ale, treated Mr. Biggs to a French song—which, as far as Mr. Biggs was concerned, might have been double Sanscrit, or provincial Chinese, both which dialects are somewhat difficult to acquire fluently. But Mr. Biggs thought it so good, that Mr. Ledbury's desire to amuse increased; and he next showed the placid clerk how the students danced at the Chaumière, and at what part they were turned out by the *Garde Municipale*, concluding by performing a *galop* with the invoice-book, until Jack joined him, and the *divertissement* concluded with a *pas de deux* of such originality, that Mr. Biggs clapped his hands quite deliriously, and declared he had never seen anything half so good—no, not at the Bower,

nor any other fashionable place of entertainment. And as old Mr. Ledbury was out of town for the day, their rapid act of merriment was only brought to a close by Titus dancing over his spectacles, and the Exchange clock striking five with an intensity that nearly knocked over the grasshopper from his ticklish pinnacle.

It did not take Mr. Ledbury long to make up his mind to go with Jack, and pack up his wardrobe. He longed to let his mustachios grow; but all the efforts he had made for years to get them to shoot had been failures; and the same with regard to his whiskers. None of the wonderful things which the young men who cut his hair always recommended, answered; his consumption of Circassian Cream must have affected in no small degree the trade of the Black Sea and the regions of the Caucasus; but still his face was smooth. And once, when he had been rash enough to buy a pair of false mustachios, that were fixed with a spring to his nostrils, he brought on such a wonderful fit of sneezing, that he had well-nigh blown all his brains out by the same route as those of the Egyptian mummies are reported, by cunning men who delight in unrolling those bales of pitchy mortality, to have left their tenement. So that he gave up the notion, fondly as he clung to it, and determined upon trusting, as heretofore, to his elegant manners and knowledge of foreign style generally, to be considered a true Parisian.

Little occurred worthy of especial notice on the road to Paris. For steam-boat journeys across the Channel were then all alike; and when you knew one *conducteur* of a diligence, you were upon terms of perfect intimacy with all, all over France; nor was there any great diversity in the fashion of diligences. The boiled mutton and French-beans skated about the chief-cabin table as usual, when the able-bodied assembled to dine, half way between the Chain Pier and Dieppe quais; the same lady of a certain age lay helpless on deck, with her head on a carpet-bag, and her feet in an old cloak; and now and then requested to be thrown overboard without further delay, and put out of her misery at once, as formerly. There were, apparently, the very same soldiers and *douaniers* on the pier that Titus knew at Boulogne; and the same incomprehensible soup, made of cheese, lamp-oil, and hot water, shaken up together, awaited them; with the identical white crockery, blunt knives, and wooden cruet-frames in the *salle à manger* of the ubiquitous

Hôtel "d'Angleterre," or "de Londres," or "de l'Europe," or whatever it was; but it was sure to be one of these.

Nor did Mr. Ledbury think otherwise than that he had slept on the same walnut-tree bedstead, and washed in the same white pie-dish, and used the same scanty towels, that look as if they were the sheets cut into little pieces, a hundred times before. And as for the diligence, next morning, somehow or other it must have been the very one that first took him from Boulogne to Paris. There were beggars too, with all of whom he was upon terms of the greatest familiarity; and the same horses whinnied, and fought, and rattled the bits of jack-chain and remnants of box-cord that formed the harness, and were sworn at with precisely the same oaths by the postilion.

At Rouen, however, there was a little change, for now there was a railway. But they did not leave the diligence for all that; for the body of the carriage was taken off its wheels, and hoisted up into the air, passengers, luggage, and all, by the ornithological and crustaceous union of a crane and a crab, as if it had been merely a sack of wool, and then lowered down upon the truck.

There was much to amuse at this part of the journey, more especially as regarded a very fussy lady, who complained that riding sideways in the *intérieur* made her sick, and so with much labour, for she was heavily fashioned, was hoisted, pushed, and guided into the *banquette*. When she got there, she hoped "she was not disturbing the gents," and then, not being in any way proud, entered into conversation, and said she was going to join Lord Somebody's family at Paris, and that her name was Mrs. Mills, and that she had been sent for from England to superintend the establishment—in other words, as Jack soon found out—to be a housekeeper. She had evidently enjoyed her dinner, and talked considerably in consequence.

"Ah!" she said, as soon as they had packed her safely away, "this is better. But nothing should have made me come, if I'd know'd it."

"Haven't you had a pleasant journey, ma'am?" asked Jack.

"Pleasant indeed, sir! Who could expect it, in foreign parts. I'm sure I thought I should have died all the way from Brighton, and a little more would have done it. I never hope to see that Chain Pier again. And it's nothing when you do, no more than what Hungerford-bridge would be with Lambeth took clean away."

"We must cultivate her, Leddy," whispered Jack, determining to draw her out; and thus he proceeded:

"You didn't have a pleasant passage then, ma'am?"

"No, sir," said the lady, sharply, as though enraged with Jack for asking. "I was insulted at first starting, by being asked at Brighton if I had a passport. 'No,' said I, 'and I hope I never shall have, for my marriage certificate is framed and glazed, and I am not afraid to show it to anybody, although now I am a lone woman!' But the chambermaid—a impudent hussy she was too—made me go to a Mr. Black, where I paid ten shillings for a bit of paper, which has bothered me the whole way. Passport, indeed! paugh! what will they want next, I should like to know?"

"Very true, ma'am," observed Jack; "as you properly say, what will they want next?"

"They'd have my bandbox when I landed, if they could, for good," said Mrs. Mills; "for a tall fellow stopped me as I was going ashore. 'And what do *you* want?' says I. '*Arretay,*' says he, which I knew by his look meant something bad; and there they rummidged it dreadful, and afterwards I was boxed up in the back of this machine, in a stivy part, just like a slice of omnibus, with foreign gentlemen, who were dressed respectable, but knew no more of English than an unborn babe. At last I heard my native tongue outside, and I said to the speaker, 'Sir, as you are a Christian, and not a Frenchman, pray ask leave for me to go in front;' and here I am."

The last affirmation was not to be denied, any more than the popular information of "Now we're off!" which everybody feels called upon to say when a train moves, without fear of contradiction. Whereupon Jack went on:

"My friend here," pointing to Mr. Ledbury, "makes precisely the same complaint. A clever young man," whispered Jack to the lady; "his name is Hopley, a cousin of the Maid of Orleans you have heard of."

"I have heard speak of her, but can't say I knew her, sir," said Mrs. Mills. "I saw her statue this morning."

"He came to Rouen to see it also," said Jack. "She was burnt, you know, in the market, after the battle of Waterloo; a blot upon the Duke of Wellington's name, great as it is—a sad mistake." And Jack shook his head.

"What did you think of the figure, ma'am?" asked Titus, who had heard all this.

“A fine girl, sir; but not so handsome as her effigies at Madame Tussaud’s, neither.”

“You must expect a Maid of Orleans to be plummy,” observed Jack, gravely.

Mrs. Mills did not take the pun, but Titus went into a temporary fit of St. Vitus’s dance.

“My friend is trying to see what connexion there is between Noah’s Ark and Joan of Arc,” continued Jack. “What is your opinion of her, Mr. Hopley?”

“She was a strange young woman,” said Ledbury, “when she was in service, and dangerous to have a Sunday out, as Susan used to say, although she was always very correct and proper. Go on, Jack,” he whispered; “I can’t tell such crams; I’m sure to laugh.”

“Her head ran too much on soldiers,” continued Jack. “She thought more of guns and helmets than brooms and afternoon caps. You can imagine, ma’am, how it astonished a respectable and piously-cheerful family, to find their housemaid learning the sword exercise in the kitchen. And yet she was the acknowledged heroine of domestic drama.”

“I thought such things were never done but at Ashley’s,” said Mrs. Mills. “I knew a lady there—a real lady she was too, and very good-looking—who played warrior queens, but she was peaceable enough at home, and never wanted to fight six ruffians, or clamber up a blazing fortress on horseback.”

At this moment Mr. Ledbury, who had been looking another way and pretending to blow his nose, and putting on an expression of apoplectic jocular suffering, burst into a fit of laughter; Jack also tittered from sympathy; and Mrs. Mills, who for some little time had mistrusted her companions, muttered something about “behaving as gentlemen,” and made allusions to “shop-boys out for the day” (which, considering where they had got to, must have been a pretty long one), and then relapsed into dignified and contemptuous silence, which lasted until they arrived at the Paris *debarcadère*. In a few minutes the diligence was again hoisted on to its carriage, to which the horses were already attached, and they once more clattered down the Rue de Grenelle St. Honoré, into the court-yard of the Messageries. Here they got a *citadine*, and proceeded over the river to the Hôtel de l’Etoile—a cheap students’ house on the Quai St. Michel, and on the river

boundary of the Quartier Latin, where they intended to stay merely until they hunted up some of their old friends.

Jack was certainly a very jolly married man—one of the best you could encounter in a long day's search—and although he made Ledbury's sister a capital husband, was not at all "slow," and therefore he told Titus he was game for anything that evening; and as it was Thursday, and he thought they might meet some acquaintances of former days, they settled at once to dress themselves, and go up to the Chaumière, determined to make the most of their united stay in Paris. So they made their toilet, and Mr. Ledbury insisted upon having his hair curled *en papillotes*, by the coiffeur in the "Rue de l'École de Médecine," and bought a pair of bright yellow nineteen-sous gloves to make an effect, and then went off, with the greatest reliance upon his personal appearance, towards the Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse.

It was very capital—the walk thither. Nothing seemed much altered. The nursemaids were flirting with the soldiers in the gardens of the Luxembourg, and the old men were still playing bowls by the ground where Ney was executed; and when Mr. Ledbury saw two grisettes in airy *barège* dresses and coquettish little muffin-shaped caps, not made as they used to wear them, but formed something like a low-crowned hat made of lace, with no rim, but large lappets, he was for rushing towards them at once, and engaging them for innumerable dances; only Jack restrained him, "for," said he, "we shall be sure presently to meet some old friends, so do not be too excited, Leddy." And this recommendation just came in time, for no sooner did Mr. Ledbury hear the distant band over the wall, than he performed a *pas seul* upon the boulevards from very joyousness of heart, no less than to distinguish himself in the eyes of the grisettes just named, and to show them that he was quite at home in Paris—rather! And this was not concluded until he had danced against a gendarme and a *marchand de coco*, whose tin temple of beverage he almost knocked over.

They went into the gardens, and, as Jack had said, soon met some old friends. Jules was there, and Henri—the two young artists, and they pointed out Eulalie, and Clara, and Sophie, and Héloïse, and all sorts of pretty little faces, that looked a few years younger, if anything; and when they recognised Ledbury and Jack, there was such a shout, and such shaking

of hands, and, as regarded the young grisettes, such going through other ceremonies of recognition, which popular maxims say it is not right to tell of, as was delightful to behold. It was lucky for Jack that Aimée was not there—very lucky—for Jack was married, and you know it would have been so awkward, the meeting! And then they all got round a table and ordered expensive things—punch and champagne even—and talked and laughed, and kicked up such a famous row, that the authorities had well-nigh interfered; and Clara, who was a fair-haired, blue-eyed, rosy-mouthed little Belgian, thought Mr. Ledbury so funny, and Mr. Ledbury was so flattered thereby, that he quite lost his head, and proposed the health of Belgium generally, and volunteered to sing “She wore a wreath of roses,” in which he was always very great, and which he now began, but was prevented from finishing by Jack voting for a polka. And here it was that Mr. Ledbury did indeed shine. His dancing was the admiration of the whole party, and his elegant attitudes, no less than his good-tempered face, attracted all eyes. And when he had finished, and led his panting, breathless partner from the enclosure, they gave him a round of applause; whereon, with much grace, he drank to them in a small tumbler of champagne, and by this time he was ready for anything.

The *Jeu de Bague*—a game like the roundabouts at our fairs—was in full swing, and Titus proposed that they should have a game between the dances.

“I will show these Frenchmen what a Briton can do, Jack, when he pleases,” he said.

“Keep all right, Leddy,” said Jack, “or, perhaps, they will show you what they can do in return. Remember former scrapes.”

“It’s all right, Jack,” said Titus; “now see them look at me.”

There were two horses and two chairs on the roundabout; and the game consisted in the players being furnished with little spears like knife-sharpener, and trying to take off small rings from a hook on which they were hung—a modification of the old tilting at the ring. Mr. Ledbury got on one of the horses, which he sat gallantly, to show the Parisians he was a sportsman; and Clara occupied one of the chairs; the two other places were taken by Jack and one of the grisettes, and off they went.

For the first few rounds Mr. Ledbury simply smiled at the company, politely bowing to them every time he came near them, like the little man at the evening party on the top of the organ; and then he kissed his hand, and waved his pocket-handkerchief, and, finally, with a flourish of his spear, began to play, imitating martial music on a cornet. By some good luck or other he carried off a ring or two, at which the students and grisettes who were looking on cheered. This was quite enough to drive him into any act of wildness, and, after a few more turns, which did not improve his steadiness, coming on the champagne, he formed a project of unequalled boldness. One of the *garde* was standing near the game, looking with folded arms and frowning brow upon the players. As Titus came near him he seized his helmet, and lifted it forcibly from his head, directly afterwards putting it upon his own, to the intense astonishment of the soldier.

Any insult offered to the authorities is sure to be hailed with acclamation by the frequenters of the *Chaumière*, and a roar of delight burst forth. At this Mr. Ledbury was so excited, that by some marvellous exertion he contrived to stand up in his stirrups, and would have got upon the horse itself, to have thrown himself into a *tableau*, had not the enraged functionary stopped the machine and pulled the offender from his charger. The crowd pressed round, and tried to hustle him away by pushing the grisettes all in a heap against the guard, knowing that he would not attack them. Jack had sprung from his perch like lightning, and, seeing their object, caught Ledbury by the collar, and dragged him actually through a party of gendarmes who were coming to the scene of the row. Then lugging him into one of the *bosquets*, where the obscurity protected them, he said:

“Keep still, Leddy. How could you be such an ass!”

“I’ll show them what an Englishman dares to do, Jack,” said Titus, quite bewildered; and he began to sing—

“For England, home, and beauty.”

“England, home, and fiddlesticks,” said Jack. “Hold your tongue, do, or they’ll have you now. Sit down.”

And, knowing that when Mr. Ledbury got into these heroics he was heedless of everything, Jack seized him by the throat and fairly choked him down behind one of the benches, in spite of all his declarations that he would go and see fair play, and not allow friends he respected to be ill-treated on his account.

And here, for a few minutes, Mr. Ledbury remained, in great excitement and indignation.

It was very fortunate for Mr. Ledbury that Jack had some command over him, for his ambition at all times to distinguish himself was so great, more especially in the presence of the fair sex, that there is no telling to what lengths he might have been led in the way of display had it not been for his friend's firm clutch. His susceptibility was not an interested feeling. So long as he knew that two bright eyes, set in a pretty face, were watching him—whether they belonged to a duchess or a grisette was perfectly immaterial—they were quite sufficient to inspire him to brave the Garde Municipale, or storm the Tuileries, or do any other madcap freak that he fancied might have been required of him.

Of course the authorities were put upon the wrong scent; and whilst they marched off to some part of the gardens towards which they were told the perfidious Englishmen had retreated, Jack pulled Ledbury from his hiding-place and prepared to quit the Chaumière. As he left the arbour, Titus said something about the British lion being at bay in his lair, and appeared desirous of realising the six positions of the Fighting Gladiator; upon which Jack got the two young artists to accompany them, and these three, performing a wild dance as they went through the gate, in the mazes of which they hustled round Mr. Ledbury whenever he attempted to speak, prevented him from addressing the gatekeeper, who thought it was merely a convivial party returning home. Thus they contrived to get him out safely upon the boulevard, along which they proceeded a little way, and then all sat down to rest on the edge of one of the hollows which are dug between the trees, for no other apparent purpose than to form traps for strangers to tumble into.

When they were seated, Mr. Ledbury, who had been performing a forced march, looked round at his companion with a severe aspect, and then he stared up at the moon, which was shining brightly. The sight of the calm planet appeared to soften his feelings, for his face gradually lost its severity, and he next said, in a plaintive tone, as he waved his head backwards and forwards:

“I am far from home and from everything I love on earth, without friends, and a stranger in a foreign land!”

“Hear, hear!” cried Jack, convivially. “Off, off! said the stranger!”

"Jack," said Mr. Ledbury, in reproving accents, "I did not expect this from you, whom I always thought my friend. But no matter—I am used to it. Would I were at home—at my own humble home, on which that same moon is now shining! How have I misspent my time and deceived my kind parents!"

Here Mr. Ledbury wept; he was evidently labouring under some impression that he had committed a series of unpardonable crimes, and was altogether an outcast from decent society.

"Why, Leddy—old brick!—what's the matter?" asked Jack, placing a hand on his shoulder.

"Nothing—nothing, Jack," replied Titus, putting away his friend. "It is long since I have thus wept; not since I was a child—a guileless, sportive thing of four years old—a little, little, little child!"

"Ah!" said Jack, drawing him out, "and you remember, you remember how happy you were when your childhood flitted by, and your little lovers came with lilies and cherries, and all sorts of larks."

"They will never come again," replied Mr. Ledbury. "And where is the little Belgian who polked so well? Has she left me too?"

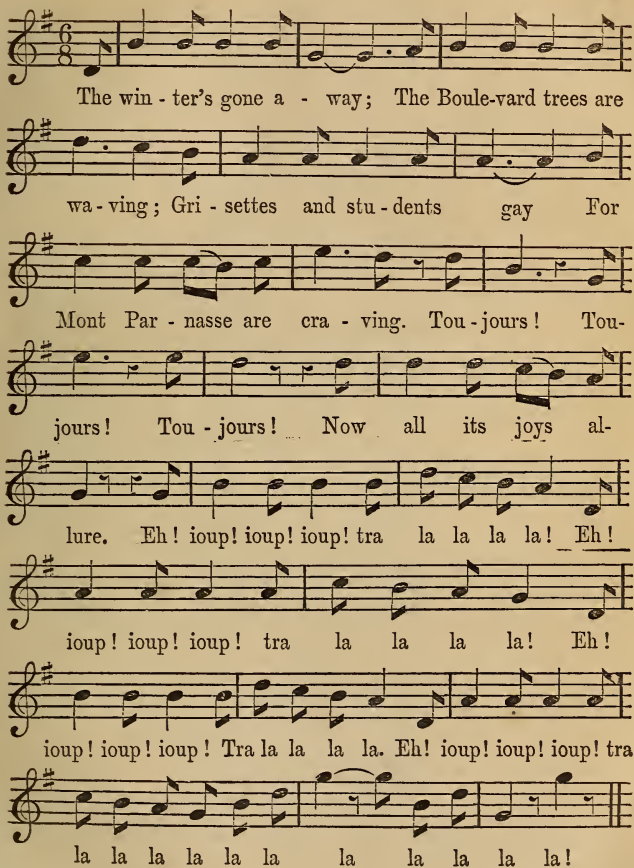
"Oh," thought Jack, "we shall do now."

So recollecting that in their rapid act of horsemanship they had forgotten the grisettes in a very ungallant manner, he got Jules and Henri to go back after them. And as soon as they were gone, Mr. Ledbury's excitement arrived at the affectionate stage, and he shook Jack warmly by the hand, and said he was a good fellow, and that they were all good fellows, and knew he'd never behaved well to Jack, nor showed him such attention as he ought to have done; but that was neither here nor there, nor, as Jack observed, anywhere else that he knew of.

However, they got wonderful friends again, and by this time the young artists came back with Clara, and Eulalie, and Héloïse; and, making over the former to the protection of Mr. Ledbury, they started, seven abreast, along the boulevard on their way home, indulging, as a matter of course, in the right and proper chorus to be sung at such times, which nobody was ever known to go home along the boulevards from the Chaumière without joining in. This is it:

THE STUDENTS' CHAUMIÈRE SONG.

I.



The win - ter's gone a - way; The Boule-vard trees are
 wa - ving; Gri - settes and stu - dents gay For
 Mont Par - nasse are cra - ving. Tou - jours! Tou -
 jours! Tou - jours! Now all its joys al -
 lure. Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! tra la la la la! Eh!
 ioup! ioup! ioup! tra la la la la! Eh!
 ioup! ioup! ioup! Tra la la la la. Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! tra
 la la la la la la la la la la la!

II.

Messieurs les Etudiants
 All at the Chaumière now,
 To dance the wild *cancan*
 Beneath the band repair now,
Toujours! toujours! toujours!
Bacchus et "les amours!"
 (Chorus.) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

III.

The Garde Municipale
 Has only to show fight, boys,
 We stop our wild cabal,
 And then we take a sight, boys,
Toujours! toujours! toujours!
 The which we can't endure.
 (*Chorus.*) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

IV.

At once we follow up
 Our studies, love, and folly;
 We read, we drink, we sup,
 And still are always jolly,
Toujours! toujours! toujours!
 Whilst night and day endure.
 (*Chorus.*) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

V.

Our passions soon are o'er:
 We sigh for Héloïse,
 Now Clara we adore,
 And now we kiss Louise,
Toujours! toujours! toujours!
 And all the rest abjure.
 (*Chorus.*) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

VI.

Here's Julie's sparkling eyes,
 Whose every glance expresses,
 "Faint heart ne'er won the prize—
 I wait for your addresses."
Toujours! toujours! toujours!
 The treasure, then, secure.
 (*Chorus.*) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

VII.

Despite the sermons slow,
 Of tutor or of father,
 The students always show
 They love the Chaumière—rather.
Toujours! toujours! toujours!
 With wine and "*les amours!*"
 (*Chorus.*) Eh! ioup! ioup! ioup! &c.

There are no places in the Quartier Latin of Paris to "finish" an evening at. English innovation has kept some of the *cafés* open very late on the northern boulevards; but by eleven o'clock at night this classical region is deserted. And as the young ladies—the daughters of the proprietor—who conjointly kept the lodge of the Hôtel de l'Etoile du Nord were models of propriety, and did not approve of the visits of any other young ladies to their domicile at any hour, but always received them

with an aspect of fearful severity, which the boldest did not like to encounter a second time, Jack and Mr. Ledbury took an affectionate good night of their friends at the door, and especially of the little Belgian, to whom Titus, in his enthusiasm, had been talking Tennyson for the last quarter of an hour instead of singing, and trying to put the good poetry into bad French as he proceeded, to the utter bewilderment of his companion, for even Mr. Ledbury's French was not of the purest.

"Ecoutez," said Mr. Ledbury: "La reine du Mai est la plus jolie de tout; elle est la reine du fête, vous savez, comme ça. Je la chanterai." And, stopping his ears to the chorus, he went on:

"LA REINE DU MAI.

Si vous êtes veillante, appelle-moi, ma mère, appelle-moi de bonne heure;
Demain sera de toute l'année le plus fortuné jour;
De toute l'année nouvelle, ma mère, la journée le plus gai,
Car je serai l'Reine du Mai, ma mère! je serai l'Reine du Mai!

N'est ce pas que c'est touchante?"

"Charmante!" said the little Belgian, in a perfect haze as to its meaning: "bien gentille!"

"I shan't be waking to call you early, Leddy, if you don't come in," observed Jack, just as Mr. Ledbury was beginning another verse.

It was a peculiarity of Mr. Ledbury's nature, that, when he was just at all excited, he always began to talk Tennyson. If young ladies jilted him after supper at parties, he always abused his "cousin Amy" in right good Locksley Hall style, as a relief to his feelings. If he felt slow, he quoted "Mariana;" and when he wanted to create a favourable impression, he whispered the Ear-ring and Necklace song from "The Miller's Daughter" to his partner in the rest of a polka. But Jack, who had heard all these pieces over and over again, did not always enter into his enthusiasm as warmly as he wished, and now even rudely cut him short. So the good night was repeated—one would fancy it must have been a very agreeable proceeding by the evident general desire to encore it; and then the grisettes were escorted by the artists along the Quai St. Michel. They struck up the chorus again as they left, whilst Mr. Ledbury waved his hand with the air of a *châtelain* of the olden time when a procession left his castle; and the strain awakened the echoes of the old buildings from the Morgue—which was exactly opposite to them—to Notre-Dame, until, as they turned up the Rue de la Harpe, it stopped suddenly, at

the request of a body of the Garde Municipale, who just then came round the corner. And then, as Mr. Ledbury had seen enough of those functionaries for that evening, he retreated indoors, and, taking his candle from the eldest Mademoiselle Petit, followed Jack up to bed. But his cerebral excitement had not yet gone off, and his visions were disturbed. He dreamt that he was a cuirassier, fighting for Belgium and beauty, and then dancing strange Chaumière figures over a body of prostrate gendarmes, being joined by all the lamps and musical instruments in the garden, which appeared to be always rapidly descending before his eyes, without getting any lower. And indeed the morning sun came through the quivering leaves of the scarlet-runners that bordered his window, before he sank into a quiet slumber.

Jack's first care was to get the business transacted that he had come about, and this took up a couple of days, which Mr. Ledbury passed chiefly with Jules and Henri in their *atelier* during the morning, getting rid of the evening by treating the little Belgian to unlimited ices at the Café de la Rotonde, and then going to see Déjazet. And he found this life so very pleasant, that, with a little persuasion, he left the Hôtel de l'Étoile, and took what Jack very rudely denominated a first-class cockloft over the studio of his friends. It contained a bed and a chair, and was so limited in its proportions, that the occupier was obliged to sit on the floor to dress, and could not open the door without getting on the bed. But nevertheless, Mr. Ledbury was exceedingly joyous in it; and would have been more so but for the "lean-to" ceiling, against which he regularly bumped his head every morning.

"I don't think I like this pigeon-house much, Leddy," said Jack, as Titus, in the fulness of his heart, wished his friend to partake of it.

"Oh, it's capital, Jack—ten francs a month—think of that! Such a pure air, too, and such a view!"

"A view—ah! yes, I see," replied Jack, looking towards the panes of glass in the roof, through which alone light was admitted; "capital, if you like astronomy. You can lie in bed and learn the Great Bear famously."

"No, no; look here, Jack," said Mr. Ledbury, anxious to exhibit all the advantages of his new domicile. "You must get on the bed, and then open the skylight, and heave yourself up through it—so. There, now, I can see the telegraphs on St. Sulpice working away like several one o'clocks. I wonder

what they mean? they're very like an F just now: can you tell?"

"That's a comprehensive clue, certainly," said Jack. "But it's sure to be 'news from Bayonne,' about a row in Spain. The French telegraphs never do anything else."

"I can see all the roofs and chimney-pots along the Rue Racine," said Mr. Ledbury. "And—I say, Jack—look here: this is the great point. No; you must get up, and put your head through. There; do you see that window where the canary-bird is?"

"Quite well, Leddy. What is it?"

"That's where the little Belgian lives. She's an *illumineuse*—paints maps and things. Isn't it jolly?"

"Very," said Jack, wedging himself a little tighter into the skylight, until there appeared a chance of their getting fixed there irremediably. "I don't much see what use it is, though."

"Oh, telegraph, telegraph, Jack; beats St. Sulpice all to nothing. Look here, now."

Whereupon Mr. Ledbury contrived, by dint of sheer animal force, to release himself from the skylight: and then taking up a walking-stick, he put a glove on it, and removing the bit of looking-glass which formed his mirror from the wall, reascended.

"Now, first, we must call her attention," said Titus; "and I do that, when the sun is out, by making a Jack-o'-lantern on the canary-bird. There—see how it frightens him, and what a row he makes. That will bring her to the window."

Mr. Ledbury was right. In half a minute Clara's pretty face peeped between the convolvulus leaves which ran upon bits of tape all over the windows, and nodded to him.

"Now for the burgee," said Mr. Ledbury, who had learned the name when somebody took him one day in a yacht to Erith, but had not the wildest notion of its meaning. "Here goes." And he hoisted up the glove on the walking-stick. "There—that means 'Can you come to the Chaumière to-night?'"

The little grisette shook her head, and held up a map half-coloured; and then retiring for an instant, she brought forward a champagne-bottle, which evidently served for a candle-stick—for there was a little piece still in it—and putting it on the coping before her, held up all her fingers and laughed.

"Now I know what she means," said Mr. Ledbury. "She can't come to the Chaumière, because she has work to do; but

she will sup with us at ten o'clock. She's a good one, isn't she, Jack?"

"I'm sure, if you say so, she is," replied his friend, getting down; and then Mr. Ledbury, after a rapid series of nods to the beloved object, which made him look like a galvanised mandarin, followed him.

"You won't come and live here, then, Jack, while you stay in Paris?" asked Titus, as they reached the floor.

"No, I think not. There isn't room to swing a kitten, Leddy, to say nothing of a cat."

"Well, but we didn't come to Paris for that, you know," said Mr. Ledbury. "Besides, I haven't seen such a thing as a cat since I have been here. I can't tell how it is. With such capital tiles as these are, they would have swarmed like flies in London."

"It's all owing to the *restaurateurs*," said Jack. "Wherever you see '*lapin*' on their bill of fare, you may be sure there are no cats at large in the neighbourhood. They are not even in Leicester-square as they used to be, since all the cheap French houses started up. Fact: depend upon it."

Before long they joined Jules and Henri on the floor below, and went together to dine at Viot's, the eating-house which the students of the Quartier Latin chiefly love to patronise. It is a thing that should not be missed, a dinner "*chez Viot*." The *carte* is extensive, and not at all expensive: you may get off famously for a franc, including a sou for the waiter. You don't often see much wine there; but there is an unlimited supply of water, somewhat tepid, and in hazy decanters; but it quenches the thirst of the students just as well as if it had been kept in crystal filters and Wenham ice all the day. They have some remarkable beverage, too, which they call "*bière blanche*;" translated, it might be termed "*intermediate*," from forming a gradation between penny ginger-beer and the traditional result of rincing out porter-tubs and washing brewers' aprons, which low minds denominate "*swipes*." Their meats are six sous the plate; their vegetables and dessert, three; bread is *à discrétion*; and the labours of M. Viot—who looks like the knave of clubs setting up for himself in the licensed victualler line—in cutting up the long rolls are beyond description. The waiters, too, are all pictures. They outdo all the jugglers you ever saw, in balancing pyramids of dishes on their arms; and their single-breath orders of "*Une Julienne—deux croûtons—un bœuf aux*

choux—trois haricots verts à l'huile—un pommes sautées (avec beaucoup de jus)—deux bifteks un peu saignants—un œufs sur le plat—deux fraises—deux fromages à la crème—un riz au lait-t-t-t!" are sounds which will readily be recollected by the old *habitués* of the house.

There is a great excitement, too, at a dinner at Viot's which assists digestion, for man is gregarious; and, besides, the incomprehensible *côtelette* of the tavern is far beyond the soddened lonely chop of lodgings, albeit you know not of what animal fibre it is composed. And the noise is quite charming. What with the unceasing orders, as above given; the shutting of the glass-door into the street, which makes all the windows go off every minute with a bang, owing to their thin glass and scanty metal frames, like the clash of a brass band; the cata-racts of dirty plates shot down the inclined plane into the kitchen; the shouts of impatient guests; the clatter of table implements, and the deep responsive "Ho!" of the barytone cook, who rivals the "Garçon Lablache" of the Palais Royal Café in his low notes,—what with all this, the meal is delightful, at least when you get used to it. On your first visit the row takes all your appetite away, so intense is your terror. But Mr. Ledbury and Jack were not so easily frightened. This is what they each had.

VIOT, RESTAURANT.

Rue de la Harpe.

- 1 *Potage (Purée aux Croûtons)* 6

This is, as tea-merchants say of three-and-sixpenny congo, "a fine old-fashioned" soup. Its component parts are unknown; but it is supposed to be made of dice of bread fried in dripping, and then simmered in whatever comes handy, from cabbage-water to kitchen-stuff, flavoured with diluted peas-pudding. It is very nourishing.

- 1 *Biftek aux Pommes* 6

A popular dish. The "biftek" should more properly be termed a rasher, as it is here cooked. It looks like a large broiled mushroom. It is called beef, as cheese is sometimes termed a rabbit, or certain preparations of veal, "olives." Physiologists are divided in their

	sous
opinions respecting it; but the majority agree that it is an artful combination of horse and india-rubber.	
1 <i>Haricots verts à l'Anglaise</i>	3
An interesting example of the supposed advantage of making things foreign, "haricots à l'Anglaise" being precisely what we call "French beans." They are eaten with a curious lump of adipose substance, very similar to that used to put into the boxes of railway wheels, which is dabbed on the top, and allowed to melt there.	
1 <i>Fraises du Bois</i>	3
A little plate of wild strawberries, really very good when eaten without another mysterious adjunct served with them, which looks like a saucer full of whitewash.	
<i>The Garçon</i>	1
This is dropped into a vase on the counter, on which the lady in attendance, who displays the slightest suspicion in the world of rouge, gracefully inclines her head, in return to the bow from the guest.	
Total	19

Leaving change out of the franc. The "leg of beef soup, with bread and potatoes, for threepence," in St. Giles's, is the only dinner that beats this for cheapness. Berthollini cannot be mentioned in the same breath.

The dinner being over, the party repaired to one of the *cafés* in the Rue de l'École de Médecine, and here the remainder of the afternoon was spent in billiards. Mr. Ledbury did not particularly shine in the game. He played with wrong balls, and never knew which was the spot; and sent it flying, when he did, over the cushions, and out of the window, and down stairs, and into all kinds of irregular places; and, although he was always chalking his cue, this did not improve his play, until at last, having cut the cloth into a right-angled laceration, he gave it up, and, ordering his "*demi-tasse*" and accompaniment, looked on.

Jack continued to play, as well as the artist, and at last they got up a large game at pool, which Henri was fortunate enough to win. And, as the evening was advancing, Mr. Ledbury thought it was time to call for Clara, which proposition was readily agreed to. Jules and Henri also—by such a lucky

chance—met Eulalie, and Sophie, and Héloïse, so that each had now a companion. Jack offered his arm to the latter—a dark-eyed, very-wicked-indeed-looking Lyonnaise. He could not do otherwise, of course, if only from mere politeness. Perhaps it was as well Emma did not see him : not that there was the slightest harm in it, but ladies' imaginations, in matters of jealousy, are like microscopes, and make the most wonderful images out of the smallest objects, magnifying tiny innocent creatures into monsters so terrible that the normal state of the earth cannot show their parallel. As it was, they were all very joyous, and Henri promised to spend all his winnings in festivity that evening; upon which they proceeded together to the Café Anglais, to the great delight of the grisettes, who had never aspired beyond the Palais Royal.

Be sure that the supper was noisy enough. A *réunion* of this kind can never be very dull on the Boulevards; for, putting on one side the lights, and lustres, and looking-glasses, the busy, cheerful noise of life and relaxation, and the constant motion of the guests, as attributes at all *cafés*, increased in *estaminets* by the click of billiard-balls and the rollicking of dominoes, there is a most joy-inspiring air about the houses on the Boulevards. The hundreds of twinkling lamps on the stalls round the theatres and at the side of the hack carriages—the perambulating *marchands*, each also with his little basket illuminated—the twanging of guitars and harps, or the jingling hum of tambourines, and the countless, indescribable vocal and instrumental sounds in all directions—the leaping forth of emancipated corks, when a bottle of *limonade gazeuse* creates as great an effect as one of champagne,—all contribute to an *ensemble* which defies anything like melancholy.

Mr. Ledbury was never so rich. The jokes he made were perfectly marvellous; and so the rest would have thought, if they could have understood but one word of them; but puns are difficult to translate into French, and especially Mr. Ledbury's; but when they did not laugh at what he said, they laughed at him himself, which made him just as happy. And when he showed them how to draw up cherries into his mouth by the stalk, and finally to put the large claw of the lobster on his nose, my heart, how they all screamed! so rapturously, that Henri got black in the face, and Jack got up and untied his neckcloth, and patted his back; which medical proceeding only increased the uproar to such a pitch, that some dressed-to-death

English ladies, whose husbands had taken them from their hotels to see the *cafés*, insisted that staying there any longer was not proper, and declared such disgraceful creatures ought not to be permitted to come in! And yet, *au fond*, there was no great harm in the merry party; and the little grisettes might, perhaps, have held their heads as high and proudly as any of the "Browns," who appeared angry that, after loading themselves with all the expensive things they could procure, they did not produce any effect like the trim figures, close-fitting *barèges*, and wicked little caps of French girls.

At last they found that they had all ordered as much as they had money to pay for, which alone brought the festival to an end; and then they all turned out upon the boulevard to go home, chorusing some popular polka, which Mr. Ledbury illustrated with Clara in front of them along the pavement; for it was a *pas* he ever loved to dance, knowing his elegance therein. Indeed, such was his devotion to it, that nobody at last would go with him to the Promenade Concerts, or the band in Kensington-gardens; for, whenever a polka was played, he incontinently danced thereto, unless restrained by physical force, its effect on him only being excelled by that which, as recent observation shows us, the high-pressure speed of a locomotive is apt to have upon the natives of Ethiopia residing in Alabama. And this dance and chorus lasted until they left the Boulevards, and turned down towards the southern part of the city.

The night-police of Paris are not too obtrusive. The streets are watched by the municipal guard, who go about in bodies, and when they have passed you may play up whatever games you like for the next half-hour, from the indefinite "old gooseberry"—if you know it—to the devil, who is at all times very popular and ubiquitous here. And so Jack, who was becoming very light-hearted, commenced the sports and pastimes by leaping up and pulling down one of the little boards labelled "*Appartement garni à louer présentement*," which hang in such numbers over the *portes cochères* of the houses. This species of entertainment, being new in Paris, was immediately pronounced a hit; and accordingly the gentlemen started off on either side of the way, taking a jump at all they saw, until they had collected a dozen of them at the end of the street. The question now arose as to how these should be carried, when Henri saw a tempting-looking board over a shop, on which was painted the sign of a man making chocolate in his shirt-sleeves,

and it was accordingly doomed. By a little modification of what circus-bills call "the human pyramids of the Athenian acrobats of the Pyrenees," they contrived to climb upon one another's shoulders until they pulled it down; and then they stacked the other little boards upon it.

There was a little debate as to who should carry it. At length, by each stating that he did not dare to do it, they got Mr. Ledbury to say he would, for he thought the act of bravery would distinguish him in the eyes of the young ladies; and, accordingly, he put the board on his head, and marched on, having crushed his hat down like a Gibus, but with no chance, like a Gibus, of springing up again. But this he did not mind; for he felt that he was the "marquis," so to speak, of the party, and that was all in all sufficient; so he balanced his cargo with one arm, and offered the other to Clara, as proud as an undertaker carrying the tray of feathers, like pies, in front of his first carriage-funeral.

Now they had all got somewhere to put the things, they did not mind what they took possession of. They pulled down a great red tin hand from a glovemaker's, and a cocked-hat from another shop, and, finally, carried off half a dozen plaster masks of Grisi, Rubini, Thillon, Plessy, and others, which hung at the entrance of the Galerie Colbert, until Mr. Ledbury could scarcely move; but he kept bravely on until they reached the Place des Victoires, when, on arriving at the foot of Louis the Fourteenth's statue, he gasped out that he must rest a minute, which was agreed to.

"Now, look here, Leddy," said Jack, struck by a sudden idea. "I've got a notion that will immortalise you."

"What is it, Jack?" asked Titus, eagerly.

"See this board with 'Unfurnished room to let' on it. What do you say to tying this round the head of the statue, and leaving it there?"

"Glorious! capital!" said Mr. Ledbury; "I'll do it!"

"Stop!" said Jack; "take your time. Mind the rails—there—now—be sure of your footing. I should like to do it myself, only you are the tallest."

With a boldness that only the grisettes' eyes and the champagne could have given him, Mr. Ledbury, by the help of his long arms and legs, contrived to reach the statue, and fix the announcement on his head. But he had barely finished this, when Jack, who was ever on the *qui vive*, heard something like

the measured tramp in one of the streets running into the Place, and exclaimed, in a quick, alarmed voice,

“Look out, boys! Here’s the guard coming round. Get down, Leddy, get down! Jules! Henri! take up the boards and things. We must be off. Keep the pedestal between them and ourselves. Leddy, look sharp, I tell you—down the Rue des Petits Champs!”

They were all on the alert. Unwilling to leave their prizes, they lifted up the board, and, followed by the grisettes, went off as swiftly and as quietly as they could down the street Johnson had indicated. But poor Mr. Ledbury—he was in a sad way. His coat-tails had got, somehow or other, by some strange accident, which never would have occurred to anybody but himself, entangled in the metal trappings of the horse, and he could not move. He uttered a fearful cry to “Stop!” as the others flitted off; but it was of no avail. The next minute the guard entered the Place, and, seeing his outline against the moonbeams, marched up to him, and ordered him to descend. For a moment a wild thought entered his head of keeping them at bay, knowing they could not reach him with their accoutrements; but at the very first demonstration made to this effect, the muskets were pointed at him, and he was compelled, with the loss of his tails, to come down.

Meanwhile, Jack, unwilling to leave him all alone, returned with the Lyonnaise in the rear of the guard; and they stood looking on as casual spectators, until Mr. Ledbury reached the ground in a sorry plight enough. He immediately perceived his friend, and Jack feared he should also be apprehended in consequence of the recognition. Wonderfully enough, Mr. Ledbury saw in an instant the utter futility of showing that they were acquainted; but he felt somewhat comforted that Jack was near him, and directly, without a word, accompanied the patrol to the Corps de Garde as a prisoner—his second appearance in that character since we first knew him in Paris.

There was something so very novel in the charge, that the head-patrol scarcely knew what to make of it; but he saw enough to be convinced that Mr. Ledbury was in a state of fermented beverages; and, therefore, instead of locking him up, as he looked respectable, he allowed him to sit until morning in the lodge; and then, assured that he was no agent to any secret society, and that the placard had no reference to shooting at royalty, he sent a guard up with him to his lodgings, to

ascertain if his address was true. He was pleased to see Jack waiting for him at the door of the Corps de Garde ; and he was followed by his friend to the Rue Racine, wherein his lodgings were situated.

As they went up-stairs, Johnson passed quickly by them, and whispered a word or two to Ledbury in English ; and then he continued on, until he came to the artists' studio, into which they entered, followed by the landlord, the porter, the porter's wife, one or two lodgers, and some idlers, whom the appearance of the guard had brought together, in the expectation of seeing a room discovered full of infernal machines, seditious papers, and arms of all sorts.

Mr. Ledbury's room was here indicated to the authorities, and they were about to enter it, when Titus threw himself before it, and begged they would desist ; but finding that the guard, which never yielded generally, was not disposed to do so on the present occasion in particular, he next changed from the suppliant to the heroic state, and, thumping his breast, said that if they entered it should be through his heart, which would have been a curious way of getting into a room. Whereupon the Sergent de Ville asked him for his key, which Mr. Ledbury produced, and with a melodramatic "Jamais !" threw it far away through the window. On this, the word was given to apply the butt-ends of the guns to the door ; and, as the iron-work of France is not celebrated for massive strength, it yielded at the first blow. What was the surprise of the party to see, surrounded by the masks, tin gloves, boards, and cocked-hats—the spoils of the preceding night—the pale, trembling, pretty form of Clara, the little Belgian !

You must not prejudice her. Let us hasten to show how she came there ; for appearances are certainly against her. She had gone home with the others ; but finding it so late, and afraid to ring up the *concierge* of her house, who was a terrible babbler, the rest had offered her Mr. Ledbury's room, knowing pretty well that he would be furnished that night with a lodging by the authorities ; and the champagne and advanced hours had kept the grisette in bed far beyond her usual time. To this effect had Jack spoken to Mr. Ledbury on the staircase ; and this accounted for his chivalric behaviour.

The proprietor of the house was in a dreadful state of virtuous indignation at the discovery, and the various articles strewed about the chamber increased his wrath. He bustled

into the room, and turned poor Clara out in the most ungallant manner by the shoulder, on which Mr. Ledbury would have flown at him, but for the guard; and then, kicking the various articles to the landing with his foot, he seemed inclined to include Mr. Ledbury with them. At all events, he told him to quit the house that instant; that he forgave him all his rent, but that he should not stay there a minute longer, so that he had better follow his carpet-bag, which he had already got to the floor below. Upon this the lodgers started a great cry of execration, which brought all the rest out of doors, and the tumult increased to a pitch that was absolutely fearful, until Mr. Ledbury reached the front gate, whence, from the new feature given to his case by the stolen property, he was compelled to return to the guard-house, as well as poor little Clara, who already pictured herself in a long white dress, with her hair down her shoulders, going to the guillotine.

Fortunately, the head-officer was a good fellow, who had been a student himself, and at once saw the state of things. The grisette was immediately acquitted; and Mr. Ledbury was compelled to give up his passport (which is equivalent to putting in bail, as you cannot well move without it), and wait, under the surveillance of the police, until such times as the people should claim their goods, and the Procureur du Roi should "invite" him to appear at the Palais du Justice to explain his motives; and then he also was allowed to depart.

"We must cut as fast as we can, Leddy," said Jack, as they met outside.

"But I can't," replied Titus. "I must stay here, for they've got my passport. And that pretty girl! Really—I don't know—but I've put her in such a very awkward predicament, that I think some little attention—I can't explain exactly—but now, don't you, Jack?"

"Oh, we'll set all that to rights," replied Johnson. "You really are not safe to go alone yet, Leddy; but there's no mistake about it, we must be off, and sell them all. I'll manage it."

And Jack was as good as his word. That very afternoon he went to a railway friend of his, a gentleman who was in a temporary state of provisionary exile, and got his passport *viséd* for England, promising to send it back to him in a letter as soon as they arrived. And then he booked two places also that afternoon in the Boulogne diligence, for himself in his own

name, and Mr. Ledbury as Mr. Straggles, and departed at once; although, as Titus said, it tore his heart-strings to leave the little Belgian so abruptly. But Johnson told him to have a pipe, and promised to send her over six pairs of English stockings, which is a present grisettes prize above diamonds and all other jewels of great price, and that then he would be quite happy.

There was a little parting dinner at a *restaurant*, close to the Messageries; and Jules and Henri promised to come to England in the spring. And—it ought scarcely to be mentioned in fairness—just before he took his seat, Mr. Ledbury gave the little Belgian a kiss, and not only one, but two or three good downright long ones, all of them. And then they waved an adieu, and the postilion "*créé'd*" as usual, and the *conducteur* lighted a cigar, and the passengers got silent and sleepy. And being blessed with a quick journey and a fair passage, that time the next day they were at Folkestone, once more under the shelter of the British Lion, and out of all danger from guards, guillotines, and galleys—and, perhaps, what is more, from sparkling-eyed grisettes.

XII.

MRS. CRUDDLE'S ANNUAL ATTACK.

EVERYBODY could not have lived where Mrs. Cruddle did. It was at the end of a court, that went out of a lane, that opened upon a street, that led into a great thoroughfare between St. Paul's and the river. It was, furthermore, in a locality that looked as if all the spare warehouses and private dwellings, left after London was finished, had been turned into a neighbourhood by themselves, without any regard to order; just as the dealers in old furniture make up cabinets and davenportsof any old scraps of plain and ornamental woodwork thrown aside by them after their great design has been achieved.

Her house, moreover, was difficult to arrive at. First of all, the very cabmen were slow at finding it out, never, according to the habits of their race, stopping to inquire of any one; but driving on, and on, and on, as if they expected some inherent instinct would ultimately show them, or their horses, where to stop. Next, if you walked and asked, your first hope, a pedestrian, would reply that he was a stranger in those parts, look wistfully around him as if he sought some index floating in the air, like the guiding hands in the "White Cat," and then pass on. Your second, a policeman, would keep you some minutes in suspense, and finish the interview by admitting that he had heard of the place, but confessing his ignorance of its exact whereabouts; and your final chance, a baker at the corner, would not be sure whether it was the third turning or the fourth. Lastly, if you found it out, your journey was all the way one of great terror, from the chances that the overhanging wheels of the huge waggons would grate you to death against the walls of the narrow footway, which was only a kerb; or, that the mighty woolpacks and sugar hogsheads, that hung from the cranes high in air over this edging of pavement, would fall just as you were passing under, and knock your head into your stomach beyond all possible chance of recovery.

When, however, you arrived at Mrs. Cruddle's house, it was not lively. It seemed to be all back rooms, go into whichever one you would, even up at the top, except the very attic, whose

windows opened upon a widely-extended thicket of chimney-pots, ultimately lost in the smoke they were giving out, or a falling and rising prairie of roofs, reminding one of nothing but the view from a railway that runs into the heart of a great city. But here Mrs. Cruddle had lived for twenty years. We mention the lady more particularly than her husband, because his claims to be considered an actual resident were less decided, inasmuch as he was a "commercial gentleman," travelling for a wholesale druggist, and having as many homes—at all of which he was equally known and welcomed—as there were old commercial inns in principal towns in Great Britain. Mrs. Cruddle, however, could scarcely be considered a lone woman. Her house was always filled with lodgers—clerks from Doctors' Commons, boys from St. Paul's School, and young men from Paternoster-row; and to all of these, as well as to her own family, scattered about in various parts of the City, Mrs. Cruddle was a mother. But at one time of the year the domestic position of Mrs. Cruddle was considerably altered. Legal courts were closed, holidays arrived at the school, and even in Paternoster-row leaves of absence were granted between "magazine days;" so that the house became comparatively deserted. Mr. Cruddle returned from his travels; the tracts of chimney-pots became more extended in the clear air; theatres shut, and gardens opened; boats ran to Gravesend for sums that it would have been dangerous to have sold a bottle-imp for; and everything proclaimed that the lazy end of summer had arrived.

And with it came a complaint to which Mrs. Cruddle had long been subject. It was not cholera, nor influenza, nor anything else that "went about" to the great delight of the doctors. It did not depend upon states of the air, or sanitary neglect; nor was it like the potato disease, general, being in a measure confined to England. It was, in fact, the very reverse of the Swiss disease of over-love for the fatherland, consisting in an irrepressible desire to get as far away from home as possible.

Mrs. Cruddle and her husband were such a happy couple, that she knew she had only to express her wish for a change of air to procure permission and the means forthwith. But this did not do. For some incomprehensible organisation of her woman's disposition, a request and a ready acquiescence would have taken away all the pleasure of the trip. It was absolutely necessary that the suggestion should come from her husband, and that then light reasons should be given for its im-

practicability that year, and doubts urged as to its judiciousness. And to effect this, she would at this period get up a sort of monodrama, and perform it in a very truthful manner, commencing by complaining of the closeness of the rooms, untying her cap-strings, and opening all the windows, as she hinted at the luxury of fresh air. Next she would envy Mrs. Saddler of Knight Rider-street, and Mrs. Egg of Addle-hill, and the Drivers of Great Carter-lane, for that they had all gone somewhere in steam-boats; and were, perhaps, enjoying nice wet feet on the sands, or slipping off the green seaweed into the holes of the periwinkle rocks, at that very moment. And the number of minor diseases that attacked her, perfectly irreducible to any medical category, would have puzzled the British College of Health, whoever that gentleman may be. Into all these traps Mr. Cruddle would good-temperedly fall, in the same kind spirit in which you take the card which the conjuror evidently forces on you, instead of brutally drawing one from the undisplayed portion of the pack; so that at last Mrs. Cruddle, satisfied that the sea-air alone would do her good, prepared to put it to the test. Her husband readily acquiesced in everything, always excepting that he should be expected to go too, for all the time. He enjoyed the holiday much more, he said, when it only came once a week; and so he settled to breathe sea-air from Saturday until Monday, keeping in town all the rest of the time. It is true during this space he was seen about at resorts, dining at Blackwall, or going to Cremorne, with certain old friends of his, wags of the travellers' rooms; and these same friends would also, now and then, assemble at his house, upon the sly hint that "the broom was hung out," and smoke cigars in the drawing-room during a rubber of very long whist. But all this was very fair; and Mrs. Cruddle, even, could not be angry when she heard of it.

"And where do you think of going, my dear?" said Mr. Cruddle to his partner, who, ever since the sojourn had been determined upon, appeared to have been engaged in learning Bradshaw by heart, all the way through, including cab-fares and advertisements. "Gravesend?"

"Now, Cruddle! Gravesend!" answered the lady, reproachfully. "Gravesend for sea-bathing! Why, it's nothing but brackish mud and shrimps' tails. Besides, a shilling there and back: what can you expect at such a price?"

"Well, Margate, then?"

“No, Cruddle, not Margate: no.” And here Mrs. Cruddle made that kind of face which people do when they get the first sight of the black draught they are about to take. “No, the last bedstead I had there was quite enough for me. Ugh!”

“What was that, my dear?”

“Don't ask me—no: a perfect colony of them. I never shall forget Alfy saying he saw a little black ladybird on the pillow.”

“Oh! that was it, was it?” replied Mr. Cruddle; “that's nothing at the sea-side, you know. You should see the fleas at Chester. Lor! he, he, he! We all used to laugh so.” And the recollection of them appeared so diverting that Mr. Cruddle chuckled again. “Joe Robins used to say always when he got there, ‘Now, Fanny!’ he used to say, ‘bring me the mouse-trap.’—‘La! Mr. Robins,’ Fanny used to say, ‘what do you want with the mouse-trap?’—‘What!’ Joe always said, ‘why, to catch the fleas with, to be sure!’ And then how they used to laugh. Lor!”

And the mere reminiscence of the fun again threw Mr. Cruddle into such a state of hilarity that he forgot all about the subject of conversation, and, possibly, would not have reverted to it again if Mrs. Cruddle had not answered some imaginary question of her own by observing, “No, I never was so robbed as I was that August at Ramsgate. The moist sugar alone would keep me from ever going there again.”

“Try Boulogne!” suggested Mr. Cruddle, brought back to the topic. “It's very cheap, and uncommonly curious.”

“France!” cried the lady. “My goodness gracious, Cruddle! “What—to be made into a barricade, or blown out of your bedroom by artillery in the middle of the night, and then guillotined. I do declare I've thought of nothing but that room at Madame Tussaud's ever since the French Revolution began.”

“Well—I'm sure I don't know, my dear,” said Mr. Cruddle.

“Now, look here,” continued his wife, turning over to Bradshaw, “‘London and South-Western’—that's it.”

“‘Cornelius Stovin, manager,’” read Mr. Cruddle. “Lor! what an odd name—Stove in! How it puts you in mind of a horse-box got on the wrong line and the express coming up.”

“Now don't, Cruddle!” exclaimed the other; “you quite make one nervous. See here: ‘London to Southampton, second

class, ten-and-six.' Now then, turn to the boats, and read. There it is—'Southampton——' ”

“ ‘Southampton to Bombay, on the 3rd of every——’ ”

“ ‘No, no!—‘to Ryde;’ there it is; ‘all day long.’ Very convenient, isn’t it? And the Isle of Wight is so very beautiful—I think it must be the Isle of Wight.’ ”

And the Isle of Wight was accordingly fixed on; and it was agreed that poor Miss Peers, who never had a holiday, and thought so much of going out, was to accompany Mrs. Cruddle on her tour.

Miss Peers was the useful friend of the Cruddle family—one of those available persons who can always come whenever they are asked—which is usually when they are most wanted—and always look pleasant under the most trying domestic *contre-temps*. She could do everything. Her Tarragon vinegar was pronounced, by competent authorities, to be more than superior; and no one could manage short-crust in a floured cloth so successfully. She was artful with pink saucers, knew where peculiar tints of worsted could be procured at the cheapest rate, and understood tea-making to a marvel. If a servant was discharged hurriedly by Mrs. Cruddle, Miss Peers always knew of the very one to take her place. She possessed in her head a whole library of secrets respecting rough-dried linen, pickled onions, grape wine, plate powder, and clear-starching; and, the day after a party, knew where everything was to go back to, what was left, and how it was to be disposed of, better than the hostess herself. Hence she was a great treasure—a real blessing to a mother like Mrs. Cruddle; and as Mrs. Cruddle never had any time to read anything, and Miss Peers—who was suspected of shaving her forehead to bring out her intellect—took in, or borrowed, all the cheap periodicals, and retailed their contents during the stringing of a cullender of French beans, or the repairing of a basket of the infant Cruddle socks, she was as entertaining as useful. Besides which, she was a great favourite with little Alfy, who was to accompany his mother.

We pass over intermediate matters—how the strange parcel of umbrellas, cloaks, and spades of former years, for the sand industry of little Alfy, quite astonished the guards on the railway; how they met a poor gentleman who had heedlessly got into the wrong train, meaning to go to Richmond, and had been whirled down to Woking before he found it out, both

starting at the same hour, and being in reality a reputable and harmless man, had been looked upon as a swindler, made to pay excess fare, and kept out of a lucrative commission; how they enjoyed the sea-trip, and Mrs. Cruddle declared she was a capital sailor, and so was little Alfy, and Miss Peers too—Southampton Water and the Solent being as smooth as glass; and how Miss Peers showed Mrs. Cruddle Netley Abbey and Calshot Castle, the first of which she had seen in some dissolving views at the Polytechnic, and the last in a pocket-book, as well as at the top of an illustrated sheet of note-paper sent very appropriately from the Mile-end-road. How they landed ultimately at Ryde, and found that Portsmouth would have been their proper line—but had been overlooked in a vague conventional reminiscence of the coaching days—also formed a feature in the trip. But we omit all its detail, and plant our party at Ventnor on the same evening, after having crossed the island in, possibly, the only stage-coach left in England.

“Well, I declare the sea-air makes me feel better already,” observed Mrs. Cruddle, looking upon her present condition of perfect health as a remarkable cure; “and I never saw a child eat as Alfy did at tea. There’s nothing like it.”

Mrs. Cruddle made this remark to Miss Peers as they started from the inn to look after lodgings. Miss Peers entirely coincided with the assertion, forgetting that little Alfy had made but an indifferent dinner on the railway from a dry sandwich, with nothing to drink; and that this might, in some degree, account for the quantity of shrimps he had devoured, and the number of times he had been choked by their heads and tails.

There were many lodgings to let, but none that suited. Some were too dear, and others too dirty; and at all Mrs. Cruddle persisted in tasting the water, and telling a story of a friend of her husband’s who turned light blue through drinking from a chalybeate pump constantly, and always got rusty in damp weather afterwards. The search would have tired many people, but Mrs. Cruddle was never so happy as when she was routing about after apartments with no idea of where she would ultimately go to bed that night. And of course Miss Peers was happy, too; and little Alfy, being lured on from one to the other, under false promises of digging sand that very night, was equally contented.

At last, quite at the end of the village, they found what they wanted. It was a comical little house, something between a

Swiss cottage and a donjon keep, with a flagstaff at the door, and two wooden cannon on the roof, to which access could be obtained. This much delighted Miss Peers, as from it she could watch from the lonely tower, and see the rovers' barks in the distance, with other romantic pleasures. And, perhaps, the landlord might be a bold buccaneer! It was charming.

There was everything they wanted. A sitting-room and two bedrooms, one of which, looking towards the beach, was appropriated to Miss Peers, because she loved to hear the ocean's murmur. Little Alfy had a sofa, since it was his custom to go to sleep upon his hands and knees, with his head burrowing in the pillow, which, although agreeable to himself, was less pleasant to a bedfellow. There were no carpets, but, as Mrs. Cruddle said, that made the room more airy, and air was everything at the sea-side; and the furniture was singular and scanty, which contented Miss Peers declared was half the charm of a lodging. So that it was all just as if it was made for them; and so cheap, too, they could scarcely understand it.

Of course there was nothing in the house. There never is at lodgings; and it is wonderful to think how the real natives live without salt, vinegar, potatoes, or any other of the inevitable articles of consumption, the existence of which is always so calmly denied, if they are asked, until the lodgers procure their own. There was not even a bit of bread for Alfy, so Miss Peers started forth to procure comestibles, leaving Mrs. Cruddle to unpack the boxes, which, having done, she sat down to look around her. There was a curious air of desolation in the rooms. Everything appeared to have been carried off except the barest necessities. There were nails for pictures, but none suspended therefrom; and rods and hooks for curtains, but none attached. The only well-stocked part of the room was the mantelpiece, and this was covered with bottles of sand, vases of seaweed, trifles from Shanklin, cockle pincushions, shell dolls, and cats made of putty and periwinkles—articles interesting from association, but of small intrinsic value. When Miss Peers returned and they wanted something warm, there was no fire; and when they wanted the fire, there were no coals. But Mrs. Cruddle was not put out; she said they had come suddenly, so they could not expect to find everything as at home, and, after all, health was the greatest blessing. Upon which they fell back upon cracknels and cold weak brandy-and-water, giving Alfy a little in a glass egg-cup; for there were no wine-glasses in the house.

However, they slept very soundly. Had they not been tired with the journey, the constant murmur of talk that went on in the kitchen nearly all night would have disturbed them, and induced much speculation upon its import. But once off, their slumber endured until morning. Mrs. Cruddle dreamt that her husband came down on Sunday and brought a dozen friends with him, and that they had nothing for dinner but one duck. Little Alfy fancied he had dug such a large hole in the sand that he tumbled into it, which awoke him with a start; and Miss Peers's visions were of becoming the bride of a bold buccaneer, more or less Grecian in appearance, varied with notions of being a mermaid in coral submarine caves, where lobsters and home-made pickled salmon could be had for the mere trouble of catching.

Very bright and beautiful was the next morning, when the ladies first looked from their windows—lovely as the first fine morning at the sea-side always is to a Londoner. Not a cloud was to be seen in the blue sky, except a few white mists which occasionally rolled across the summits of the more lofty hills. In some places the downs were covered with small white dots, which a closer inspection would have proved to have been sheep; in others, with long, sloping wheat-fields, which, as the wind came, waved gracefully in a thousand billows, revealing the corn-flowers, and bright, intruding poppies growing over them. Cockney architecture had been lavished on the village, but it could not destroy the beauty of the undercliff; and seaward the tide splashed its sparkling foam upon the rocks and pebbles of the beach, with a sound perfectly musical. Mrs. Cruddle pronounced herself better than ever she had been in her life, breathing, indeed, with the greatest ease; and Miss Peers's was equally salubrious; whilst Alfy's appetite astonished them both as much as the traditional Jack's did the easily-imposed-upon giant, whose hospitality was so craftily taken advantage of at breakfast. They settled to go out directly after the meal and market—it was a sin to lose an instant of such lovely weather—and, accordingly, off they started. But, upon their return, they found the door of the house fast closed; and Mrs. Grit, the landlady, looking out of the first-floor window in great apparent anxiety, increased as she saw them approach.

“Just wait one minute—only a minute, ladies,” said Mrs. Grit. “I am very sorry to keep you, but it can't be helped.”

Mrs. Cruddle and Miss Peers looked at the landlady and then at each other, rather bewildered.

"I want my spade!" ejaculated Alfy.

"A low, sneaking fellow!" continued Mrs. Grit, watching the retreating form of the man. "It will be quite safe directly, ladies," she added to her lodgers.

"Mamma, you said I might go on the sand as soon as you had bought the mutton-chops," Alfy went on.

"Now then, ladies—now then!" cried Mrs. Grit, hurriedly, as she disappeared from the window. "But please make haste."

"What can this mean?" thought Mrs. Cruddle and Miss Peers.

"That's the way to the sand," said Alfy; "and I know there's periwinkles, and starfish, and little crabs, like there was at Margate."

The door was here opened a little way as Mrs. Grit looked out. Then she allowed the party to enter, as soon as she was satisfied that they had not changed places with anybody else; and, finally, she slammed the door again, with nervous haste, and shot the bolt.

"The beggars are abominable," said Mrs. Grit, when the feeling of security was re-established: "so unpleasant, too, for you ladies to be kept waiting. But it is not my fault."

From the imperfect view obtained of the man who had departed as they came up, Mrs. Cruddle did not think that he looked very like a beggar. He was florid and hearty, well clad, and carried a walking-stick.

"I cannot understand this at all," she said to Miss Peers, as they entered their sitting-room.

"I think there must be smuggling going on; if so, the French brandy is remarkably good for cherries," replied the other lady, in whose mind romance and domestic economy were ever mingled. "A smuggler—dear me! I wish I had taken more notice of him."

"Once I went on the sands directly after breakfast," hinted Alfy, "and was so good all day afterwards."

But the suggestion was unattended to in the curiosity of the minute.

Anon new matter for wonder arose. The butcher's boy arrived with some meat that had been ordered, and instead of delivering it in at the door, in the ordinary method, was told

by Mrs. Grit to wait until she got a long piece of string, by which the shoulder of lamb was pulled up to the bedroom window. And then, as little Alfy still kept indulging in illusions of the sea-coast, it was thought proper to indulge him. But just as they were about to start, Mrs. Grit put herself before the door, in the attitude of a stage heroine, who declares that if anybody attempts to pass it shall be over her dead body, and implored them to wait a minute.

"He is here!" she exclaimed, but almost in a whisper. "It is not safe just now—pray wait a minute, ladies."

Mrs. Cruddle grew still more astonished. As for Miss Peers, she at once put down the object of alarm as a sea-Chartist, or something equally terrible. Every attempt to procure a tranquil explanation from Mrs. Grit was a failure. She only replied that she was a wretched woman, but that they should one day know all: and then, beckoning them to the back of the house, opened the kitchen door, after a cautious survey through the window, almost pushed them out, and banged it to, as before, after them. Under these mysterious circumstances the walk was not agreeable; and although little Alfy was in high spirits, and heaped up shingles, dug holes, collected marine trash, and got his feet wet after the most approved fashion, and in a way that would, at another time, have called forth the highest encomiums, Mrs. Cruddle and Miss Peers had a cloud hanging over them which prevented them from fully entering into the spirit of his diversions. Their return was attended with still greater unpleasantness. They were not admitted for half an hour, and then in a hurried manner by a French window, just as the mysterious stranger appeared round the corner of the house. All this was so bad, that Mrs. Cruddle determined to leave the place the next morning. Even the few hours of it, she said, were beginning to undermine her health.

The afternoon passed very uncomfortably, and at last they went to bed, sleeping less readily than on the preceding evening, but towards morning falling into a deep slumber. From this Miss Peers was awakened by a noise in her room, and, opening her eyes, she observed, to her horror, that the dreaded man had opened her window, which she had neglected to fasten, and stepped into her chamber. He now stood at the foot of the bed.

"Who are you? Go away! What do you want, man?" cried Miss Peers, with a ringing scream.

“Don’t be afraid, ma’am, it’s an execution,” replied the intruder.

“A what!” shrieked Miss Peers; and by this time her cries had brought Mrs. Cruddle into the room, who nearly fainted. She had caught the man’s word, and expected nothing else but that everybody was to be put out of the way immediately.

“I’m sorry to intrude,” continued the man; “but don’t distress yourselves now. Only I’m in possession now, that’s all.”

“Oh!” gasped the ladies; Mrs. Cruddle having wrapped her form in the bed-curtain, and Miss Peers pulled the counterpane up to her very eyes.

The truth dawned upon them. They saw that the miserable state of the house was owing to everything available having been sold, and that their difficulty of egress and entry was accounted for by the presence of the man.

“Leave the room!” cried Mrs. Cruddle. “Leave the room, and let us pack up our things at once, and go. Well—I’m sure!”

“Beg your pardon, ladies,” said the man; “but you can’t move a thing. I’m in possession.”

“But everything you see is ours—these boxes, and clothes, and linen even.”

“Very sorry, ma’am,” said the man; “but you mustn’t touch ’em. They all belong to me.”

Mrs. Cruddle uttered a cry of despair, and threw herself upon the reclining form of Miss Peers. Little Alfy heard the noise, and came in, joining his screams to the confusion, as he clung to his mother. The *tableau* of horror—helpless, crushing horror—was complete.

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The straits to which the unfortunate ladies were reduced, how they could not even get a pocket-handkerchief, how they did not dare to write to Mr. Cruddle, and how he arrived on Saturday in the middle of it, will be detailed to anybody who passes the house at Ventnor, and may care to call. But Mrs. Cruddle is supposed to be cured. As violent remedies at times put a stop to long-standing diseases, this terrible adventure is supposed to have annihilated her marine propensities. At all events, she confidently told Miss Peers, on the evening of their return to the court in London, that “there was nothing like home after all.”

XIII.

THE QUEEN OF THE FÊTE.

I.—THE DAY BEFORE.

(To be read with liveliness.)

IF you're waking, call me early, mother, fine, or wet, or bleak;
 To-morrow is the happiest day of all the Ascot week;
 It is the Chiswick fête, mother, of flowers and people gay,
 And I'll be queen, if I may, mother; I'll be queen, if I may.

There's many a bright barège, they say, but none so bright as
 mine,

And whiter gloves, that have been cleaned, and smell of tur-
 pentine;

But none so nice as mine, I know, and so they all will say;
 And I'll be queen, if I may, mother; I'll be queen, if I may.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
 If you do not shout at my bedside, and give me a good shake;
 For I have got those gloves to trim, with blonde and ribbons
 gay,

And I'm to be queen, if I may, mother; I'm to be queen, if I
 may.

As I came home to-day, mother, whom think you I should meet,
 But Harry—looking at a cab, upset in Oxford-street;
 He thought of when we met, to learn the Polka of Miss Rae—
 But I'll be queen, if I may, mother; I'll be queen, if I may.

They say he wears mustachios, that my chosen he may be;
 They say he's left off raking, mother—what is that to me?
 I shall meet all the Fusiliers upon the Chiswick day;
 And I will be queen, if I may, mother; I will be queen, if I may.

The night cabs come and go, mother, with panes of mended glass,
 And all the things about us seem to clatter as they pass;
 The roads are dry and dusty: it will be a fine, fine day,
 And I'm to be queen, if I may, mother; I'm to be queen, if I may.

The weather-glass hung in the hall has turned to "fair" from
"showers,"

The seaweed crackles and feels dry, that's hanging 'midst the
flowers,

Vauxhall, too, is not open, so 'twill be a fine, fine day,
And I will be queen, if I may, mother; I will be queen, if I may.

So call me, if you're waking; call me, mother; from my rest—
The "Middle Horticultural" is sure to be the best.

Of all the three, this one will be the brightest, happiest day;
And I will be queen, if I may, mother; I will be queen, if I may.

2.—THE DAY AFTER.

(Slow, with sad expression.)

IF you're waking, call me early—call me early, mother dear;
The soaking rain of yesterday has spoilt my dress, I fear;
I've caught a shocking cold, mamma, so make a cup for me
Of what sly folks call blackthorn, and facetious grocers, tea.

I started forth in floss and flowers to have a pleasant day,
When all at once down came the wet, and hurried all away,
And now there's not a flower but is washed out by the rain:
I wonder if the colours, mother, will come round again?

I have been wild and wayward, but I am not wayward now;
I think of my allowance, and I am sure I don't know how
I shall make both ends meet. Papa will be so wild!
He says already, mother, I'm his most expensive child.

Just say to Harry a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
Perhaps I was cross, but then he knows it was so very wet;
Had it been fine—I cannot tell—he might have had my arm,
But the bad weather ruined all, and spoilt my toilet's charm.

I'll wear the dress again, mother—I do not care a pin—
Or, perhaps, 'twill do for Effie, but it must be taken in;
But do not let her see it yet—she's not so very green,
And will not take it until washed and ironed it has been.

So, if you're waking, call me, when the day begins to dawn;
I dread to look at my barège—it must be so forlorn;
We'll put in the rough-dried box; it may come out next year,
So, if you're waking, call me—call me early, mother dear.

XIV.

THE TRADITION OF "THE FOLLY" AT CLIFTON.

WE heard a story once of a respectable tradesman, somewhere in the country, who had an old horse that was accustomed to go round and round in a mill for the purpose of grinding some article or another used in his business; in fact, the animal never did anything else. But one day his master took it into his head to attend some neighbouring races with his family, and Dobbin was accordingly brought from the mill and promoted to the four-wheeled chaise, being his first appearance in that character for many years. But such was the habit he had acquired in the mill, that the minute his master gave the customary expression of a desire to start, the horse turned short round, and, falling into his usual routine, described a circle with the chaise, and then another, and another: just like one of Mr. Cooke's rapid act steeds at a circus, when the gentleman in flesh all-overs is making up his mind to jump over the piece of striped stair-drugget: until his owner, finding that it was of no use trying to make him go in any other manner, gave up the excursion in despair.

But you will say, "What has all this to do with 'The Folly' at Clifton?" Just this: that the labours of a periodical writer may be in some measure compared to those of the mill-horse mentioned above; and that if he keeps going on too long without diversion, he will fall into the same jog-trot style, and never be able to get out of it. And so, finding that our ideas were, so to speak, getting perfectly mouldy from want of change, we resolved upon making a rash start, and going we scarcely knew whither, but with a determination not to leave our address in London. We invested sixpence in the purchase of a *Bradshaw*, and tried the ancient divining process of pricking the leaves with a pin. It opened at the *Great Western*, which has three pages all to itself; so, cramming a few things into a curtailed carpet-bag of so miraculous a nature that it is never so full but you can stow something else into it, we rose with the lark—or rather the ragged bird who hangs outside the second-floor window of the next house, and does duty for one—and started for Bristol.

A bell—a squeal—and we are off. Deep London cuttings, and a distant view of Kensal Green; the Hanwell Viaduct, with its rich pastures below; the grey profile of Windsor Castle on the left, and then the Slough Station, where all the up-and-down lines appear to cross, and twist, and tie themselves into knots, and yet seldom bring about a collision. On again! Maidenhead is passed, and the fair woods of Clifden, glorious in the noontide heat, and the springs where the Windsor and Eton people have such pleasant pic-nics. Then a long, long cutting, where you see nothing for miles but a bank; then Reading gaol—ruins and churches flying by, or rather, we are; rich plains and distant headlands, with the diminished Thames creeping through the green pastures here and there, until we are at Swindon, where the noble refreshment-rooms, and the pretty girls who attend them, are as much worth seeing as anything else upon the line, and well deserve the ten minutes' grace allowed to hungry travellers. By the way, there were prettier girls once at Wolverton, but they have flown. We suppose they have been married off.

On arriving at the noble terminus at Bristol, which puts one in mind of Westminster Hall compressed, we climbed an attendant omnibus bound for Clifton. The flies attached to the railway form the most ludicrous collection of those vehicular insects ever known, being of all possible shapes and dimensions; but looking to the extraordinary hills they contrive to climb, they approach nearer to the common fly in their nature than any others; for we are convinced, if need were, they would go up the wall of a house. We wound through a lot of old streets, bounded by old houses, amongst which we will particularise the White Hart Inn: just such a house as you could fancy flung back the sunlight from its lozenged casements in Chepe in the olden time, whilst the 'prentices played at buckler below. Then we crossed a bridge over the Avon, which is here a dock, and got upon the quays. This part of the city is exceedingly like an English translation of Havre, with the exception that we miss the cockatoos, Java sparrows, shells, and monkeys, with which the latter place abounds.

After toiling up a succession of hills—dusty, shadowless, and baking—until we began to entertain doubts as to whether we were not at once going to the moon, we were deposited at an hotel at Clifton, and soon started off *à pied* to see the chief lion. This is St. Vincent's Rock—a cross-breed between the Drachenfels on the Rhine, and Windmill Hill at Gravesend,

so renowned for their separate Barons, Siegfried and Nathan. It is certainly very beautiful; but our first impressions of the Avon were not favourable, its appearance being that of dirty pea-soup. It was low water, to be sure: when the tide is in there is a vast difference, but still the colour is the same. The scenery around is most lovely; it is a portion of the Rhine seen through the wrong end of a telescope, or rather a glass of very diminishing power. Far away, over the hills, you can trace the Severn, and beyond this the view is bounded by the blue Welsh mountains; whilst inland there are a number of equally charming prospects, although of a different nature. On the opposite banks are beautiful woods, with cottages for making tea, which are always thronged with visitors, chiefly of the working classes, and a fine pure atmosphere it is for them to escape into, from the confined air of Bristol. Their great amusement is swinging, six or seven of these machines being always in motion; and the white dresses of the girls, oscillating amongst the trees, have a curious effect.

If you look towards the sea, you will perceive, high up on the hill, a round tower; and if you ask any native of the place what it is, he will tell you it is called "The Folly." Why it is so named we are going to tell you, for of course there is a tradition attached to it. A tower without a tradition would be a public building without a public discontent at its design—a cab without a broken-kneed horse—a fancy ball without a King Charles or a Rochester—a burlesque without a joke upon "cut your stick"—a number of *Punch* without one of Mr. Leech's pretty girls—a list of new books without one from Mr. Trollope, or Mrs. Gaskell; or any other improbability. This, then, is the story:

In that romantic epoch which forms the middle age between the periods of "once upon a time" and "there was formerly a king"—the era of everything that was wonderful in the fairy chronicles—there was, one day in autumn, great feasting and revelry on a very fine estate, whose homestead rose where the tallest and oldest trees now cap the rocks opposite St. Vincent's—a leafy wig kindly furnished by nature to the bald limestone. They knew what revelry was in those days, when they really went in for it. The retainers were not bored with speeches about temperance and the wrongs of the poor man. They were all allowed to feast, and dance, and tipple, and get wonderfully drunk just as they pleased; and on this particular day they did so with a vengeance, for it was a very joyful occa-

sion. The lady of the house had presented her liege lord with a little son and heir, after he had waited several years for the arrival of the small stranger; and so, in his joy, he presented all his household with a little sun and air as well, giving them a grand banquet on his lawn, and extending his invitations to everybody round about the country who chose to come. And a rare feast they made of it. They roasted a dozen oxen entire; and tapped more barrels of beer than all the horses of all the brewers in England could have drawn, had they kindly lent them for the occasion; and after they had danced with the girls, and flustered them with such ringing kisses that the very woods echoed again; and pitched about the plates and drinking-mugs so recklessly that, had they been hired of a professed lender of rout glass and china, a whole year's income would not have covered the breakages. But luckily all the plates were wooden platters, and the mugs black leather jacks, so that they could have been kicked into the last quarter of the next moon without injury. In fact, the girls' hearts were the only things there that might have been ticketed "with care;" and several of these, the chronicles say, were broken outright that day.

People who are clever in legendary lore find out that many traditions bear a wonderful analogy to one another. Arabia, Germany, France, and England, all lay claim to the same stories; and the Sultana Scheherazade, M. Grimm, the Countess d'Anois, and the Dowager Bunch were evidently originally all of one family, but were driven by circumstances to settle in different parts of the world. And so we did not wonder at the opening event in the story being like a circumstance in the life of "The Sleeping Beauty"—the unfortunate omission of somebody who expected to have been invited to the birthday festivities. This is, however, not so improbable, for we believe there never was a large party given yet but a similar mistake occurred.

However, although in the present case it was not a fairy, it was somebody equally wonderful—no less a person than an astrologer—one of those gentlemen who at the present time live in back garrets in Paternoster-row and write almanacks, but who formerly poked about in caves and hovels, and wore old dressing-gowns covered with red tinsel copies of the signs on the show-bottles of chemists and druggists and cheap doctors, and studied enormous ledgers in a similar language, as difficult for common eyes to read as the cypher on a young

lady's note paper. He was not asked, because they knew he was a wizard; and they thought that if any of them inadvertently offended him he would change the roast beef they were eating to crooked pins and tin-tacks, or carry them up on the stable brooms to indefinite heights above the level of the Avon, and then let them fall on the rocks. In fact, they trusted to his not hearing anything about it.

But they forgot the party was in the country, and that in the country, then as now, everybody was sure to know what was taking place. The astrologer, who was known as the Wizard of the Sou'-West, heard of it; and as he had not received an invitation, he came without. Nobody dared oppose him; he stalked through the lines of tables, and went to the end one, at which the lord of the estate, and a few exclusive friends who would have been allowed silver forks at the present day, were seated. And then, before the host could speak, he drew forth a scroll, and read as follows :

“Twenty times shall Avon's tide
 In chains of glist'ning ice be tied :
 Twenty times the woods of Leigh,
 Shall wave their branches merrily ;
 In spring burst forth in mantle gay
 And dance in summer's scorching ray ;
 Twenty times shall autumn's frown
 Wither all their green to brown,
 And still the child of yesterday
 Shall laugh the happy hours away.
 That period past, another sun
 Shall not his annual circle run
 Before a *silent, secret* foe
 Shall strike the boy a deadly blow.
 Such—and sure—his fate shall be :
 Seek not to change his destiny.”

And having delivered himself of this prediction, he gave the scroll to the host, and made a bow, as though he had been presenting an address ; but, not waiting for any “gracious answer,” stalked proudly back again to where he came from, the precise locality of which spot we cannot ascertain. The common people at the lower end of the table, thinking it was a speech, applauded lustily, without understanding it a bit, as is their wont. The lord looked very much put out, but it would not do to be “slow” on such a day before his guests; so he called for “Some more wine, ho!” and having drunk himself into utter forgetfulness of everything, determined, after the manner of many married gentlemen in similar domestic positions, to

make a night of it, which process consisted in not allowing there to be any night at all.

But he thought of it, the first thing on waking in the morning, or rather the afternoon, of the next day; and when his lady was sufficiently recovered to bear it, he told her; and although they both agreed it was all nothing, and everybody must be daft to listen to the ravings of an impostor, they thought a good deal about it nevertheless.

* * * * *

“Twenty years are supposed to have elapsed between the first and second parts,” as the playbills say; and the heir had become the realisation of a novelist’s and dramatic hero. He was tall, handsome, and clever. He would have fought any odds of villains, had he seen just occasion. In the sports of the field and forest nobody could surpass him; and in winning the favour of any fair one he chose to pay his court to, he distanced all his competitors; indeed, he finished by gaining the love of the most beautiful and charming girl in all the south of England. But, as the period of his majority arrived, the father and mother recollected the prediction, and got very nervous; and, after much curtain debate, they agreed the best plan would be to build him up in a tower, all alone by himself, until the fatal period had passed. The matter was settled, and a cunning architect was sent for, who ran up the building in a space of time that would have thunderstruck even the Bayswater and Park Village builders, especially if they had known it would have lasted for centuries. The young Lord of Clifton did not altogether much approve of his solitary confinement, more especially as he had been guilty of no crime; but the parents were imperative, and so, as soon as his twentieth birthday arrived, he went to the tower, which they had fitted up very comfortably, with as many missals as they could collect, to beguile the time, and every sort of preserve, and potted meats, and bottled drinks that the age knew how to prepare. He was to wait entirely on himself; not a servant, not a human being was to be his companion; everything he wanted was to be pulled up by a cord to a high window, and the lord himself, with his most trustworthy followers, encamped round the building.

He found it rather dull at first, for he was naturally fond of company; but by little and little he got used to it, and he invented a species of telegraph, by which he could converse with his friends—and one especially, across the river—so that the time did not hang quite so heavily. Even at an amateur per-

formance there is a pitch when you get beyond yawning, with nothing to divert you but the wonderful odd people, and they are always worth a visit to look at any day. Well, the winter went away, the woods became green once more in the spring, and the tangled wild flowers spangled them in the summer. Then their leaves began to rustle, and the days got short and chilly, and the prisoner, at the first cold breath, not deterred by economical motives of any kind, thought that it was time to begin fires, and hauled his fagots up accordingly.

The term of his solitude at length came to an end, and one bright, sharp, autumnal morning all the family assembled to conduct him home. But, for a wonder, they did not see him at his usual place at the window to meet them. They shouted and blew their horns, but all to no effect; and at last got a ladder, and the father himself ascended and climbed through the loophole; but his cry of grief soon brought the rest up after him. They thronged up the ladder as though they had been a besieging party at modern Astley's, and entered the room, where they found their master lying prostrate on the bed of his son, convulsed with mental agony. A single glance assured them that the boy was dead.

One or two of the servants lifted the Lord of Clifton from the body, as another turned down the coverlid to discover the cause of the fatal occurrence. And there, coiled upon the young heir's breast, with its head resting on a livid spot, they found a poisonous viper, who had evidently crept out of one of the fagots, roused from torpor by the warmth of the chamber. In spite of all the precautions, the astrologer's prediction had been fulfilled.

This, then, is the story of "The Folly." We cannot vouch for its severe authenticity; in fact, if we were driven hard by a strong-minded inquirer, we might confess that we don't believe a word of it. But whilst such marvellous impossibilities are associated with every old wall and tumble-down tower on the Rhine, and holiday tourists really think it absolutely necessary to get them up, and become as enthusiastic about them as a bottle of steam-boat Moselle will always make them, we don't see why our own ruins should not enjoy an equal share of the romantic visitors' sentimental reveries; and therefore we recommend all who are apt to be taken so, to go to Clifton, and once more people the neighbourhood with the personages of our story. The excursion is worth all the trouble.

XV.

NARRATIVE OF AN EXPEDITION TO THE END OF
BIRKENHEAD, 1846.

THERE is a delicious feeling of approaching enterprise always experienced upon emerging from the terminus of a long railway into a strange town. The utter uncertainty as to the direction you must take; the eager curiosity with which you approach the corner of every street, almost regarding it as you would do the green curtain of a theatre that will presently discover some new scene to you; the idea that all the shops, and houses, and people have sprung into existence that very moment, and that they had no being before you saw them, but have been conjured up to meet you—a somewhat conceited thought; the entirely different appearance of the place to what you had determined it ought to have been, in your own mind, before you saw it, and consequently the greater novelty,—all these things make a first visit to anywhere sufficiently exciting.

But when this feeling of strangeness lasts beyond the first impression, it is apt to get tiresome, and especially so to a Londoner, who can scarcely comprehend being in a large place that he does not know the minute anatomy of—at least in his own country. Abroad, he never ventures out, if an utter stranger, without a guide or a map; and, indeed, seldom desires to see more than the places whose *locale* is sufficiently conventional to be discovered without much difficulty, putting aside the chance of his not knowing the language indigenous to the country. But when he comes to a large place of which there is as yet no popular map, and whose outskirts are rising up in the night like Aladdin's palaces, quicker than even the aborigines can follow the names that indicate their sites, his case is somewhat perplexing.

Everybody has heard of Birkenhead—originally a little nucleus of life, which has been shooting out in all directions, like a crystal forming on the disc of a microscope, until its diameter has come to be a very fair walk for an appetite—on the Cheshire

side of the Mersey. It so happened that, a short time since, being at Liverpool, we determined upon paying a visit, before leaving for town by the half-past-four express, to a cousin, a young architect, located in the before-mentioned rising town; a follower of the large permanent encampment there setting up, with whom we had passed through all the constructive stages of infantile mud, Ramsgate sand, toy-shop bricks, dissected barns, little theatres, rabbit-hutches, and rustic verandahs, to those wilder castellated buildings of maturer age, which, in the spirit of true opposition as regards freedom, the French give to Spain, and we to the air. At last we parted. He took to building magazines in stories; we, to constructing stories in magazines; and when, after a long separation, we found we were at Liverpool, and that he, as his card informed us, was at "St. Michael's-terrace, Birkenhead," we determined to call upon him.

"Terrace"—it was a grand word: there would be little difficulty in finding it. "St. Michael's," too, sounded well. Had it been "Prospect-terrace," or "Albert-terrace," or "Brown's-terrace," we should have mistrusted it; but "St. Michael's-terrace" conjured up at once images of terraces known to the great world; of the terrace at Windsor Castle, when the band is playing, and the tall mustachios of the Life Guards are out for a stroll; of Connaught-terrace, wherein drawing-rooms light up so well, and cornets-à-pistons—sound so silvery amidst the wax-lights—pure patrician wax-lights, not Price doing duty for them—in the "Bridal Waltz," that one above all others for *deux temps, cinq temps*, or any time at all that could be invented by the most frantic professor; even of the terrace on the old Adelphi drop-scene, where the cavalier of the middle ages is supposed to be singing to his lady, who is, in turn, supposed to be listening to him inside the window; or of Westbourne-terrace, where there are some inmates who would have driven all the cavaliers of the middle ages into the wildest tomfooleries of chivalry, but the number of which we do not tell, for fear the public should flock to see them too eagerly. All these associations put us quite at rest about the practicability of readily finding out St. Michael's-terrace.

In the pride of our heart, having, in the language of the Neapolitan fisherman, "beheld how brightly broke the morning," we left St. George's Pier, Liverpool, on board the odd steamer which conveys anybody who "don't care twopence".

(paid for the journey) to Woodside, on the other shore of the Mersey, which is to Birkenhead what Bankside is to the Borough. The steamer was a curious affair. It had all sorts of strange decks and seats, and a rudder and wheel at either end, so that it could "go ahead" or take "half a turn astarn" with equal facility; and the engine was directed upon deck. Two iron bars kept oscillating from out the hatches, as if a gigantic metal lobster was imprisoned below, and these were his feelers; by them was the machinery governed. The journey occupied two or three minutes—literally no time, in the amusement derived from the panorama of docks, ships, buildings, and flashing water around us.

On landing at Woodside, we were too proud just at present to ask our way, so we followed the throng up what appeared to be the principal thoroughfare, and at last coming to a division of roads, thought it time to inquire after St. Michael's-terrace. To this end, we placed our faith in the intelligence of a contiguous baker, who, in return, "thought he knew the name, but couldn't exactly say whereabouts it was, not for a certainty, except that it wasn't within a goodish bit of his shop; but he reckoned the policeman opposite might know." With that irritable feeling always provoked by a person, who, upon being asked the way to anywhere, never puts you out of your misery at once, but, after keeping you in suspense for some time, at last confesses "he's a stranger in these parts," we left the shop somewhat discourteously, and attacked the policeman. The policeman's answer was frank and decisive; he had never heard of no such place at all; but added, that there was a map in the market, a little way off; and so we turned towards the market.

Birkenhead will, without doubt, some day be a great town; but at present it is rather suggestive than imposing. The grand thoroughfares are simply marked out by a kerb and a gutter; and marvellous traps are laid to catch foreign pedestrians, fashioned like that which Jack laid for the Cornish giant, by covering sticks over a deep hole, which let you fall into embryo areas and dust-holes. The sticks in this case are planks, and they tip up sideways like a beetle-trap when you tread on them. Everything is new; new door-steps, new slates, new shutters; and where there are no houses, they are preparing to build them. Deep foundations are dug here and there, and about, which form into ponds for the ducks to dabble in; ground is partitioned off, and traces of the old localities are

rapidly disappearing. Now and then, a bit of primeval hedge, black and stunted, stares up in amazement at the improvements around it; and a piece of old wall, that hemmed in some garden of the middle ages, finds itself in the centre of an intended square; but beyond this, there is little to recognise the former spot by.

We contrived to find the market-place, a nice building, by the way, resembling a railway terminus pulled out like a telescope, with fountains, and stalls, and edibles, and, we should suppose customers, only we could not have been there at the proper time to meet them. But there must have been people to buy things somewhere, because there were shops, with cloth caps at sixpence, and stout men's highlows in the windows; and even note-paper and envelopes. At the end of the market-place we found the map; it was, if we remember aright, a manuscript one, and the authorities had blockaded all approach to it with large forms and tables. But our situation was somewhat desperate. We were not to be stopped by trifles; and we climbed over all the obstacles until we got close enough to it. There were all sorts of names of existing and intended streets, but not the one we wanted; and getting down again at the peril of our neck, we vandyked along the central avenue, asking every stall-keeper on each side, and with the same ill luck. At last we were directed to apply at the Parish Office; and this appeared the best chance yet: it must be a strangely desolate place that rate-collectors did not know of it. But that knowledge, even here, was somewhat hazy; they certainly had heard of such a place, although they did not know at which point of Birkenhead it was situated; but they rather thought it was at the end of Grange-lane.

The end of Grange-lane! There was desolation in the very name. It told of dreary coppices and quags; of water-courses and lonely paths; of moated granges without even a Mariana to be aweary in them. Our spirits sank within us; but we thanked the gentlemen in the office for the sympathy they evinced in our tale of distress, and having had our route pointed out to us on another map, evidently the fellow to the one in the market-place, we set off again upon our weary pilgrimage. At the corner, a boy—the only one in sight—was standing on his head with his feet against the wall, apparently for lack of better employment. We gently knocked him over to ask if we were right, intending to give him a penny; but the acerbity

of his "Now then, you jest do that again, that's all!" stopped our mouth, and we went on until we saw the shop of John Power, a licensed victualler, invitingly open. We entered, and humbly made the old inquiry.

"Parthrick!" cried the individual we applied to, with a strong Hibernian accent.

"Sirr!" replied a hamper, in the corner of the shop.

"Which is Michael's staircase?" said the first speaker; at least we thought so, and we mildly suggested St. Michael's-terrace.

"Oh, your sowl, it's all the same, and he knows it, you'll see," continued the man. "Where is it?"

"Down by the hotel," answered the hamper; and then the lid rose, and a head appeared from it, and went on: "Keep right away from the door, and take a turning you'll see before you, and then anybody will tell you."

And this information being considered sufficient, the head went down again, and there was a noise as of packing bottles.

Whether the directions were wrong, or whether the position of our informer made the difference, we cannot tell. We only know that, after much more dispiriting wandering, in the absence of the Polar star to guide us, we described almost a circle, and found ourselves once more at the market. We were literally ashamed to ask again. We fancied that the policeman looked suspiciously at us; and the dealers eyed us as if we had been the Wandering Jew. At last, by the luckiest chance in the world, we saw a postman—a strong-minded, intelligent man, above equivocation—and he directed us as clearly as minute directions about places perfectly out of sight would allow him to do. We followed his plan; and, after passing rows of shell houses, and embryo chapels, and crossing perilous chasms, and limping over roads of broken crockery, and angular bits of granite with all their sharp sides uppermost, which made the walk as pleasant as it would have been along a wall with bottles on the top, we at length arrived, footsore and weary, at a row of houses they told us was St. Michael's-terrace, for no name had been put up; neither were there any numbers, and all the doors were alike. Morgiana and her chalk could have bothered the whole of the forty thieves beyond all chance of identifying any of the abodes, better than in Bagdad.

We found out the house, however, and conceived the last

coup had been given to our misery by finding, also, that our cousin was not at home. Hearing that we were at Liverpool, he had gone over to Radley's to find us out, and—he had got the keys! So we wrote a few words, in bitterness of heart, on a card, as we should have done to put in a bottle, in some great extremity out at sea; and sorrowfully began to retrace our steps. Of course we missed our way again. We had noticed a sandstone wall, with a top made of uneven bits, set on their edges, but there were so many like this, that when we thought to be at Woodside, we found ourselves at Birkenhead Church; and now having, as we conceived, a right to rest, we strolled into the churchyard.

The ruins of the old Priory of Birkenhead—or *Byrkhed*, as it was once called—are behind the church, and we paid them a visit. There was something inexpressibly refreshing in arriving at this tranquil oasis in the wilderness of new glaring bricks, and glowing slates, and dusty scaffold-boards and poles, that surrounded it. In an instant its ivy-costumed walls shut out everything from the view; and nothing told of neighbouring life, except a few bright green-house plants gleaming through an old Gothic window-space from the garden of a *cottage ornée* adjoining. The door of the chapel was open, and we rested on one of the benches. The sun fell pleasantly upon the old red monuments of the cemetery, and pierced the evergreens of the ruins to flit on the turf below. All was calm and soothing; nothing breaking the quiet but the pattering of the autumnal leaves as they were driven into the chapel, and almost sounded like footsteps, as if its ghostly residents once more peopled it. There is a board at one of the gates leading to an inner ruin making known that "strangers are not permitted to go into this place on the Sabbath-day." It is difficult to conceive what feeling not in accordance with the day in question could be generated by a visit thereto. But there must be some other reason.

The pier-bell broke our day-dreams. We hurried down to the ferry and missed the boat; so that as the steamers do not leave Monk-ferry so frequently as they quit the other piers, we were obliged to go on to Woodside. Everywhere the spirit of enterprise and speculation is at work; on all sides hotels, streets, public buildings, and docks towards the river, are in progress of formation. The entire colony has the appearance of being certain to prove either the greatest hit or the grandest

failure on record, for those concerned in it. The part that struck us as most worthy of notice, is the Park, which we subsequently visited. We have nothing at all like it of the kind in London, nor, we should conceive, anywhere else. It is laid out and varied with consummate taste.

We had to wait again at Woodside until the half-hour came round, and when we got once more to Liverpool, we had still so much to do, that all notions of leaving that day were out of the question. Even our ten minutes at the ruins would not have aided us, if they had been recalled. And so we wish well to Birkenhead, and shall be delighted to read in the papers of its extension and improvement, of the spirit of its inhabitants and prosperity of its institutions; but we shall not venture into its wilds again, until all its streets and rows and terraces are marked in proper maps, and some of the dangers are abolished which at present threaten the enterprising visitor at every step. Until then, whatever relations we have to establish with its inhabitants shall be accomplished by post.

XVI.

MISS PERKAPPLE AND THE GOTHICS' BALL.

MISS PERKAPPLE was the oldest young lady we ever knew ; and we wager the world to a China orange—which are long odds, but which, at the same time, there is no possibility of settling, even if you lose, so they may always be laid with tranquillity—that if you had known her you would have thought the same. And we will even allow you to have lived amidst a legion of young old ladies, who had fallen back upon the calm of tracts and canaries, from the anxiety attendant upon man's insincerity.

Miss Perkapple's nose was sharp, and always got red in cold weather before anybody else's ; and she had very uncomfortable shoulders, with curious points and peaks about them unknown in popular social anatomy. She had also great evidence of collar-bone ; and wore spectacles, with glasses of a light bluish tint ; and she was accustomed to dress her hair in fanciful designs, the like of which had never been seen before—not even in the imaginative range that begins in the fashion books and terminates on the waxen brows of hairdressers' dummies. From these it may be conceived by intelligent minds that Miss Perkapple was also literary—in fact, a Prancer.

Not that all literary characters are like her—very far from it. For some have white rounded shoulders ; and some have finely chiseled profiles ; and in others, nothing of red is remarkable in the features except where it ought to be—glowing on the lips and faintly flushing on the cheeks. And there is one sweet lady whose face you could gaze upon for ever, and marvel not that, between the beauty of her floating glittering eyes and glossy braided hair and rosy mouth, and that of the sweet thoughts she can give utterance to, there should be some close analogy.

But these are not Miss Perkapple's clique. For when we state that, in addition to her other characteristics, she wore gloves, generally, without regard to temperature, with the tops

of the fingers cut off, through which the real ones protruded, as though they had thrust themselves out to see what was going on, like caddis-worms; and was reported to have a fine ankle, which at times she needlessly exhibited on a footstool; and was a beautiful figure—not a bit made up—principally from the want of any *appui* for crinoline to rest upon,—when we whisper all this, it will be seen at once that Miss Perkapple belonged to the high-purposed, rather than the popular, style of literature. So those of her class, acting on the same notion that framed the proverb, “The nearer the church the farther from Heaven,” addict themselves to subjects of domestic family interest, dependent in no small measure upon that holy state, which they have not the most remote chance of ever knowing anything about.

Perhaps Miss Perkapple was a trifle more romantic than the majority of her co-poetesses. She believed in Venice—in fact, she had a very great idea of Venice—and she had written a great many ballads to her gondolier. She had never been there; but she had a beautiful lithograph of the Grand Canal, from the title-page of a song; and a line engraving of the Piazza San Marco, cut from an Annual; and she had, moreover, read Cooper’s “Bravo;” and had once seen the “Bottle Imp” acted in London, with “its bright and glittering palaces;” so that she was quite qualified to address her gondolier whenever she chose. She was also much attached to Spain, and had written of Boleros and bull-fights; and spoke of Andalusian eyes, and the sparkling Guadalquiver, and rich Aragon blood; she never said much, however, about Spanish onions or Castile soap, they were too commercial to be romantic; and she touched but lightly upon Seville oranges. But she had a pair of castanets hung up in her room, which, by the way, she could not play; and in a corner of the *Fogthorpe Messenger* she had written various Spanish ballads, in which she called thirty-shilling sherry “her golden wine of Xeres,” and alluded to “the Cid,” and made some hazy mention of the “Alhambra;” though, from her knowledge of the latter place being somewhat vague, albeit she had never been there, she was very nearly putting her foot in it. But what she lacked in absolute acquaintance with Spain, she made up in enthusiasm.

It must not be presumed that Miss Perkapple always lived at Fogthorpe. She had friends in London, who occasionally asked her to stay with them, and took her about to literary

soirées at institutions, and pointed out to her the popular writers of the day; and although they sometimes made slight mistakes, and whispered that Mr. Thackeray was M. Louis Blanc, and called Mr. Charles Kean Mr. Robson, and pointed out Sir Edwin Landseer as Mr. Alfred Crowquill, the funny gentleman; yet, as she was not undeceived at the time, these things made Miss Perkapple equally happy. Indeed, she was determined to enjoy everything; for she had got over her Christmas literary labours, and written a seasonable tale, called "The Frost on the Window-pane," after having turned the *Every-day Book* inside out to find some new winter subject, all the yule logs, wassail bowls, mistletoes, plum-puddings, holly boughs, new-year's days, and snows having been long used up.

The friends of Miss Perkapple were most respectable tailors. Not common tailors, understand; there was no shop with little wax boys at the door, and remarkable ready-made waistcoats labelled "The Thing!" in the window. They did not throw books into railway omnibuses, nor advertise poetically, nor publish small works of fiction pertaining to their calling; such as "The Walhalla of Waistcoats," or "The Paletot Palace," or "The Kingdom of Kerseymere." No. They had a quiet window with a wire gauze blind, on which their name alone appeared; and sometimes you would see a single pair of trousers—generally of a noisy check pattern—hanging over the blind aforesaid; and if you went in, there was Mr. Striggs, the principal, working problems on rolls of cloth with French chalk, and mighty scissors that looked more fitted to cut off the heads of pantaloons in a pantomime than to cut out their legs on a shop-board. There was a private entrance in the passage, too, fitted up with one of those irritable, snappish little brass knockers which always flourish on inner doors; and if you chanced to be inside when the postman attacked it from without, the sharp percussion would well-nigh make your heart leap up to your mouth—only such a start is anatomically impossible. We have hinted that the Striggses did all they could to render Miss Perkapple's visits agreeable; and they never made her more happy than when they announced to her their intention of taking her to the Gothics' Ball, which was a very gay ten-and-sixpenny affair at the Hanover-square Rooms, subject to such proper regulations as kept its visitors in the sphere of its conductors. For, as Paris had its Longchamps, so has London—or recently had—its Gothics; either being the fête of

intelligent costumiers to exhibit those dresses which they wish to render most popular in the ensuing season.

The choosing of a wedding gown was not a matter of more difficulty than the choice of a costume was to Miss Perkapple when she decided to go. She wished to make a hit; she felt it due to her literary reputation to do so; albeit the *Fogthorpe Messenger* was not extensively read in town. And first she thought of going as the Comic Muse, but there was nothing in the dress marked enough; and she did not like the notion of being obliged to lean against a column, with a mask in her hand, all the evening, to support the character; for, although there were two columns under the royal box well adapted for such a purpose, yet the attitude, however appropriate, might become monotonous after a time. So Thalia was discarded.

Miss Perkapple next thought of Sappho; but being somewhat fluttered at a few traditionary stories respecting the fair Lesbian, she decided it would not be proper: more especially as the common world will not always look at things in an artistic spirit; and as an artistic spirit, like charity, will cover any amount of impropriety, this is unfortunate. Then she thought of going *poudrée*, after some of the sketches from the Queen's ball in the *Illustrated News*; but, although a white wig sets off a pretty face, it is fearfully trying to even one of ordinary mould; and spectacles of light blue tint don't improve the general effect. Her glass hinted this to Miss Perkapple very mildly, and the powder was abjured.

She ran over a variety of other costumes, including the cheap and popular one of the plaid scarf and Scotch bonnet, to typify any Highland lassie in general; the favourite Plantagenet tunic of pink cotton velvet trimmed with white rabbit skin; the Marquise, with the habit and whip. She knew that with a two-shilling tambourine an Esmeralda could be got up at a small expense, but her hair was not long enough to plait down her back; it would only make two little horns, and she mistrusted false tails. It would be so awkward if one was to come off! At last she remembered that her pinksatin dress might be turned to good account. It was a little *passé* to be sure, but deep flounces of black lace would hide its weak points, and she could go as a Spanish girl. She could also "support the character"—a conventional notion connected with fancy balls—with great effect; and quote her own Spanish poetry. How very nice!

The evening came at last, and Mr. Striggs, in tight red legs and pointed shoes; and Mr. J. Striggs, as a white mousquetaire; and Miss Striggs, after the Marie Antoinette of Madame Tussaud; together with Miss Perkapple, as the Cachucha, all got into a coach, followed by Mr. Spong, who paid attentions to Miss Striggs, and went all alone by himself in a Hansom's cab as a Crusader. With a beating heart she gave her ticket to the George the Second nobleman at the door, and they then went up-stairs and entered the room.

"What enchantment!" said Miss Striggs, as the gay scene broke upon them. "I scarcely know whether I am on my head or my heels."

Miss Perkapple blushed deeply as she thought upon the terrible effect one of those positions might produce. But she replied, "How gorgeously brilliant! Don't speak to me."

And hereon Miss Perkapple fell into a poetic reverie, and thought of something for the *Fogthorpe Messenger*, beginning

"I pace the gay and glittering scene,
And feel thou art not there;"

and then she ran over, mentally, "queen, green," "between, mien"—that was good—"my altered mien:" having got which rhyme, she proceeded to build the line up to it, which is a safe plan in writing poetry—proceeding

"And shudder at my altered mien;"

and was going to finish with "and look of blank despair," when Mr. Striggs hoped she would stand up in a quadrille with him, just then forming. So she left the "Lines to ——" for a little while, and took her place.

The programme of the evening's dances was printed on a card, with places to pencil down the engagements. Perhaps it carried out the name of the ball better than any other of its components; for there were "Spanish dances," and "country dances," in the middle of the evening; and "polka quadrilles," and a "Cellarius waltz," and other Terpsichorean vagaries, which savour more of the dancing academy than the drawing-room. And some of the company bowed to their partners, and to the corners, when they began; and others, in the polka, did fandango figures, and launched into wild intricacies and atti-

tudes. But there were only two polkas down on the card; for the Gothics preferred the good old steady quadrille. Their notions of the *valse à deux temps* were limited; and the Post-horn Galop was beyond them altogether. One or two graceless *débardeurs*, who had been used to faster things, expressed audible disapprobation at the arrangements. But when one of the stewards came up, and intimated his astonishment at their vulgarity, their discontent was soon knocked on the head, and the Gothics immediately looked on the *débardeurs* with much contempt—their notions of them being very indistinct, but rather tending to the belief that they were foreigners who had come in their shirt-sleeves.

To the Spanish dance Miss Perkapple looked anxiously forward. She was always very great in it; and as most old young ladies are indefatigable dancers, she calculated upon making an effect in her Cachucha costume; and when Mr. Striggs introduced her to a Spanish nobleman, who she learned was Don Cesar de Bazan, a thrill passed through her frame. She took his arm, and they wandered down stairs for refreshment.

“Have you travelled this last autumn?” asked Miss Perkapple, with her most insinuating tones.

“I was from London two months,” replied Don Cesar.

“In sunny Spain?” inquired the lady, softly, as she looked at the cavalier from his plumed hat to his boots. “Seville?”

“No; Rosherville,” answered the Don.

Miss Perkapple, fortunately for her feelings, did not know where Rosherville was; and she would not show that she was ignorant. So she played with her coffee, lifting spoonfuls out of her cup to bale them in again.

“Your dress is charming,” continued the lady; “so tasteful, so exact! Where did it come from?” And Miss Perkapple concluded that the sun of Madrid had gleamed upon it.

“It is from Nathan’s,” replied De Bazan. Miss Perkapple did not know in what department of Spain the *locale* was situated. “Your costume is also most characteristic,” continued her companion, who had learned what it was from the pictures of Duvernay.

“I am glad you like it,” answered Miss Perkapple; “a simple thing, but correct in detail.” And she advanced her foot a little way beyond the lowest lace flounce. “But I adore everything Spanish—don’t you? Its eyes and mantillas——”

“Its onions and liquorice,” said the Don.

“ Playful fellow !” thought Miss Perkapple. “ What a nice sense of the ludicrous he possesses ! How cleverly he banters ! May I trouble you to put my cup down ?” she added, aloud.

Don Cesar rose, and did as he was requested with infinite grace. Miss Perkapple was enchanted, and thought she had never before seen so efficient a stem for the tendrils of her young heart to cling to. His figure, his dark moustache, his air altogether, were perfect. “ Can it be possible that I love again ?” she thought. And then she sighed as she recollected the faithless editor of the *Fogthorpe Messenger*, who had printed all her poetry in the top left-hand corner of the last page, which he must have seen was addressed to himself ; and all the time was courting the doctor’s daughter, whom he ultimately married.

The Spanish dance was performed, and Miss Perkapple’s share in its mazes was unequalled. Nobody else could come up to the spirit of her attitudes ; she bounded forward in the true Andalusian fashion, and swung round her vis-à-vis, and beat audible time with her feet to call attention to them, and in the waltz poussette was especially great, turning her head alternately to the right and left as she went round ; in fact, as a coarse-minded Polka-nobleman observed, who was looking on, she was all legs and wings, like an untrussed chicken. But the anti-confidential style is that which old young ladies greatly incline to, and very different to the present acknowledged one ; which, we take to be, figures in tolerable approximation ; heads over each other’s right shoulder ; your left arm extended well out from the side as the hand sustains your partner’s right, and keeps it almost on a level with the top button of your waistcoat ; her left hand over your shoulder ; a well-kept short deux-temps step, and then—go ahead ! But the Gothics don’t try that yet.

Supper came ; and under the influence of the champagne, and lights, and feathers, and spangles, Miss Perkapple believed in all the fairy tales she had ever read ; and she established a great flirtation with Don Cesar de Bazan, who engaged himself to her for all kinds of dances. For she was entertaining in her conversation, and the Don was at the same time somewhat overcome by her flattering speeches. And she introduced him to Miss Striggs, whilst she danced with the Crusader lover, and all went merry as a marriage-bell—if that announcement of the addition of two more victims to a popular delusion can

be considered so. But though she was anxious to get the Don to dance the last quadrille on the programme with her, she could not prevail on him to stay. He must go, he said; he had business, great business of importance to transact before he retired to rest, and must tear himself away. Miss Perkapple admired him more than ever; what could he be? An attaché? or perhaps a literary gentleman on a newspaper, and that a London one!

The time for parting arrived; and when Don Cesar had wished her adieu, Miss Perkapple enjoyed the revelry no more. She went up to the royal box, and gazing on the festive triflers below, thought how fleeting was happiness, and quoted some of Medora's lines to herself, until the last dance on the card arrived—the British Navy Quadrille—and the Striggsses prepared to depart. Shawls were recovered, coaches called, and, in the cold grey of morning, amidst a mob of early risers who were loitering round the door to watch the company out, they drove away. Miss Perkapple thought but of one subject—the partner of the evening; and, with her eyes closed, pretended to be asleep as she conjured up his image before her. But she was aroused from her reverie by a laugh from Mr. Striggs, and a cheer in the streets, as if from boys, which somewhat startled her. Looking from the windows, a spectacle met her own pair that well-nigh brought on a fit of hysterics. They were in a West-end thoroughfare; and there, in front of a shop—a common normal grocer's shop—was Don Cesar de Bazan, as he appeared an hour previously, taking down the shutters to the delight of a crowd of boys on the pavement, who were madly dancing about him. Some unprovoked assault upon his cloak caused him to turn sharply round as the hackney-coach passed, and Miss Perkapple saw that he had only one moustache! The other had been danced off in the last polka, and was now lying on the floor of the Hanover-square Rooms; for he had trusted to composition instead of springs, which latter had set him so sneezing that he had well-nigh blown his head off before he came. As he turned, his eye caught Miss Perkapple's. Despite the cold air of morning he blushed crimson, and shot the shutter he held down a grating under the window with a precipitancy that looked as if he would have given worlds to have gone down after it; after which he rushed into the shop and disappeared behind a monster coffee-grinder, but whether he

merely hid for the moment, or committed suicide by throwing himself into it, remained a mystery.

The spell had been too rudely broken, and Miss Perkapple saw that the secret of his anxiety to "leave the halls of dazzling light" was fully explained. She suppressed the cry that rose to her lips as well as she was able, and pulling her shawl over her head, at the great peril of her Cachucha comb, and the—shall we say it!—and the back plait attached to it, was alone in her misery. For Mr. Striggs had kindly gone in the cab by himself to let Mr. Spong ride with the beloved object of his heart, and of course they were only occupied with one another; and Mr. J. Striggs's white mousquetaire costume was too small for him, so that he had been in an ill temper all the evening, and scarcely spoke to anybody, and therefore our heroine felt as only old young ladies can feel under such circumstances.

The discovery was cruel! Had she seen him reeling from the contiguous posada—it was a gin-shop in common language—followed by his brawling companions, it would have been something; or, if he had attacked one of the bulls who were going by on their way to Smithfield, it would still have been in character; despite the cold, she would have waved her handkerchief from the window in passing recognition. But shutters! dreary things only used to close shops, and carry accidents of unromantic character upon: her very soul revolted from the association. To be sure, even that would have been nothing in Madrid; but in London that was quite another thing. For the glamour of distance—both of time and space—that makes poetic temperaments conceive Swiss girls and vivandières to be beautiful creations, and invests 'prentices of the middle ages with more ennobling attributes than those of the present time, had great sway over Miss Perkapple.

The blow was never recovered. The next day Miss Perkapple looked forlorn and deserted; and when she did look so it was to a remarkable extent. Her friends put it down to fatigue: but she alone knew whence the chill upon her heart arose. London had lost all its charms for her; the Cachucha dress became a souvenir of bygone happiness, as mad brides, in affecting stories, gaze upon the faded orange-blossoms that tell of brighter hours. She retired early to her room, and began some touching "Stanzas for Music," but her spirits

failed her, and, after another immature attempt at "The Spirit Weary: a Sonnet," she went to bed.

The day after that she left London. Her visit had a marked effect upon her writings. It is said that no author is worth half-a-crown a page until he has been in love or difficulties; and Miss Perkapple felt that for one bright evening in her life's gloom she had been the former. Hitherto she had, in the manner of her class, described hapless flirtations entirely from imagination—except that with the editor, which could scarcely be called one—creating her lovers on purpose to be deserted by them; but now her genius took a more decided turn. The *Fogthorpe Messenger* was, in consequence, a gainer thereby; and the Spanish ballads became a great feature in its columns, for they told so plaintively of wretched hopes and happier hours. Indeed, they are about to be collected for republication, by subscription, with a preface by Miss Perkapple, stating that "many of her friends—in this instance, she fears, too partial ones—have urged her to the venture." But she is at present undecided as to whether they shall be dedicated to "The Spanish Legion" or "The Memory of the Past."

XVII.

SWEETS AND BITTERS.

A BUFFO LYRIC.

It is decreed that man should lead
A life without alloy,
But from its cup, the draught should sup,
Of sorrow, mixed with joy.
And though some pleasures may o'erflow,
Without a chance of pain,
Too oft, alas! a shade of woe
Will follow in their train.
And should you question what we sing,
And doubt our moral trite,
Pray listen to the truths we bring,
And own we're in the right.

'Tis sweet into some fair one's ear
Your tale of love to pour ;
But rather awkward, when papa
Is listening at the door.
'Tis sweet to wander side by side,
The bright moon to behold ;
But not so pleasant, when you find
Next day you've both caught cold.
'Tis sweet to hear her lips confess
That marriage is her plan ;
But most distressing, when you find
That you are not the man.

'Tis sweet when some one sends a cheque
For debts long given o'er ;
But most annoying, when the bank
Has failed the day before.

'Tis sweet to get an Opera-box
For nothing in the spring ;
But not so pleasant, when you find
No great artiste will sing.

'Tis sweet when to America
From bailiffs you take flight ;
But not so pleasant, when you find
The packet sailed last night.

'Tis sweet to see the morning sun
In all his radiance bright ;
But not so pleasant, when it proves
You have sat up all night.

'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog bark—
At least so Byron said—
Sweet to be waken'd by the lark,
And called up from your bed ;
But not so pleasant, when the dog,
Barks day and night as well ;
Or when the lark's at your expense,
As pulling off the bell.

'Tis very sweet to some gay ball
Receiving an invite ;
But rather awkward, when you go,
And find it's the wrong night.

'Tis sweet to be pick'd out to take
Some beauties to the play ;
But very awkward, when you find
That you have got to pay.

'Tis sweet to buy some comic sheet,
For lots of fun to look ;
But very awkward, when you find
'Tis not our little book.

XVIII.

THE POLKAPHOBIA.

A LITTLE NEWS OF MR. LEDBURY CONNECTED WITH THE
POLKA, AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE YEAR 1844.

It is now a little more than twelve months since we last heard any news of our old acquaintance Mr. Titus Ledbury. His friends will be glad to hear that during this interval he has been well and happy; that his manners and general bearing in society are, if possible, more elegant than ever; and his graceful attitudes have greatly distinguished him in the salons of the Transislingtonian districts. At the same time, his mind has lost nothing of its well-poised intentions; albeit, as formerly, they do not altogether at times produce the exactly desired effect. But he is a good creature, and everybody is always happy to see him.

Of course, Mr. Ledbury was one of the first to learn the Polka. Like everybody else, as long as he could not dance it, he said it was very uninteresting, and would never keep its ground; but when he came to know it, he was most indomitable, and after supper, completely frénétique in its mazes, especially in the "chassé" and the "back step," upon which he rather prided himself. He has been known, at this period of the evening, to tire down three young ladies, and then ask to be introduced to a fourth—madly, wildly, desperately—even after she had confessed that she only knew it a little. And this, too, when he saw there was no chance of the tune coming to a conclusion, by reason of the cornet and piano, having numbed their feelings with sherry, and played on mechanically, with the dogged action of a culprit who anticipates much exercise on the treadmill. It is a merciful dispensation that the cornet can be played with the eyes shut, in common with many other Terpsichorean instruments. If it could not, polkas and cotillons would gradually vanish from the face of the drawing-room, to the fiendish delight of those manchons de société (muffs of society), who tell you that the aforesaid polkas and cotillons are "very strange kinds of dances, which they never wish their girls to join in."

Old Mr. Ledbury did not see much in the polka ; in fact, he had a dislike generally to what he termed "people kicking their heels about in outlandish fashions." But the instant Titus perceived that every one who wished to distinguish himself in society must learn the polka—not to mention the Valse à deux temps and Cellarius, which he had scarcely courage enough yet to attempt—he determined to conquer its difficulties. And to this end, he joined a class at a professor's who taught polkas night and day ; in whose house the violin never stopped, in whose first-floor windows the blinds were never drawn up. The professor was connected with the ballet at the theatres, and he used to bring one or two of the "pets" of that department to be partners on the occasion—pretty little girls, with glossy braided hair and bright eyes, who tripped about in the morning in blue check polka cloaks, and in the evening in pink tights and gauze petticoats—sylphs that people paid money to see ; peris whom men in white neckcloths and private boxes had looked at through binocular glasses. What happiness for Titus ! Under such tuition he improved rapidly. He went out everywhere, and polked all the evening ; at last, nothing could satisfy him but that his people must give a polka party themselves. There was a great deal to be said against this. Since his sister Emma's marriage, there had not been much gaiety at home ; and, besides, Emma had now a little baby, regarding whose appearance, in reply to Master Walter Ledbury's too minute inquiries, the most remarkable horticultural stories connected with silver spades and the vegetation of parsley had been promulgated ; a tiny, fair, velvet-cheeked doll, in whose face everybody found a different likeness. The other little Ledbury girls were not old enough to be brought out, and Mrs. Ledbury said she could not take all the trouble upon herself : but there was a greater obstacle than all this to contend with. The family had left Islington at the expiration of their lease, and taken a new house somewhere on the outskirts of the Regent's Park, in a freshly-made colony, which cabmen never could find out, but wandered about for hours over rudely gravelled roads, without lamps and policemen, and between skeleton houses, until, at break of day, they found themselves somewhere infringing upon Primrose Hill, at an elevation of a considerable number of feet above the level of Lord's cricket-ground. And, moreover, there was a clause in the leases of these houses, that no dancing could be allowed therein, under heavy forfeits, which threw aspersions on their

stability. But architectural improvement is daily progressing ; and economy of time and material being the great desiderata in all arts and sciences, particular attention is paid to this point. Houses are run up, like Aladdin's palace, in one night ; and the same ingenuity that could formerly overspread Vauxhall Gardens with a single ham, is put into fresh requisition to see how many acres of building-ground may be covered with the same number of bricks that were employed, in times gone by, for one family mansion.

All these facts were urged by Mr. Ledbury, senior ; but Titus did not give it up, for all that. He knew that his father was as insensible as a rock to his hints, but he also knew that the constant dropping of hints would at last have a softening effect ; and so it proved. He implored so earnestly, and impressed the fact so frequently upon his parents, that the landlord need never know anything about it, as at last to get their consent. And then he struck the iron while it was hot. He bought some engraved invitation note-paper with "Polka" in the corner ; drew up a list of friends ; and, lastly, got his mother to ask Miss Seymour to come and stay with them for the time being. Fanny Wilmer, his country friend, was also asked up from Clumpley, to which place the polka had not yet reached. Baby required all Emma's attention, and so she was left out of the question ; but her husband promised to come, and be Jack Johnson as heretofore, "by particular desire, and upon that occasion only." For having passed through that stage of feeling, during the time he was engaged, which rude people designate as "spooney," and the subsequent enchantment, after matrimony, during the premières illusions—in both which states a man is not fit company for anybody except one—he was now returning once more, as is the invariable rule, to a capital fellow.

The chief occupation of Titus before the ball was to teach Fanny Wilmer the polka. And to this end they practised all day long, whilst Miss Seymour kindly played the Annen and the opera editions until her fingers were as weary as their feet. They did the promenade, and the waltz, and the return, and the double polka on the square, and the chassé, and the whirl, turning round so fast and leaning back to such a degree, that they resembled a revolving V made of two human figures, like an animated initial letter. All this practising, however, had its desired end. Fanny Wilmer learnt the polka, and Titus was so charmed at the effect he was certain they would produce

together, that he had some vague notion of putting on a pair of red morocco boots with brass heels, that would click together, expressly for the occasion.

At last the night came. By dint of much previous instruction, everybody found the way to the house pretty well, except old Mrs. Hoddle, who came in a fly all the way from Islington, not believing in cabs, and missing the proper road, got benighted in St. John's Wood, which, in her imagination, she peopled with North American Indians, having some vague recollections of an Ioway encampment thereabouts. Jack assisted Titus in his duties as master of the ceremonies, for he knew almost everybody there; and then the festivities of the evening commenced. Old Mr. Ledbury gave himself up to his misery with great resignation. He intended, as heretofore, either to have visited a friend, or to have gone to bed; but, in the first case, everybody he knew lived too far off; and, in the second, his bedroom was turned out of window for the evening. The supper was laid in the dining-room, the door of which was locked; and the ices and cherry-water were dispensed in the back parlour, which Titus, from the presence of a few grave volumes, and some loose numbers of periodicals, called his "study."

They had a quadrille and then a waltz; then a quadrille, then a polka, and so on. Mr. Ledbury greatly distinguished himself, and was much admired. Nor was Jack Johnson less conspicuous. He had not regularly learned the polka, but he said it was merely a diluted edition of a Quartier Latin dance, for which he had sometimes been compelled to leave the Chaumière, and therefore he did not find it very difficult.

Of course there was, and there always is, a large proportion of the guests who did not dance the polka; but they stood round the room, and looked pleasant, which was all that was required of them. Nor were they, in this capacity of wall-flowers, without their value, for spectators are useful things in a party to inspirit the others; and the bare idea that you are doing something which somebody else cannot who is looking on, encourages you to perform unexpected marvels of Terpsichorean agility. Some people call this vanity, others human nature. However, the enthusiasm spread, and every polka was more energetic than the last, until the room trembled again.

It would have been well had this been the only sensation created. The servants had entered the dining-room, to make the last preparations for supper, when a wild scene of horror

presented itself, unparalleled even in the annals of the Lisbon and Guadaloupe earthquakes. Well might the landlord have prohibited dancing in his tenement. The ceiling had curved round, and was bulging into the room like an inverted arch, whilst, from its patera, the lamp was swinging recklessly, as though it had been an incense-burner in the hands of a priest. Every glass on the table, chattering its own music, was polking with its fellow, until it fell off the edge; a Crusader, in black-leaded plaster, had chassé'd from his bracket, and was lying piecemeal on the carpet; a bust of Shakspeare was nodding time to the tune as he prepared to follow its example; and there was not a barley-sugar ship or windmill which had not been jolted into fragments that left no trace of the original form. Well enough might the domestic supernumeraries engaged for the night have been scared. There was a momentary expectation of all the guests coming down to supper by a much quicker method than the staircase.

Terrible and general was the alarm when the remarkable state of the architectural affairs was promulgated. There was only one person happy, and that was old Mr. Ledbury. As soon as he saw his guests were frightened, he rubbed his hands and smiled, and promulgated the intelligence that the floor was about to fall in, with the same glee as he would have done the news of a favourable change in the ministry, or a rise in the railway shares, of which he was a large participator. Titus, who was stopped in the middle of a distinguished step, turned pale; Jack laughed; and Mrs. Ledbury hurried all her visitors down stairs with the most nervous eagerness, which gave them a pretty broad hint that they were to bolt their supper and go away. They took it very speedily.

This was Mr. Ledbury's first polka party, and his last. It certainly had created a sensation, but not the one he had anticipated. He determined, if he danced the polka again, to do so at the residences of other people; and old Mr. Ledbury, who got involved in a mild lawsuit in consequence, after many anathemas against outlandish dances and their followers, finally gravitated into a determination to leave his present abode, which never recovered its right angles; and for the future, next to the polka, to abhor all houses run up to be let in suburban neighbourhoods, which were as picturesque and fragile as those of the illuminated village carried at evening on the head of the ingenious Italian in quiet neighbourhoods.

XIX.

THE STRUGGLES OF TERPSICHORE.

WE have no very clear ideas respecting the comparative difference between the worldly prospects of the Muses at the present day and in those remote times before the invention of clairvoyance, nerves, railways, printing, and Puseyism, when people believed in the mythology. Our best notions of the manner in which they passed their lives are collected from the drop-scenes of theatres and the ceilings of royal palaces. From these authorities we learn that they held a perpetual *conversazione*: some playing on remarkable instruments, the like of which are not recognised even by the directors of the Ancient Concerts; others singing; others dancing; others reciting poetry or making speeches: but as all appear to be exhibiting at the same time, we opine that some degree of confusion must have characterised these *réunions*. As they had no listeners beyond themselves, and must have been perfectly acquainted with everything each other could do, the meetings in question must have been, without doubt, singularly "slow;" as dull, in fact, as an amateur *matinée musicale*, or a set obligatory annual family dinner-party.

We learn, however, one thing for certain from these pictures—the Muses were idle. There is nothing to show that they were going all through this display to earn a living.

But now, in these days of utter mercantile materiality, things have altered, and the Muses are compelled to work—nay, struggle—for a livelihood; they will do anything to avoid a union—we mean in the more modern acceptation of the word. Melpomene has had a hard fight for subsistence; and, being harshly made to assume a spangled dress under all circumstances, had thrown herself into the New River Head, when she was charitably taken out by the Shakspeare Humane Society, and carried into Sadler's Wells to be resuscitated. Thalia is a little better off, having married Momus, who is a man well to do, and so she allows her sister a trifle. Calliope travels with, or for, a show, and is constantly employed; and Euterpe

and Polyhymnia get good dividends from shares in the St. James's and St. Martin's Hall; or, not being proud, oscillate between Exeter Hall and Evans's—whichever pays best for the time. Clio is proprietress of a pictorial newspaper, finding history will only go down in that style; during the week she sells the catalogues at Madame Tussaud's. Erato picks up a precarious pound or two, now and then, by writing a libretto for an opera; and Urania has found an asylum in the observatory at Kew, as long as the British Association will support her. But of all, Terpsichore has worked the hardest; and to her fortunes a few years back we now turn.

She had supported herself creditably, if not in first-rate style, for some time in England. The whirling, maddening waltz had triumphed over the stately minuet, and the first set and Lancers had mercilessly trampled down "Sir Roger de Coverley," when, all on "a wild March morning," in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and forty-four, the Paris correspondent of the *Times* sent us word that a new dance was turning the heads, bodies, and heels of our neighbours, to the utter exclusion of all other topics, and that it was called the "Polka." We said, "Indeed!" and for a week thought no more about the matter; until, at the expiration of that time, the epidemic broke out in England, all at once, like a Cremorne firework, which begins with a small blue flame—a mere hint—and then suddenly flashes and sparkles in every direction, twirling all ways at the same time. What this all led to everybody knows. Pamphlets, magazine-papers, farces, songs, caricatures, all took the "Polka" for their theme; and then Terpsichore's run of luck commenced. Elderly people, whose dancing days ought to have been over a very long time indeed, were actually detected taking lessons: whilst young gentlemen, who did not yet know it, when they received invitations where the awful word appeared in the corner, "regretted a previous engagement compelled them to decline" the attention; and then registered a solemn vow upon their *Gibus* to learn the "Polka" forthwith. "Polka" academies of professors—rivals à l'outrance—collected people to dance in the middle of the day, and afforded opportunities for all kinds of pleasant ante-prandial frock-coat-and-*barège* flirtations; columns of advertisements deployed over the pages of the newspapers; and the "Polka" was even danced in public as a sight—a thing to pay money to see—from Carlotta and Cerito, in all the pride of beauty and

position, to their humble sister of the *carrefours* and race-courses, who demonstrated it upon a shutter, in the red serge tunic, trimmed with rabbit's fur, with leather boots *plus ou moins rougeâtres*, and the rattling brass heels, and the tarnished finery of the anomalous petticoat, for whatever the drum and Pandæan pipes could collect in the invalided decanter-stand.

These were great days for Terpsichore. She kept a carriage and drove in the Parks—that is to say, when she could find time. She visited the sea-side, and was even seen in Paris, after our season, floating about the Gardens of the Tuileries and Boulevards adjoining the *Chaussée d'Antin*, or beaming from the *avant-scènes* of the *Académie Royale*. She forgot Gravesend, or affected never to have known that there was such a place, but spoke of Wiesbaden. She had climbed the Alton Schloss, but repudiated Windmill Hill.

Knowing that it is far easier to establish luxuries hitherto unenjoyed than to put them down when once experienced, we somewhat trembled for her. We knew that the time would come, sooner or later, when everybody would have learned the "Polka:" when the simple, agreeable figure, alone now recognised, would supersede all the "promenades," the "chassés," and the toe-and-heel atrocities of the dancing academies and public balls: and we were right. The advertisements disappeared from the papers one by one; the *matinées* at the different rooms were discontinued. The terrible time *had* come, and everybody knew the "Polka!"

We were in a state of great uncertainty as to what our darling Muse would do next, when one evening we went to a party; and there, in the middle of the entertainments, a tune of novel measure and harmony suddenly arose from the band, and two couples—there were no more—went off hopping, and diving, and sliding about the room in a sort of dislocated waltz. We did not choose to demean ourselves by asking what it was that the guests suddenly crowded round to gaze at with such curiosity; but we soon heard that it was called the "Cellarius." We saw immediately the cause of its introduction. Terpsichore meant it to keep up the dancing excitement of the public and her own income. But we formed our opinion at the time, and future experience only strengthened it: none of the couples ever danced the "Cellarius" as though they loved it. They went through it with the air of feudal tenants performing some grave ceremony, by which they held their situations; or they

showed the bystanders that they desired no display, and yet felt that people were looking at them. There was none of the mad spirit of the waltz or polka in it. No silky perfumed curls ever swept across your very face; no panting *staccato* words could be breathlessly flirted into the delicate ear that almost touched the lips that uttered them, unnoticed by all but *the* one: there were none of those deliciously romping concussions, for which a smile or a laughing, gasping exclamation was the only punishment; none of those——Never mind, we leave the other *agrémens* to the imagination of the dancers.

Well, the "Cellarius," to speak in theatrical idiom, was comparatively a failure; and so it was backed up by the Valse à deux temps—a charming scuffling sort of exercise enough, but somewhat troublesome where only two desperate people danced it in a circle of two dozen, revolving on the old method. This, in its turn, was soon learned, and Terpsichore got desperate. What was to be done?

Again she flew to Paris; but this time it was on a professional errand—not on a pleasure-seeking sojourn. She insinuated herself into private society; there was nothing there. She plunged into public balls—the "Chaumière," "Mabille," and the "Prado d'Été:" decidedly there was nothing *there*. The Faubourg St. Germain and the Barrière du Mont Parnasse, each failed: the Quartier Latin was no more available than the Rue Royale. She promulgated whispers of wonderful dances—the "Mazurka," the "Frottesca," the "Napolitaine." No. In vain she told the readers of the *Family Herald* that these were danced by the highest circles in Paris. She did not appear to be believed. The carriage was put down for the hack cab; and that only on wet days. Gravesend was again recognised; Windmill Hill was not so despicable after all; and she had heard of a contiguous wild and savage place called Rosherville, yet haunted by a few forgotten mortals who did not know the "Polka." She went there: it was a fall, to be sure, but what was she to do?

At last came the Palace Costume Ball of 1845; and all the minuets that had slumbered for a century, like Sleeping Beauties, were awakened by the magic touch of royalty. Again Terpsichore's star was in the ascendant; for those whose education had long since been pronounced complete, found they did not even know how to bow and curtsy with proper effect. Her spirits revived, and advertisements once more appeared;

but the minuets came as comets: they illumined a certain sphere for a time, and then passed away and were forgotten. In vain professors offered to teach what they assured the world would be the *furore* of the season: in vain the theatres kept up the plot, and Weippert, Collinet, and Musard programmed the music—the real identical royal music! It was of no avail: Terpsichore found herself once more sunk to her former inactivity.

What she will do next we cannot tell. The civilised world has been pretty well ransacked for novel dances, which have proved failures; so that all hope is at an end in those quarters of the globe. Japan, however, we believe to be open; and there are yet *Almées* in the desert, according to Félicien David, although I never saw any there, when I have crossed it. Whether anything new can be procured from these resources we know not. If there can, it will be all the better for Terpsichore: if there cannot, we recommend her to cultivate the friendship of the Hindoo Nautch girls; from whose *répertoire* something may be brought out, without doubt very original, that may get up a sensation for an ensuing season.

XX.

A LEGENDARY CHARADE.

MY FIRST.

“ Now lithe and listen, little page,
And set the merlin down ;
Thy bonnet don, this message take,
And bear it to the town.

“ For there are drums and clarions loud,
And casques and pennons bright,
And my sweetheart, Sir Galafred,
Has come back from the fight.

“ Go, tell him, if he sees to-night
A cresset on the keep,
’Twill show him that my father’s eyes
Are closed in heavy sleep.

“ But if no light upon the wall
He marks to guide his track,
Then tell him not to come at all,
But speedily turn back.”

The lady’s page was not at all like those we meet in Russell-square,
With rows of buttons, beaver hat, and shining face, and short-cut hair ;
But wore long flowing chesnut curls, and velvet doublet—gold and green—
In fact, just such a page as now is only in the coulisses seen.
Alboni, in “ The Huguenots,” was like him, only not so slim,
For, truth to tell, the great contralto would have made a score of him.

Laughing-eyed and sunny-hearted,
Off the little page departed ;
But it was a summer’s day,
And he loitered on his way.

Now he lingered at the hostel, where the noisy troopers stayed,
Listening to the fearful stories of the forays they had made.

Next he met the miller's daughter, whom he chid despite her
charms,

For that she had thrown him over for some stalwart man-at-
arms.

But we know that lovers' tiffs *amoris integratio est*,
So they very soon made friends, and——never mind, we'll guess
the rest.

In this way so long he tarried, that the sun was sinking down,
Gilding vanes, and roofs, and spires, when he reached the
bustling town.

Knights and squires, spear and bow men,
Mail-clad guards and jerkined yeomen,
Minstrels clothed in Lincoln green,
Damsels decked in kirtle sheen,
So confused the little page,
Did his young eyes so engage,

That he quite forgot his charge, and told Sir Galafred to come
If he saw no watchlight gleaming from the lady's castled home.

MY SECOND.

O Hesperus! thou bringest all good things
Home to the weary: dinner's dainty cheer,
Or, in the house where stout Alboni sings,
The welcome stall to him who lists to hear.

Whate'er of mirth about our circle clings,
Whate'er our deux-temps waltzers hold most dear,
Are gathered round us at thy genial hour:
Thou bring'st the knight, too, to the lady's bower.

Perchance you think you've heard all this before,
Or something very like it? Never mind,
Ideas are not so teeming as of yore,
So be unto the theft a little kind.
I was about to say that day was o'er,
And not one ray of sunset left behind,
When brave Sir Galafred, to her amazement,
Just showed his face outside the lady's casement.

Quick and startled was the greeting
 At this unexpected meeting.
 "Fly!" she cried, "ere they have caught you!
 What sad chance has hither brought you?"
 "Give me one," the knight replied.
 "No—pray go!" the lady sighed.
 "Only one!" was still his prayer,
 As a voice cried, "Who goes there?"
 "Never mind the risk,
 I'll brave it:
 One is all I ask!"
 She gave it.

MY WHOLE.

The fields in sunny Normandy were in proud England hands,
 And Cherbourg bold and Harfleur old were smoking from her
 brands,
 And Caen had given up her stores—plate, gems, and velvet fine,
 And Tancarville was sent in strange captivity to pine.
 By smouldering homes the course was shown of Edward's armèd
 might,
 Until, on Cressy's green hill-side, they halted for the fight;
 And there, before the set of sun, they made a bloody fray,
 That few were they who 'scaped to tell the fortunes of that day.

King Edward from a windmill saw the chances of the field,
 And how his son, by numbers pressed, had got good cause to
 yield;
 But when they sent a messenger to beg his instant aid,
 The king still kept back his reserve, and this was all he said:
 "Go, tell my son, to him be all the honour of the fight,
 And bid him win his golden spurs, and wear them as a knight,
 So that his name be known to fame in future songs and tales,
 And bards shall praise my noble boy, young Edward, Prince of
 Wales!"

Then forth the mighty engines burst, outpouring death and fire,
 And first on battle-field was felt the angry cannon's ire.
 The lady's father marked its force, and when the fight was o'er,
 He pondered much upon its use, and then an oath he swore,

That once again on English ground he would no pleasure take
Until such arms, of lighter form, his armourer should make,
By which he might in better plight his castle watch and ward,
And from all flight with lover light his gentle daughter guard.

And thus was made the demi-haque, and arquebus-à-croc,
The musquet, haquebut, caliver, snap-haunce, and tricker-lock,
The hand-gun, fusil, carabine, wheel-lock, and esclopette,
And one from which Sir Galafred his death had well-nigh met;
For, blazing from an embrasure, as 'cross the chase he fled,
A shower of bullets rattled through the branches o'er his head
But he escaped to come again, and this time all was right,
Since, when he left, his lady-love was partner in his flight.

XXI.

LORD MAYOR'S DAY.

I DO not remember to have met with a matter-of-fact description of Lord Mayor's Day. Some years ago, the late Mr. Theodore Hook published a famous story called "The Splendid Annual," in which he depicted, as he only could have done it, the glory of the Lord Mayor when he took possession of his office, and the grandeur thereunto attached, ending with a capital account of the indignities he endured when he sank the mayor in the citizen at the conclusion of his reign. Every year the papers come out with long lists of the viands provided upon the occasion; the quantity of tureens of turtle, "each containing three pints;" the number of dishes of potatoes, "mashed and otherwise;" the bottles of "sherbet," which I take to be the *Guildhall* for "punch;" the plates of biscuits, and the removes of game; enough in themselves to have emptied all the West India ships, Irish fields, Botolph-lane warehouses, ovens, preserves, and shops generally, ever known or recognised. And they also tell us how the Lord Mayor went, and how he came back; how he was joined, on his return at the Obelisk in Fleet-street, by all the noble and distinguished personages invited to the banquet at Guildhall; and what were the speeches given. But they omit the commonplace details; and as this is something that is sought after, now-a-days, whether it relates to a visit to a pin-manufactory, a day in a coal-mine, or a dinner in the City, I venture to give a report: and I beg to state that this is intended more for the amusement of my friends in quiet country nooks and corners—who hear occasionally by a third day's paper of what is going on in our great world of London—than for those who know City dinners by heart, and can look back through a long vista of many years at the sparkling splendour of Guildhall, as on our retreat from Vauxhall we used to cast a glance at the Neptune at the end of the walk, ever spouting out amidst his jets and glories.

My earliest recollections of Lord Mayor's Day are connected with my scholarship at Merchant Taylors'. The school was once called "Merchant *Tailors'*;" but I remember, when instruction in writing was first introduced there, and we had copies to do, with the name of the establishment as our motto, that our esteemed head-master, "Bellamy" (for "Reverend" or "Mr." were terms alike unknown to us), altered the orthography. "How will you have 'Tailors' spelt, sir?" asked Mr. Clarke, who had come from the Blue-Coat School (if I remember aright) to teach us our pothooks and hangers. "With a *y*, most certainly," was the answer of the "Jack Gull;" for Bellamy (that I should live to write his name thus lightly, and so treat him without fear of an imposition! but he was a goodly creature and a great scholar, and will forgive me) had his name inscribed over the door of the schoolroom as "*Jac. Gul. Bellamy, B.D., Archididascolo,*" and from this abbreviation he took his cognomen amongst the boys. And so, we did not mind being called "snips" by opposing schools (and, mind you, we had great fights with Mercers' and St. Paul's thereanent, and pitched battles in Little St. Thomas Apostle and Great Knight-Rider-street), but we stuck to the *y*, and henceforth believed greatly in our school, and its motto: "*Parvæ res concordia crescunt,*" although ribald minds still told us that its true translation was, "Nine tailors make a man."

But I humbly beg pardon: all this time I am forgetting Lord Mayor's Day. It was to me a great holiday. I had some kind friends in Bridge-street, Blackfriars, who always invited me, on that festival, to join their party; and from their windows, over the little court that runs from the above-named thoroughfare into Bride-lane, I first beheld the pageant. I look back upon those meetings now with very great pleasure; enough, I hope, to excuse my dilating upon them in these few lines. None of the parties which, as a floating literary man upon town, I have since been thrown up with, have ever equalled them in unstrained fun and honest welcome. I can recal vividly the crowd in the street; the only parallel to which I ever saw was from the roof of Newgate previous to an execution; for a mob is not particular as to the object of its assembling. The visitors, and above all the girls, at the windows above; the laughter that the pieman caused when he was pushed about by the crowd; the hard time the applewoman had of it when she un-

advisedly ventured into the middle of the street, with the pertinacity of a half-price pit fruit-vendor; the impudent boy who had got on the lamp-post, and actually made faces at the policeman, knowing that he was beyond his power; the fortunate people, having possession of the door-step, looked down upon their fellows; and, above all, the lucky mob, whom it was the fashion in after times, before the misery of Europe put them at a discount, to call "the people," who had carried the obelisk by storm, and perched themselves upon every available ledge,—all these things, I say, I can recal, and wish I could look at them again with the same feelings of fresh enjoyment, before it was so constantly dunned, and hammered, and insisted on, and bawled into my ears that "purpose" was the end of all observation.

Well, the crowd jostled, and swayed, and quarrelled, and chaffed, and at last the procession started from the bridge. Its commencement was difficult to determine. You saw a flag waving about amidst an ocean of hats, and an active gentleman on horseback riding backwards and forwards to clear the way. Then the flag stopped, until more flags came up—from where goodness only knows—and waved about also. Then the sound of a distant band was heard, only the bass notes falling on the ear in that unsatisfactory strain that reaches you when a brass band is in the next street; and at last there did appear to be an actual movement. Large banners, that nearly blew the men over, preceded watermen, and "companies," and all sorts of bands played various tunes as they passed under the windows, until they were lost up Ludgate-hill, until at length came the "ancient knights." They were the lions of the show. I had long wondered at them from their "effigies" in a moving toy I had of the Lord Mayor's Show, which my good father had made for me when quite a little boy; and henceforth they were always the chief attraction. I can now picture their very style of armour, their scale surtouts and awe-inspiring helmets, which reckless spirits have since called brass "*blancmange* moulds;" the difficulty they had to sit upright; the impossibility it would have been for them to have stood a course, "in the name of Heaven, our Lady, and St. George," in lists. But they were very fine. And then came the carriages, so like other toys I bought at the fair, in a long box, where the coachman had a curly goose's feather in his hat, and the horses dazzled with Dutch metal; then came other bands, and the

huzzas, and the mob again. It was all very delightful; and nothing ever moved me so much, not even the procession in *The Jewess*, when I first saw it. And it was very proper too. Now I am writing this very paper in the depths of the country. A wood fire is flashing upon the wainscot panels of my vast bedroom, which are crackling, from time to time, with its heat. The air without is nipping, and frosty, and dead still. A fine old hound, who has chosen to domicile himself with me for the night, is lying on the rug, like a dead hare, dreaming fitfully of bygone chases; and nothing is heard but the wheezing turret-clock, that sounds as if it had not been oiled since the Reformation. It is impossible to conceive anything more opposite to a sympathy with civic festivity than this picture; but yet I look back to New Bridge-street and Lord Mayor's Day with the greatest gratification. I do not call the pageant "slow" or absurd. I only think if the spirit that would suppress it, with our other institutions, had been allowed to run wilful riot abroad, where would our homes and hearths have been at present? What would the *marchands* of Paris, from the Chaussée d'Antin to the Quartier Latin, not give to see any of their festivals of the middle ages progressing in the same unaltered, steady-going fashion as our own "Lord Mayor's Show?"

The procession over, I cared not what became of its constituents; and it was not until a few years ago that I ever had the chance of dining at Guildhall, and seeing what became of the principal part of them.

The ticket I received was wonderfully imposing; a whole sheet of Bristol board had apparently been used in its construction; and it was accompanied by a plan of all the plates at the table, my own being painted red, so that I knew at once where I was to sit. It did not say at what time the dinner would be ready, but informed me that nobody would be admitted after a certain hour; so that, from some hazy recollection of the procession taking in its distinguished guests at the obelisk about three o'clock, I thought four would be a proper hour to arrive at Guildhall. The ride thither was by no means the least striking part of the day's excitement. From Ludgate-hill to Gresham-street my cab ploughed its course through the densest mob of people I ever saw; and as they were all in the way, and had to be "Hi'd!" and sworn at, and policed therefrom, I do not believe any one ever received so many epithets, more or less complimentary, in half an hour, as

I did during that time. The windows were alive with heads—where the bodies thereunto belonging were crammed was impossible to guess—and not only the windows, but the balconies and copings, the tops of shop-fronts and parapets, were equally peopled; and this continued all the way to the doors of Guild-hall, where my ticket and hat were delivered up, and I entered the Hall.

The effect upon entering was very beautiful. The long lines of tables, sparkling with glass and plate, were striking in themselves; but they were comparatively nothing. The noble building itself, with its picturesque architecture outlined by dazzling gas jets; the brilliant star at the western window, and the enormous Prince of Wales's feather of spun glass, at the eastern, surmounting the trophy of armour; the helmets, banners, and breastplates hung round; the men-at-arms on their pedestals, in bright harness; the barons of beef on their pulpits; and, above all, Gog and Magog gazing, as they had gazed for centuries, on the banquet, carrying fearfully spiked weapons, which now-a-days nobody but Mr. W. H. Payne is allowed to use—and he only in a pantomime; all this formed a tableau really exciting: and, distant matters being considered, made one think there was no national conceit in the pride and glory of being an Englishman after all.

From the Hall the majority of the guests went on to the Council Chamber, where the presentations were to take place; and here there was amusement enough to be found in watching the toilets of the company. The gentlemen in their court-dresses and coloured gowns, were well enough: there was a grave municipal appearance about them that set off the scene wonderfully, nor could it have been possible to have seen so many good old honest intelligent heads together anywhere else. But we must run the risk of being considered for ever ungallant in saying that the dress of the ladies, with few exceptions, was in itself worth going to see. Their costumes were not poor—on the contrary, they were as magnificent as Genoa, Lyons, and Mechlin could make them. Neither were they old-fashioned: such would not have been altogether out of keeping. But they were singularly comical; the most heterogeneous colours, styles, and trimmings were all jumbled together: and the wonderful combinations of manufactures they wore in, and on, and round their heads, would require a list as long as the *Morning Post's* after a drawing-room to describe.

Caricatures of the *coiffures* of all the early Queens of France and England might have been detected, by a sharp eye, amongst the company; nay, one old lady had made up so carefully after Henry VIII., that, with whiskers and beard, she would have been wonderful. A large proportion had a great notion of a fluffy little feather stuck on the left side of their heads; and all preferred curls to bands when such were practicable—and curls of elaborate and unwonted nature and expanse. Amongst them, to be sure, were some lovely girls who would have put the West-end belles upon their mettle—faultless in dress and *tournure* as a presentation beauty—but they were overwhelmed by the dowagers.

There did not appear to be much to be seen here, for it was impossible to get near the dais, so I went back to the Hall, to my place at the table, and learnt, to my sorrow, that dinner would not take place before seven. But there was plenty to be amused at as the more distinguished guests arrived, and passed on to the Council Chamber through an avenue of gazers, being announced by name as they entered. This name, however, it was impossible to catch; every one, from the size of the place, ended in unintelligible reverberations. So that from “Lord Or-r-r-r!” “Mr. Baron Pr-r-r-r!” or “Captain Uls-s-s-s!” you made out what you conceived to be the most probable, and were contented accordingly. From time to time a brass band in the gallery played selections from operas; hungry gentlemen looked wistfully at the cold capons; and frantic officials, with white wands, ran about with messages and ordered the waiters. For myself, I confess to having settled quietly down on my form, and made myself as perfectly happy with my French roll and some excellent Madeira as any one could possibly have desired.

At length some trumpets announced the approach of the Lord Mayor; and his procession, including my dear old friend of childhood, with the large flower-pot-shaped muff upon his head, entered the Hall to a grand march. They came in long array down the steps, then round the end below Gog and Magog, along the southern side, and so up to their tables. This was really impressive; and, as the civic authorities, the judges, and serjeants, the trumpeters, and all the rest, marched round, one was tempted to think much more of Dick Whittington, and Sir William Walworth, Evil May Day, the Conduit in Chepe, together with Stow, Strutt, Holinshed, and

Fitzstephen, than the present good Lord Mayor of London, and all the municipal, military, naval, and forensic celebrities that accompanied him, to the tune of "Oh, the roast beef of old England!" played in the gallery.

Our good friend Mr. Harker—without whom I opine all public dinners would go for nothing, and the Old Bailey Court become a bear-garden—gave the signal for grace, the tureens having already appeared upon the tables during the *cortége*; and then what a warfare of glass and crockery, of knives and forks and spoons, and calipash and calipee began! The hapless guests by the tureens had a hard time of it in supplying their fellow visitors; and the rule for politeness in the "Book of Etiquette" which says "it is bad taste to partake twice of soup," had evidently never been learnt; for they partook not only twice, but three times, and would, doubtless, have gone on again but for the entire consumption of the delicacy. For the vast number of people present it was astonishing, by the way, how well everybody was attended to. The waiters ran over one another less than they usually do at great dinners; they recollected when you asked for a fork, and brought you one; and if it had not been for their clattering down all the plates and dishes against your heels under your form, the arrangements would have been perfect.

At the head of our table was the most glorious old gentleman I had ever seen. Whether Farringdon Without or Broadstreet claimed him as its own I do not know, for the wards were divided at the table; but whichever it was had a right to be proud of him. He knew everybody, and all treated him with the greatest respect. He was a wit, too, and made some very fair puns; besides which, by his continued pleasantries, he kept the whole table alive. He took wine with all whom he saw were strangers, and offered them his snuff-box with a merry speech. He was the best mixture of the fine old courtier and common councilman it was possible to conceive, and my admiration of his good fellowship was increased, when I was told that he was actually eighty-two years of age! I should like to have had some quiet talk with that old gentleman. He must have known many youths, barely living on their modest salary, who afterwards rode in their own carriages in the Lord Mayor's procession—perhaps as chief actors. He could, I will be bound, have told us stories of the riots of '80, when he was a mere boy; and of the banquet given to the allied sove-

reigns in that very old Guildhall, a score and half of years afterwards. But he left our table early, and when he went, and told us all that he was going home to put on his slippers and have a cigar, we were really grieved to part with him, and could have better spared the tetchy gentleman near him, who did nothing but squabble with the waiters and threaten to report them.

The dinner was despatched—the cold turkeys, and hams, and tongues, and the tolerably hot pheasants and partridges—in less time than might be conceived. There was no lack of anything. The punch was unexceptionable, the Madeira of the choicest, and the champagne unlimited. And after all this, a bevy of pretty young ladies, with an equal number of gentlemen, appeared in the south music gallery to sing the grace, which they did very well. The visitors evidently knew their business. They did not applaud, when the grace was over, in the manner of some reckless and enthusiastic spirits fresh at a public dinner, who look upon it as they would do upon a Cider Cellars chorus, but received it gravely, filled their glasses, and waited for what was to come next. Then the trumpets sounded, and were answered from the other end of the Hall, and the new Lord Mayor rose and proposed “The Queen.” And if her Majesty could have heard how that toast was received, with an enthusiasm that made the very men-in-armour totter on their pedestals, and Gog and Magog almost invisible through the haze of excitement, she would have known that the expression of her belief in the allegiance of her good old City of London, with which she was accustomed to respond to addresses, were beyond the conventional, after all.

The remaining toasts could only be heard by those at the principal table; but when the ladies left, the gentlemen went up, and stood about on the forms and benches to see and hear the “great guns” of the evening. Afterwards tea and coffee were served in a long room to the right of the Council Chamber, and then dancing began in the latter apartment, until the part of the Hall above the railing was cleared for the same purpose. During this period the company had an opportunity of seeing two very clever pieces of scenic view which were displayed, to be looked at through windows, on what might possibly otherwise have been a blank wall. These were modelled representations of the Tower, and the Rialto at Venice. They had a charming effect;

the sober light and air of tranquillity thrown over them being in excellent contrast with the noise and brilliancy of what was in reality "the hall of dazzling light," usually treated as a poetic and, perhaps, apocryphal piece of festivity inseparable from striking a light guitar.

The dancing was famously kept up, "with unabated spirit," as newspapers say of a ball. To be sure, the more refined Terpsichorean nerves were occasionally shocked by hearing subdued wishes for "The Caledonians." The majority, too, preferred the polka to the waltz, and mistrusted themselves in the *deux temps*. But they were evidently very happy, and believed greatly in everything about them, and if we could always do the same in society we should have little to grumble at. At last, not choosing to let the world generally know at what hour my faithful latch-key put me in possession of that most inestimable property, one's own bedroom, I slipped off, and arrived at home with calm propriety, filled with gratitude to the Lord Mayor, the sheriffs, and the corporation generally, for a very hospitable (and, to me, a very novel) entertainment.

XXII.

A STREET SKETCH.

(July 9, 1851.)

OORAY-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y!!! Bang! Here she comes, Bill! Ooray-y-y-y-y-y!!! Rang-dang-dang-dang! Now then, Missus, one way or the other! Rang-dang! Rang-dang-dang! Ooray-y-y-y-y-y-y!!! Rang-dang-bang-klung-klung! Bang! Bang!! Bang!!! Where are you a shovin' me under the 'orses 'eels? Hur-ray-y-y-y-y-y!!!

God save the Queen! It is long after midnight, but the streets are alive with life; and the mighty stream eddies round the horse soldiers on guard, and nearly hurries the policeman on its current. The gas stars light up the road like day, and flash on the breastplates and helmets; the people are taking early places on the kerbs; the boys have appropriated to themselves all the churchyard railings, and building hordes, and mountains of wooden pavement on the line; the heavy Life Guard chargers are moving their hoofs about as daintily as though they imagined that a lady's little foot was likely to be under all of them; and with renewed hurrahs, and bell clanging, and distant guns, and braying trumpets, through Temple-bar, which appears, from the Strand, to be the portal of a temporary city of light and banners, on comes the Queen!

They have held high festival at Guildhall to-night, and the riches of our mighty city have flown right and left to do honour to her Majesty. But we would not have given much to have seen her there, otherwise than as the chief personage in a grand mob. It is here—at midnight, in the streets amongst her people—that we feel our heart rising into our eyes as we watch her progress and hurrah with the best of them.

Look at her, European democrats, and republicans, and liberators, and patriots, and all other names of restless scamps who bawl about "freedom" and "light;" and, having nothing to lose, plunge your countries into bloodshed and misery before

you scramble off to England, in which you ought to arrive, if practicable, at a cart's tail. Look at that young woman, so honoured, and so secure in the honest affections of her people, that although her guard is as nothing compared to the crowds in the streets, she sits there as calmly as if she were in her own room in Windsor Castle. Dare but even to scowl at her, and you shall be yelled and chevied along the causeway like curs on a race-course. Look at her smiling face as she passes, and the roar of enthusiastic recognition becomes louder and more continuous until she can scarcely acknowledge it. And then look at all those good folks who are cheering and crushing round her carriage in thousands. They have no secret police or spies after them except the clever detectives; they do not know what domiciliary visits are; they have never been "disarmed;" they may all make gunpowder in their outhouses, or cartridges in their back kitchens, all the week long if they please; they have no passports, they can leave England when they like, and return at their pleasure; if they had common sporting permission, they might all have carried double-barrelled guns and cutlasses about the streets all night for their own diversion; and yet the Queen is safer among them than she would be in the centre of a belt of bristling bayonets and artillery! The *cortége* goes on, and the public once more take entire possession of the streets to stare at the illuminations. What a festival it is! Everybody seems to have a party to-night in every room of the house. We never saw so many decanters as are visible through the first-floor windows; and there is Master Brown, who would light up the V. R. himself from the window, in broad daylight, so excited and anxious was he, and has sat behind it ever since, to show his connexion with the spectacle, and will not go to bed until the last wick has expired in the smell; and there is Jones and Bunting, who have taken advantage of their neighbour's gas star, and hung a flag from their second floor, which catches all the light therefrom, and makes a great effect at a cheap rate, whilst their neighbour, whose banner is obscured by its own shade, like the clock at the White Horse Cellar, achieves small triumph. Why, there is a very old friend—to be sure it is—in the shape of a transparency. We can scarcely call to mind when we first saw that, but it is some time ago. It is what is called an "allegory," a sort of thing you see in the frontispieces to old magazines and encyclopædias, and on the ceilings of Hampton Court, which nobody can make

out, or, if they can, don't care about. Here we have the Queen in a large scallop shell, riding on the sea, drawn by dolphins, with a lion at her feet, and girls, with great display of shoulders, swimming about her; and Neptune getting bang in her way, with large calves, and deltoide muscles, offering her a trident. By the way, why are calves and deltoides always larger in allegories than anything else? Now all this is very absurd. Heaven forbid that her Majesty should trust herself with a lion in a scallop-shell, and go to sea. We question, indeed, whether any persuasion would make her do so, so long as she had her own steamer—especially to be drawn by dolphins—quite out of the water of course. We know the instant fish get out of their element what freaks they indulge in, and we should mistrust the dolphins. No—no; it is all nonsense; we prefer the reality of the clown in the washing-tub drawn by ducks, and this is all that it reminds us of.

Half-past one! The crowd still keeps streaming on; and we go with it. But the illuminations become rather monotonous. The inventive genius of the folks in this line never gets beyond a V, an A, a star, and a crown; and these wear on repetition. The "lampions" of the Continent are beyond all comparison more effective in their *ensemble*—those pretty, many-coloured globes with which they festoon the streets and cover the houses. One naked gas star over the shop of a dingy brick house is certainly worse than nothing; it puts one in mind of a dirty man in corduroys with a diamond brooch on.

By degrees the crowd thins and the lamps go out, Temple Bar, so gorgeous an hour ago, looks as ragged as a moulting parrot; and the people who sat up all the evening at the adjoining windows to look at it, have gone to bed. The wind is getting up, and the gas stars in and out, the lights and shadows flying about them as on a corn-field. Sometimes the R becomes a P, and then an I, and then a small D; and the fading devices of the variegated lamps assume unintelligible patterns, like the cards of a Jacquard loom, or a constellation without its picture. And now, right away to the east, a glimmer of grey light steals upwards, and the tops of the houses, hitherto hidden by the glare below, begin to show their outlines against the sky.

The mob is gone; the soldiers have gone; the policemen even have gone, except the ordinary numbered letters of the district; and the great heart of London begins to beat tranquilly once more, soothed by the pure air of morning. And now

another procession begins along the line of the Royal progress. Waggons of cabbages and vans of flowers come toiling on to Covent-garden ; and the Essex labourer whips his team unconcernedly along the streets, where none but the wheels of Majesty were permitted to revolve a few hours ago, and stares with stupid wonder at the dying illuminations.

What a chance for a writer of large sympathies and great purpose that Essex clodhopper affords ! How he could be advantageously compared in his stalwart health to the pampered children of empty state who rode in their tinsel and spangles along the same route two hours ago ! How his utility in the great scale of creation could be weighed in sonorous words against that of the idle courtiers who preceded him ! Stuff and nonsense ! we have seen a swell thrash a snob into fits, and with the greatest pleasure ; and, as far as the utility line goes, we wager, if the Essex clodhopper was subjected to a rigorous examination, it might turn out that packing cabbages and driving a team was all he was fit for, or capable of achieving.

Still he is useful in his way, and so are the swells, and so let us hope we all are. And it has been a very pleasant day, and thousands of people have appeared very happy, and we all seem very flourishing and comfortable generally, and don't envy anybody, and are very proud, prouder than ever, of England and our Queen ; and so, God bless us all !

XXIII.

THE FAIRY WEDDING.

ONCE upon a time, all the rich Chertsey meadows, which lie between the Abbey River and Laleham Ferry on the Thames, formed a large plain. Old Master Goring, who was a hundred years old the day King William the Fourth opened Staines Bridge—on which occasion he had the honour of being presented to his Majesty—once told me that he could remember when any one could look right away from the Thames to Netlebury Hole, standing on the Laleham Burway, without a hedge or plantation to cut the view. And there was not such a range of grass all about the country; insomuch that the above venerable gentleman, who proved in himself that “the oldest inhabitant” was not the myth he was popularly supposed to be, also informed me how he remembered the Royal Hunt once came here, and all the townspeople ran out and left their shops, just as they do now for a balloon descent, or a fight, or a drowning, to see King George the Third, who pulled up his horse, and said to his companions, “I always stop to admire these meadows.” It was my aged friend’s name which once so scandalised our parish in good Mr. Pembroke’s time. For when that esteemed minister asked the farmer’s daughter who was the oldest man, to test the extent of her serious knowledge prior to confirmation, she answered, “If you please, sir, old Master Goring!” Which threw the Sunday-schools in such a flutter, that the children had to learn an extra hymn every week during the summer, with closed windows, to do away with the district disgrace.

These meadows always had the reputation of being haunted. The notion had originated in the “fairy rings,” the circles of fresh green grass which covered them, and which were always brightly verdant, however scorched up the surrounding turf might be. A few of these still remain; and the old story, that they were traces of the fairies’ tinkling steps as they danced round the throne mushroom, is still promulgated, but not credited; the first stream of the railway locomotive blew away all belief on its puff of steam.

Elsewise I do not know who would have been bold enough on May-night, or St. Mark’s Eve, or any other haunted anni-

versary, to have sat on the banks of the Abbey River, all alone, and asked, in the awful language of the Medium, "Are there any spirits present?" I wouldn't. Leaving alone the chance of witnessing, in shadows, the dreary funeral convoy of King Henry the Sixth, as it came up this very river in a rude black boat, with a torch at the head, dripping into the sputtering water, and flashing its light about on the blood-clotted features of the murdered monarch, until they appeared to writhe again with his last agony, without monk or mourner, except the pale spectre of his son, which floated in the air in an armour of dull blue light, clouded in half a dozen places by the gore from his wounds, as it burst forth in Edward's tent at Tewkesbury; leaving alone all this, I say I should be very nervous, for a very great many people have been drowned in the Abbey River. Some have gone, with nothing more to hope for in this world, on dark terrible nights, to put themselves at once beyond the power of human wrong and agony; others, stout swimmers, have been pulled down in the bright summer noontide, by long snake-like weeds that twisted round their legs, and bubbled up their last breath with the sun dancing on their struggling limbs through the overhanging pollards; and others, I regret to add, returning with uncertain notions, at night, from Laleham brotherly love clubs, have mistaken the bridge, and walked cheerfully into the water, cutting short their vocal intentions of drowning care in a bowl, by substituting themselves and the river, in which they have been found, the next morning, sitting down at the bottom, with a pipe still in their hands, and, to all appearance, presiding at an extensive free-and-easy of fishes. More agreeable would be the meadow spirits than the corpse-like visions I should expect on the river. They appear to have been always very well-meaning and grateful little persons, if they were only well treated; but if you put them out, they were terribly mischievous; and this brings me to the fairy rings on the Burway, and how they came there.

Old Sir Reginald Wapshott lived at Redwynde Court, on the pasture still marked out in the old histories of Surrey. The Wapshotts had resided ever since the Conquest, as everybody knows, at Almoners' Barns, on St. Anne's Hill, near Hardwicke Court, where Charles James Fox used always to go to the fair, and see the girls dance in the barn, and walk about, eating a great brick of stale gingerbread. They had always been excellent people; and none of them ever rose above or sank below the grade of respectable yeomen, through all the civil wars and

turmoils that so upset the middle ages, except this Reginald. He had been knighted for some service rendered to the king; and being a fine fellow to boot, had attracted the attention of Dame Blanche Audley, widow of Neville Audley, and a daughter of Sir Mark Heriot—the same Blanche who, when a girl, hung to the clapper of the old monastery bell, still to be seen, with its monkish inscription (as figured in Bray and Manning's "Surrey" by my father), in the bell-tower of Chertsey Church, to delay her lover's execution. So Sir Reginald and Dame Audley were married; and he got fine, and did not mix much with his old friends; and perhaps it was on that account that they said Dame Audley's early energy had turned into ceaseless curiosity and tittle-tattle, and that this would one day bring her husband into trouble. Probably they might have exaggerated it; and, truth to tell, the old lady was rather an inquisitive and scandalous "party;" and, indeed, it is a local attribute to be so; for, from time immemorial, the good folks of Chertsey have always felt such a much greater interest in other people's business than in their own, that it is not astonishing the town stands pretty much the same as it did fifty years ago.

One fine autumnal night the moon was full out upon the bowling-green of Redwynde. It was after curfew time—they ring the curfew even now at Chertsey—and most of the household had gone to rest, except old Sir Reginald, who sat in an arbour drinking Malvoisie, and pondering on things in general; which is a pleasant kind of rumination, and the very thing for country gentlemen to indulge in, as it involves but little brain weariness. The night was very fine and very still. Not a leaf was moving, and nothing broke the silence except the plash of the fountain as its bright drops fell into the basin, sparkling in the moonbeams. One by one the lights went out in the windows; and Sir Reginald was thinking of bed himself, when he saw what appeared to him to be a cluster of blue sparks moving across the lawn. They came nearer very slowly, and then he made out that they were glow-worms. In the middle of them, like a shepherd in a flock of sheep, walked the daintiest little person he had ever set eyes on. He was not above three or four inches high, and he wore a little cap made of a foxglove bell. His tunic was a large tulip, put on topsy-turvy, and he carried a stalk of lavender for a staff or wand. With this he directed the movements of the glow-worms, placing some here and others there, until he had distributed them all about the

turf banks that bordered the plot, when the ground appeared powdered with light; and then the drops of water, that fell with various twinkling notes into the basin, appeared to utter most exquisite music, finer and softer than anything the knight had yet heard; and, as an accompaniment, every harebell in the garden appeared turned to silver suddenly, and assisted in ringing out a peal of marvellous changes. Whilst this went on, mushrooms of delicate whiteness rose from the turf, always surrounding one larger than the rest; and this grew and grew, until it covered the others, and made a perfect tent, which fresh troops of glow-worms directly edged and spiralled with charming devices, always under the direction of the little chamberlain, who, when he had apparently finished everything to his satisfaction, sat down on a small mushroom and surveyed the arrangements with great complacency.

And now, from every direction, groups of fairies came on to the bowling-green, all exquisitely dressed in the latest elfin fashions, which would require the pen of Mr. Planché to describe, so fanciful and faylike were they. Some of the leading belles had fans of butterflies' wings, and wore plumes from the humming-bird; but their robes of moleskin velvet were more especially admired, above all when trimmed with ribbons of Indian grass and ladybirds, and jewels from the diamond-beetles. Amongst the more exquisite beaux might be seen some very absurd dandies. One wore a "What's-o'clock?" or "Puffaway," on his head, which almost gave him the air of a Kaffir chief; and another, in a tight-fitting suit of bat's-wing membrane, with a jay's feather in his hat, looked almost like a rope-dancer, and quite prepared to perform upon the long spider's thread that stretched across the lawn. Two or three had caps of calceolarea petals; and one silly fellow came in a Templar-looking helmet, formed of a filbert husk, worn upside down, with the forepart cut away. But these were mere coxcombs—empty young swells that could be routed with an awn of barley.

They all took their places about on the little mushrooms as they pleased; and then Master Neville saw that it was a wedding. For the bride and bridegroom had places of honour; and the pretty little lady, in a veil of leaf lace trimmed with thistle down, looked *à ravir*. They made very merry for a long time, during which the old knight watched them from his arbour with the greatest wonder and admiration; and at last

they appeared to have come to the end of the mouse-skins of wine which they brought with them. They squeezed out the last drops and then looked about for more, and finally began to complain of their miscalculation with loud lamentations ; for their wine caves were far off in the remotest caverns of the Peak of Derbyshire, and the fairies hated to go in there at night, on account of the dwarfs, who set all sorts of traps for them. For every hill, as is well known, is inhabited by dwarfs ; in fact, it is owing to their spite, for the rout and confusion caused in the tunnelling of Primrose Hill, that the accidents occur on the North-Western Railway, where they play such tricks with the switches and signals that the guards and porters have a hard time of it.

Sir Neville thought it a great pity that such festive little folks should be stopped in their mirth for want of wine, and on such an occasion too. So he caught up a bottle of Malvoisie yet uncorked, and threw it amongst them. It came down with a "thug" on the turf, well-nigh smashing two or three of them, and causing great consternation generally. But one of them had seen the quarter that it came from ; so, going at once to the summer-house, he discovered the knight, and made an obeisance to him. After which he said :

"We have never yet allowed a mortal to keep his eyes after they have looked upon our gatherings. But you have a good heart, and have prolonged our cheer ; and, therefore, we hope you will join our party."

The old knight could not refuse, there was so much grace and courtesy in the little gentleman's manner ; so he took a garden-stool with him, and sat down very carefully, for fear of accident, amongst the company. They were all very polite, and pledged him repeatedly, and at last they began to dance ; and the beautiful little bride herself came up, and invited him to be her partner. They were not very well matched as to size, to be sure ; but it seemed to make very little difference to the fairies whether they were on the ground or off it : so, as Sir Neville could not very well stoop down to them, they flew up to him. And then they began to go round and round and round, until the old knight was fain to drop. But they would not stop—on they went, quicker and quicker, until, all of a sudden, a splash of water came down in the midst of them. In an instant everything was gone—fairies, glow-worms, banquet, and mushrooms ; and the old knight was lying upon the grass in the quiet moonlight, without a trace of the revelry about him, quite bewildered.

But not for long. The sound of the last music still hung on his ear, when it was broken in upon by the shrill voice of Dame Blanche, who was at one of the windows with a large black jack in her hand, which, just before full of water, she had emptied over the dancers. She had not seen them, for they had all put their caps on, which renders fairies invisible; but she had perceived her husband capering about like a maniac, and believing him to be very far gone in his cups, had taken this summary mode of exacting his attention.

No doubt there would have been an angry dialogue; but, just as it was commencing, the little fairy chamberlain came flitting through the air, and thus spoke to the lady:

“We have been very much irritated by your rudeness and meddling—you have broken up a very pleasant party; and we are equally indignant at your husband’s pusillanimity in submitting to such treatment. It was nothing to you that he was enjoying himself; and he ought to have held you in better subjection than to have permitted your outrage. And so, to punish you, as you threw water out upon us, the place shall never be dry again—not in summer, for that would be no punishment, but in the damp, cold winter. And, at the same time, the marks of our last dances shall remain, to remind you and those who come after you of the cause.”

Having said which, he disappeared, like Aubrey’s fairy, with a melodious twang, and was never seen again.

But the threat was carried out. Every winter when the mist drops from the skeleton trees and the gaunt pollards into the water, and the weirs are choked, and the towing-path covered, the floods roll over the Abbey Meads, and the boats go through the gateways, and the fish get into the fields, and Chertsey becomes almost an island. But in the summer the green rings come out amazingly fresh on Laleham Burway, however scorched up the surrounding pasturage may be. The fairies, however, have never appeared since. I cannot think what has become of them all. Perhaps a few have got a little employment in rapping for the spirits, but a vast number, I believe, emigrated to the Continent, and nestled about Heidelberg, or led wandering lives with their cousins, the Djins and Peris of the East. And this may be what M. Grimm once heard—a tale similar to the above—abroad; but be sure this is the original version, and the only true one.

XXIV.

ABOUT CHAMOIS AND HUNTERS.

FEW of my fellow tourists in the Valley of Chamouni have remained many days in the village without seeing a dead chamois hanging up some morning in the court-yard of their hotel; and subsequently tasting it, and pretending that it was eatable, at the table d'hôte in the afternoon. What its flesh would be treated as venison, cared for, and hung, and delicately cooked, I cannot tell. As it is usually eaten within twenty-four hours of its death-shot, it is about as unpalatable as anything I know; and pickled in vinegar for winter, as I have tasted it on the Simplon and St. Bernard, it is nastier still.

The principal game of this portion of the Alps may be divided into four heads—hares, marmots, chamois, and bouquetins. The latter beautiful animal is becoming more scarce every season, and is extinct on the Mont Blanc range: it is only to be found about the Piedmontese glaciers of Monte Rosa. There are, besides, badgers and foxes; a lynx was shot at Servoz in 1841; wolves are all but annihilated; and the last bear about Chamouni was killed nearly ninety years ago by one of the Payots—a grandfather of the man who lost the forepart of his feet during Mr. Behren's ascent of Mont Blanc in 1851, and who now keeps a little refreshment ch[^]let on the route to Montanvert. The animal was shot hard by the Cascade des P[^]lerins. There was a large rock near the spot called the Pierre à l'Ours, but the guides have forgotten which it is; so I recommended them to invent one, which would do just as well as many other Alpine memorials for the ruck of tourists.

When a hunter kills a chamois, he brings it to one of the hotels at Chamouni, and receives, on an average, twenty-five francs for it; sometimes the chase brings in a larger return. I gave old Jean Tairraz a commission, in 1853, to get me a pair alive. He and his neighbours contrived to catch two young ones about St. Gervais; but by the time they arrived in Lon-

don, they cost me as much as a pair of ponies would have done. Neither of them lived; one had a broken leg on its arrival, which ultimately caused its death, and the other pined away, although very great attention and kindness were shown to both.

Colonel Colt would go mad if he saw the old carbines the chamois hunters use in the age of his revolving rifles. They are almost too heavy to lift, wonderful kickers, and hang-fire once or twice. But this perhaps is fortunate, otherwise there would soon be no chamois left; for the fascination of the pursuit appears to be beyond that of any kind of hunting. Gordon Cumming and Jules Gérard themselves are not more ardent lovers of their peculiar chase than the men of Sixt and Samoëns, and on their hunting-grounds England is worthily represented by Mr. Bagge, the member for West Norfolk.

How these hardy fellows go out alone amongst the glaciers, or rather high moraines where the rock joins the ice, with nothing but a little bread, cheese, and brandy, all of the worst description, and without any clear notion as to when they shall return; how they forget all danger in the excitement; and how their whitened bones are sometimes found under the ledge of a huge granite boulder, where they had gone to sleep, never to wake again, many able pens have recounted. I do not know if what I have to add to these accounts is already well known or not; but it has been picked up, orally, about Servoz or Chamouni.

The chamois hunters are singularly superstitious. This is easily accounted for. They pass hours, sometimes days, alone, amidst the remote horrors of the glaciers; and these regions abound in strange phenomena and mysterious noises, with effects of light and twilight uncertainties. They have vague recollections of spectre animals and mountain dwarfs; ghostly hunters, doomed to chase phantom game for ever, and lights indicating the locality of ice-caverns filled with grains of pure gold. It was in seeking for the latter that old Jacques Balmat, who first went up Mont Blanc, lost his life. They believe greatly in spells and enchantments. They all entertain a notion, more or less, that they shall perish eventually on the glaciers; but this seems to increase rather than diminish their passion for the sport. A young man once told De Saussure that his father and grandfather had both been lost on the mountains, and he knew that would also be his end; indeed, he called his

knapsack his winding-sheet. His presentiment proved true shortly afterwards. He started from Sixt, and was never heard of again.

One afternoon I had walked up ahead of the *char-à-bancs* from Chede to Servoz, and I was sitting outside Jean Carrier's inn there, opposite the church, to rest and take a *p'tit verre*. There is a curiosity-shop next the inn kept by Michel Deschamps; and "here one can see" (to quote foreign English) a stuffed bouquetin.

While I was looking at it a peasant came up, and we had a talk. He told me he lived in the valley of Sixt, and that one night on the Buet he saw a hundred bouquetins all at once. He added, that they were being driven by a number of priests across the chasms of the glaciers, as easily as a boy would drive sheep over a pasture; that they did not stop at the largest crevices, but went over them like birds; and that in the morning not a trace of them was to be seen. Of course this had all been next to a dream. He had been dozing with his eyes open—a perfectly possible state, that may be induced by over-watching—and whilst this actual scenery before him was printed on the retina, his wandering fancies had supplied the phantom appearances. With more foundation he told me of an orchard, close to the ironworks on the Giffre, which the devil swallowed up in one night, because the priests wanted it. That this orchard disappeared I found to be perfectly true, and there is a lake now in its place. He complained bitterly of the devil, as a great enemy to that part of the country. They had done all they could by putting up crosses and little chapels everywhere, but he was still uncommonly troublesome.

The devil is not, however, the most important of the mysterious personages who hunt the chamois hunters; they all believe in Mountain Dwarfs, leading features in most popular superstitions. Once upon a time—I must begin the legend in the regular way—a Chamouni guide went to hunt chamois upon the Glacier d'Argentière, which lies on the other side of the tall Aiguille Verte, separated, indeed, by it from the well-known Mer de Glace. He came upon a herd of chamois, and followed them so eagerly, that at last he reached quite the end of the glacier. The animals scrambled up the rocks, and the hunter, Pierre Ravenal, after them. He had hard work with his carbine, but he went up and up, and at last gained the highest peaks, and, looking over, he saw below him the Jardin—

the well-known plot of grass and flowers which is such a famous excursion from Chamouni—and all the chamois grazing upon it. Picking out the finest of them, he lodged his rifle on a rock to make a surer aim, and was just going to fire, when his arm was seized as with a grasp of iron. He turned round, and saw, at his side, the most horrible dwarf it was possible to conceive—the king of all the bogies.

“So,” said the little monster, “I have caught you at last! I thought I should find out, some fine day, who was so constantly poaching about my property. And now to make you pay for it.”

He spoke with a hoarse, grating voice, that sounded like a tin-tack between two grindstones, and appeared to set his own teeth on edge as it came through them, from the faces he made. And then he took Pierre by the collar of his coat, and lifted him up until he overhung the precipice of the rocks above the Jardin—four hundred feet of smooth granite with jagged blocks at the bottom.

“Oh, mercy! mercy!” cried the wretched guide; “I am a poor devil with a large family, and have no choice between hunting and starvation. I did not know the chamois were yours.”

The dwarf appeared to think there might be some reason in this appeal, for he drew his victim back upon the rocks, and then relaxed his grip.

“Now look here,” he said; “if I allow you to live, will you promise me never to carry a rifle again between Mont Blanc and the Great St. Bernard?”

Pierre would have promised anything.

“Very well. Now get back to your family. Here is a cheese for you all to live upon, which will always be sufficient as long as you do not devour it entirely: be careful that there is always a small piece left. And now—take that!”

And with these words, the dwarf gave him such a tremendous kick, that it might have been sent to the museum at Geneva for a curiosity. It started Ravenal on his way home with such an impetus, that he and the cheese went rolling down the glacier, and bounding over the crevices at a rate the chamois themselves could not have kept up with; and all this time the dwarf's horrid voice sounded in his ears, turning all his nerves the wrong way. If you have ever played with mortar, and let it dry on your hands, and then rubbed them together;

or filed your teeth during a hard frost with the outside of an oyster-shell; or turned a dry flower-pot round in its saucer, with a little grit in it; or listened to a skid on a hot road; and then recalled all these things together, you will have some notion of his sensations.

When he got home, he did not mention a word of his adventure; and although rather bruised and confused—as well he might be—he was in good spirits at his escape. He told his wife that he had got the cheese in exchange for a couple of marmots he had taken, and the good woman believed it. Wives believe more wonderful stories than that sometimes—not as a rule.

To their utter astonishment, when they went to look at the cheese the next morning, the wedge they had cut out of it was entirely filled up; and this happened again and again during several weeks, until the excitement quite passed away, and Pierre got bored, and wanted to be with his rifle once more on the glaciers; and would sit for hours sighing and looking at it, hung over the fireplace of the *châlet*.

One day, as he was wandering about the woods over Montanvert, picking flowers to dry between paper for the tourists to purchase, he saw a fine chamois standing, as cool as might be, at the base of the *Aiguille des Charmoz*. All his old enthusiasm returned. He ran down to Montanvert, borrowed a carbine, went back to the spot, and, without the least trouble, killed the animal, which bounded from crag to crag down the *Aiguille*, and at last fell on the glacier. He marked the spot and returned home, for it was getting too dark to go after the game that night; but the next day he started betimes, and took the cheese with him. He did not observe, in his renewing ardour, that the last gap made in it had not been replaced. He reached the chamois, and being hot and hungry, with a little well of cold crystal water in the ice at his side, he sat down to breakfast, and before he reflected upon what he was doing, he had finished all the cheese. At that minute, a thunder-clap, which he thought was an avalanche, echoed amongst the mountains, a dark mist rose over the glacier, and the horrible dwarf once more stood at his side.

“Miserable wretch!” he cried, in the same dreadful grating tones; “you have broken your promise, and shall suffer for it. Perish!”

In spite of the hunter's cries and entreaties, the dwarf

dragged him to the edge of one of those yawning, boiling, bottomless caldrons known on the glaciers as Moulins. He held his screaming victim over it for a minute, and then let him fall right into the centre, and the whirling waters spun him round and round with a terrible roar, until he disappeared in the icy depths.

Some years since there was a great to do at Chamouni. The papers stated that the ice about the source of Arveiron—or rather what used to be the source—had come very low down towards the hamlet of Bois, and that on melting, a human body had been found in it. The local papers said it was that of Jacques Balmat, who had been lost whilst looking for gold in the mountains; but as he had perished in the Vallée de Sixt, this was utterly impossible. As well might a champagne cork, shot into the Thames from a yacht at the Nore, find its way into the Peak of Derbyshire. If I had been there, I should have told them that it was Ravenal; but they would not have believed me, and I don't believe it myself.

XXV.

OPERA VERSELETS.

1.—THE WAR OF THE NORMAS.

Now glory to La Diva, who still reigns the queen of song;
 And glory, too, to Costa—may he wield the bâton long!
 Now let the distant sound of song, and echo of the band,
 Be heard through Covent-garden, and Long-acre, and the Strand.
 And thou, too, *Morning Chronicle*, bold partisan of Beale,
 As thou wert constant in our ills, be joyous in our weal.
 For ill-advised was Jenny, when she thought to reach the throne
 Of that unrivalled songstress who made the part her own.
 Hurrah! hurrah! the first night proved she had essayed too
 much;
 Hurrah! hurrah, for Grisi and the Norma none can touch!

Oh! how our hearts were beating when, a week before the day,
 We saw proud Lumley posting up his bills in long array,
 And read 'twas by the Queen's command, that she and all her
 peers
 Would to the grand ovation join her bouquet and their cheers.
 There stood the name of Grand Lablache, of mighty voice and
 limb,
 And there too was Fraschini, but we did not care for him.
 We saw the salle: we thought of handsome Edmund's cravat
 white,
 And good Sir Henry's blonde moustache all curling with delight,
 And we cried unto our Norma, that she might be underlined,
 To combat for her own great name, and leave the Lind behind.

The Queen is come to welcome Lind; and early did she dine,
 And all along the Haymarket are Life Guards in a line;
 She looks upon her people, pack'd within the Opera walls,
 And they look at Grisi overhead, and Mario in the stalls.

Now rouse thee, Lind; portray the priestess Norma's rage and
shame;

Work up the end of the first act! Be not so very tame!
A thousand here have Grisi heard; strong minds who won't be
done,

By what they call "new readings," when there can be only one.
Go on—go on! more power yet! Alack the curtain falls,
And "Very nice, but not the thing," is murmured in the stalls.

Ho! partisans of Lumley, don habiliments of woe!
Weep, rend your hair, to hear the truth: your Norma was
"no go."

Ho! Verdi, bring for charity thy opera to their aid,
That Jenny Lind may sing and no comparison be made.
Ho! Bold Bond-street librarians find the public still is true
Unto their long-tried favourite to whom all praise be due,
For Grisi still hath proved herself the best of all the bunch,
Hath mocked the critic of the *Post*, and box-bought praise of
Punch.

Then glory to La Diva, who yet reigns the queen of song;
And glory, too, to Costa—may he wield the bâton long!

2.—ESMERALDA.

BY A MIDDLE-AGED GENTLEMAN.

(Written in her Majesty's Theatre, Thurstday, April 23, 1857.)

CAN thirteen years be gone and past,
Since I saw Esmeralda last,
And heard the tambourine
CARLOTTA rattled at the wing,
Ere, with that bright and joyous fling,
She bounded on the scene?

Can it be true? Alack! alack!
Through a long vista looking back
I trace the period o'er!
I'm stouter than I used to be;
Last birthday I was forty-three;
At balls I dance no more.

This morning Mr. Truefitt said
 He fear'd the hair upon my head
 At top was getting thin.
 "Thin!" What he so politely call'd
 Was formerly considered *bald*—
 I bore it with a grin.

Why—thirteen years ago—let's see,
 Enchanting Piccolomini
 Was quite a tiny witch;
 Of Jenny Lind we'd scarcely heard—
 Of great Alboni not a word—
 And Delafield was rich.

I mind me of the grand Copère,
 Of Perrot's comical despair—
 St. Leon *Phœbus* play'd;
 Venefra eke, and Gourriet too,
 And all the twinkling-footed crew
 That such *ensemble* made!

Those were the ballet's days. How well
 I recollect how fair *Giselle*
 And *Ondine* whirl'd about;
 And *Alma*, in Cerito's prime
 (Another *Alma* since that time
 Has put her fire quite out).

But still, whilst sitting happy here,
 Old forms and faces still appear
 In amber-curtain'd nooks:
 And from the omnibus a lot
 Of friends, like me who've stouter got,
 Gaze forth, with pleasant looks.

And see! the old familiar scene—
 The Truands waiting for their queen,
 Upon their own demesne;
 The captive poet, pale and lean—
 Small chance him and the rope between!—
 And hark! the tambourine!

A graceful girl, with deer-like bound,
That seems to spurn the level ground,
Sings on, so fresh and fair!
And as she dips, her petticoats
So swim about, she fairly floats
In the enamoured air.

Comes, too, each old-remember'd strain—
I feel I'm thirty once again—
The gipsies' galop wild,
The *Nuit des Noces*, the *Truandaise*,
And all that long since did amaze
In times so well beguil'd.

Midst “*Bravas!*” loud the curtain falls;
I leave the Opera's well-loved walls,
And to my club repair.
I'll try some supper once again,
And in a beaker of champagne
I'll toast POCCHINI there.

3.—“THE TRAVIATA” AT EXETER HALL.

(Easter Monday, April 13, 1857.)

COME, Reverend Stiggins, Mrs. Priggings, get your umbrellars—
There will be such a rush to-night amongst the ticket-sellers.
The chance won't come again to us, the world's regenerators,
To hear improper music, and not in the vile theayters.

Come, all ye chosen lambs that form the audience of the Hall;
Come, blessed Barebones family—sly, sleek-haired, grim, and tall;
Come, gaunt old maids, with false dry braids, long past tempta-
tion's ken;
Come, pious clerks, who weep at larks; come, “Christian
young men.”

Come, Bankers, who commence with prayer; come, Zion's trusty
helps,
Who would not let your children learn with those of Mr. Phelps;
Come, above all, that fusty smell of silks long worn and rank,
Which, on the days of dividends, floats all about the Bank.

Yet weep to hear how, on Good Friday, Sydenham's pile was
 cramm'd,
 And *thirty-seven thousand* souls teetotally were damn'd
 For worshipping GOD's glories from His universal book,
 And flying from the mumbling drone of some parochial Rook.

And having dropped the pious tear o'er that ungodly day,
 Repeat some prayers—cut up the stairs—and get what seat
 you may,
 For Verdi holds high festival, and to the godly throng
 The *Traviata's* piquant tale will be expressed in song!

It is not very likely that the outline of the plot
 Will be distributed about—in fact, 'twere better not :
 Suffice to say the heroine, to whom the treat is owed,
Should live at Brompton, and *should* die in the Blackfriars-
 road.

But is it not a blessed thing, that chosen ones, like *us*,
 Can hear it at our sainted Hall, without unpleasant fuss ?
 Journals condemned its play-house form ; but bless our happy
 land,
 Which makes sin in the Haymarket religion in the Strand.

So Reverend Stiggins, Mrs. Priggings, let us haste away,
 The thin end of the wedge is in, on this auspicious day,
 And, in the garb of sanctity, who knows but we may hear
 Some more “improper” music in the Easter week next year!

OH-BE-JOYFUL HIGGINS.

Clapham Common.

4.—LE NOUVEAU PIFF-PAFF DE MOSSOO.

(From the amended version of *Les Huguenots*.)

THIS great work lay neglected for some months, until the political events of February, 1858. It was then circulated. Sung in every corner of Mossodom, it caused the army to push the cries of enthusiasm the most lively (“*pousser les cris d'un enthousiasme le plus vif*”); and, taken up in an ironical chorus of men voices by Mr. Milner Gibson's *Derbydizzygesangverein*,

it actually sang Lord Palmerston's administration out of the House :

Air—MARCEL.

A bas les sacrés Rosbifs !
 Jean Bull à terre !
 A bas leurs femmes à vendre !
 Au feu Ley-ces-tere-squerre !
 Au feu de Londres les murs,
 Repaires impurs !
 Les Anglais ! Terrassons-les !
 Frappons-les !
 Piff ! paff ! pouf ! Boxons-les !
 Qu'ils pleurent,
 Qu'ils meurent,
 Mais grâce.....Goddam !

Jamais la France ne trembla
 Aux plumes du *Times* !
 Malheur au *Punch* perfide,
 Qui vante les crimes !
 Brisons Roebuck, qui triche,
 Qui spik Angleesh !
 Docks, Lord-Mayor—cassez-les !
 Chassez-les !
 Piff ! paff ! pouf ! Frappez-les !
 Aff-an-Aff,
 Portare—paff !
 Mais grâce.....Goddam !

XXVI.

AN OLD SWISS TRAVELLER.

A TRAVELLER must have taken a very high ground a few hundred years ago. Scarcely any place had been visited, and very few had been described; so that a tourist could publish what marvels he pleased, without much fear of contradiction in the next edition of "Murray's Hand-book." When the ingenious American showman of modern times painted his ten-mile long panorama of some mighty and unexplored river, and, on being asked whether he had been there, replied, "No—nor more had anybody else, which was his great advantage, because nobody could tell whether he was right or wrong," he reflected to some extent the spirit of the old travellers. It was not necessary to go far away from one's home to seek for marvels, or to become a "lion," in the sixteenth century. And indeed, before that, Marco Polo and John Mandeville, and the early adventurers who so excited Columbus with their mysterious islands in terrible and distant oceans, and their wondrous tales of Cipango, and St. Brandard, and Atlantis, might have created the same sensation without leaving their country to judge from the credit and renown attached to other chroniclers whilst the heavy fogs of credulity and ignorance hung over Europe.

We have been led into these considerations through lighting on an old book of travels, purporting to be a description of a part of Switzerland, and published at Lucerne in the year 1645. Its author, Jean Leopold Cysat, was a native of that city; and his book presents a quaint evidence of the state of the natural sciences and credulity of the people at that epoch. His "travels" were not very extensive; they were principally confined to what would now be termed an "excursion" round the Lake of Lucerne, about which the citizens knew absolutely nothing. The little steamer that leaves Lucerne twice a day for Fluelyn, which it reaches in an hour or two, runs over the extent of Cysat's wanderings. We gain in time, but we certainly lose in marvels, for we see nothing like the old traveller saw; and this with every intention to make use of our eyes. We do not

remember much beyond the Righi visitors getting in at Weggis, and the meadow of Grüttli, and Tell's Chapel. This latter spot did not much interest Master Cysat. His belief in the pippin-splitting patriot was evidently small. The acorn of tradition had not grown up into the oak-tree of fact, nurtured by the sunny holiday credulity of Cockney tourists.

After having enlarged upon the beauties of the lake, our good traveller describes minutely the wonderful fish found in it. Any one of these, hung in the shop of a West-end fishmonger during the season, would have collected an impenetrable crowd. Amongst them was one with four legs and a frog's head. He also saw carp with humps on their backs like dromedaries, and others with faces like those of cats. Many had stones in their heads, which served as remedies against several disorders; and, for fear that we should doubt this, he gravely tells us that in 1642 he found one of these stones in a crayfish caught in the Lake of Sempach, and that the likeness of our Saviour was engraven upon it. He goes on to say that some of the fish in the Lake of Lucerne are so large that they run out and swallow the cattle when they come to drink; and in one of these fish he found a man's hand with two gold rings on it. We might conclude this to have been an alligator, only our author expressly states that it had neither scales nor teeth, and that it must have been a whale, which had mounted the Rhine, the Aar, and the Reuss to gain the lake! Its flesh was rather nasty, but possessed great virtues. It cleared the voice of those who tasted it, and cured sciatica. We have fished for hours in the Lake of Lucerne, but never yet chanced to hook such a marvel.

The newspaper paragraphist's last resource, a "shower of frogs," would not have astonished the good Cysat. Near Mussegg he was out in a heavy rain of them. They fell all about him and on his hat in incredible quantities. He says they appeared young, but were very thin; and that those which fell on the road were killed, but those tumbling on the grass hopped away in fine style. He also saw several dragons; but he is puzzled whether to class them as birds, fish, or quadrupeds. One started from the Righi and flew away towards Mount Pilatus, so frightening a peasant at work in the fields that he fainted, but on recovering found a precious stone near him as large as a goose's egg, which the dragon had dropped, and which subsequently cured, in an astonishing manner, many

stout disorders, and at last appears to have involved the whole population in a lawsuit as to its possession.

We do not invest the Righi with much supernatural romance just at present. Fairies cannot abide hotels, and they hate the clatter of knives and forks, and the Anglo-French of wrangling travellers, and the popping of corks from bottles of champagne and limonade gazeuse. Neither could they pursue their moonlight dances on the summit without the fear of being disturbed long before daybreak by the appearance of some eager tourist, wrapped up in his own counterpane, freshly crept out of his bedroom to see if it was time for the sun to rise. But it seems there is, or was, a great deal to see on the Righi beyond the sunrise, the view from the Kulm and Staffel, and the Fall of the Rossberg. When Master Cysat went up he was shown several very curious grottos, one of which was inhabited by dwarfs of the mountains (*Bergmännli*en); "but this," he says, in a most Herodotus-like spirit of straightforward candour, "I must say that I was but told: let them believe it who may." Subsequently he was shown a lake, at the bottom of which the inhabitants of the district occasionally saw large herds of pigs, which turned over suddenly on their backs when looked at; and on an adjacent peak, an ecclesiastic of high repute told him that he had seen some fragments of a vast ship, which he believes must have rested there since the Deluge. To back up this story, he quotes a writer who declared that in a mine at Berne, three hundred feet under ground, he had found a ship, with the bodies of forty men on board, together with anchors and rigging. And, continuing his route, he mentions a lake of a marvellous nature. When any one stands on its bank, and shouts three times, the water commences to boil over with such violence that the intruder has scarcely time to get out of the way; and, without fail, always dies within the year. Master Cysat appears rather incredulous on this point. He did not test it himself, not considering the result in any way satisfactory.

But while Master Cysat thus minutely and carefully gathers the physical wonders of the lake of the Four Cantons, he does not forget the social aspects. Everybody who has been up and down the Righi recollects the sunny little village of Weggis, and its wooden pier, on which it is so pleasant to sit and watch the blue sparkling water, and wait for the *St. Gothard* steam-boat. Well, one fine Saturday, in the autumn of 1617, it seems that the treasurer of the parish, a thirsty "party," named Fishlien,

suddenly recollected that the next day was the *fête* of the local patron, and that a great consumption of meat, wine, liqueurs, and fruit would take place in consequence; and so, careless of dragons, and whales, and other terrors of the lake, he started off in his boat for Lucerne, there to lay in a stock of comestibles. Master Cysat describes these boats as hollowed out of the trunks of trees like the canoes of savages. Our good man arrived at Lucerne without any accident, and made his purchases, paying especial attention to the choice of the wines; in fact, he was so anxious to select the finest for his patrons, that no thirsty soul with a "tasting order" in the cool cellars of the London Docks ever discussed so many varieties. At last, having finished everything to his satisfaction, he re-embarked. It was a beautiful evening; the heat of the sun had declined, and a light breeze coming down from Mount Pilatus bléw directly across to Weggis. All this was very agreeable; so Fishlien hoisted a little square sail, and then laid himself comfortably down at the bottom of his boat, and contemplated the stars which began to peep and twinkle through the violet sky. But he soon found that the vapours of the wine he had tasted troubled his observations. The stars danced and whirled round like flies in a ceiling quadrille, and indeed were doubled in number; so that, after a time, murmuring a confused and melancholy convivial song, he shut his eyes, and, leaving to the wind all the task of driving his boat to his native shore, fell fast asleep.

It so chanced that the wind soon fell asleep too. The current of the Reuss was running with its usual rapidity through the lake; and the good man, boat, wine, provisions and all, turned back again towards Lucerne. He darted under the first bridge, and might have been stopped, if, like the Lady of Shalott, when she floated down to the "many-towered Camelot," he had kept on singing. But he was still fast as a church, and he glided on unperceived under the second bridge, and then under the third, all very quietly, until he came to that part of the Reuss where the rapids began. And here his boat was so tossed, and driven, and bumped against the shore, that he was roused from his slumbers, and perceived in his horror that he was shooting along the stream between strange landmarks, and perfectly helpless. At last, after every vain attempt, he contrived to hold on to a bramble, and so pull himself to land. But he had come so far that no assistance was near, and, ultimately, he

never got back to Weggis with his meats and drinks until the *fête* was all passed and over. And this being all the story, it is remarkable what pains Master Cysat has taken to chronicle a matter of such great simplicity amidst the other astounding marvels with which his book abounds.

Looking back to the credulous old writer, we almost regret some of his marvels are not yet extant, for the benefit of Swiss travellers, who will romance about his tours. They might there have seen something that would have served them to have talked about on their return home beyond "storms on the Grimsel." We all know a class of young men—they are chiefly budding barristers—who bore you if you sit next to them at dinner-parties, with accounts of frightful adventures they encountered in the snow, with ignorant guides, on the most beaten passes of the Cockney Swiss itinerary. You know all the time that these things never happened; that every road, and pass, and sentier of the Alps is as secure as Hampstead Heath; that the long-detailed conversations these travellers had with their guides, their determined resolutions, threats, altercations, and triumphs, were vivid inventions, looking to the average French of the Temple; that adventures altogether in travelling have long ceased to be, since the existence of continental railways, circular notes, and "Murray;" that those who go to the Mer de Glace have not been half of the way up Mont Blanc, nor anything approaching to it; and that when the corks of Barclay and Perkins floated on the Lake of Lucerne, and the echoes of Tell's meadow were called forth by the "Half a turn astarn!" of the steam-boat engineer's boy, no more adventures would be allowed to run about the dessert. And, therefore, we wish that Cysat's book would hold good at present, to furnish these chatterers with new themes. Besides, what a draw his Righi dragon would be at the Zoological Gardens; or his large fish in the tank at the Polytechnic Institution! How a family of the mountain dwarfs would put out of joint the noses—as much as they possess—of the Bosjesmen, managed by a 'cute American! And what a blessing, as soon as Parliament and the elections were over, his shower of frogs would be to the entire newspaper interests of the United Kingdom!

But these things are not. Bradshaw is the great Iconoclast of romantic images, and the dread interior of Africa is now the only spot left for any one to go to who wishes to make an uncontradicted excitement by a book of travels.

XXVII.

A PLEA FOR BOULOGNE.

WE never respect old gents—for there are old gents as well as young ones—who, not being able to get beyond a few phrases of the French conversation-book, and uttering even these with an unintelligibility which makes the French maid request they will speak English—get enthusiastically patriotic after dinner, and talk to travellers at table about “our own country,” and the “no wish to see foreign lands until they know their own.”

Nor do we overmuch like the young ones—in addition to a rooted hatred to gents in general—who catch up the same idea second-hand, and cling to it as they know they would do to the side of the steamer, when they are pretending to look after some creature that was following on their lee, but literally concealing their discomfort; who, when a guest says he has crossed the St. Gothard, exclaim, “Ah, but you should see Wales!” and who, when you mention the rocks of Meillerie, exclaim, “Oh! but did you ever go to Hastings?” There are hundreds of these individuals who, having walked up to the waterspout at the end of Shanklin Chine, will sneer at all you can humbly venture to say about Interlachen or Aosta. And when those who ought to be good, honest persons, descant upon “the beauties of our own land, if people would but look after them,” we get somewhat angry. Not that we deny the glories of an English landscape—Heaven forbid we ever should!—if there was only the afternoon sunlit glade upon which the curtain rises for the romance of Ivanhoe left in our country to keep up the character for sylvan beauty: but these remarks are always made in depreciation of some foreign spot the speaker has never visited. We would, on such occasions, always provide him with a handbook, and a private set of memoranda to boot, of the choicest hotels and least deceptive *vetturini* on the high roads of Europe, that they might go forthwith and be undeceived. The observation that we so often hear made of “England being the place for everything, after all,” is, as re-

gards travelling, as deceptive as the absurd one that our school-days are our happiest—at least we judge by our own—and we suppose that the discipline of Merchant Taylors' may be considered a fair type of the unmeaning severity with which boys are treated at public schools, the unjust torture which is felt at the time, and, sometimes, dispassionately recollected.

For all such notions are conventional; and conventionality is the log that old slow coaches lay across the railway upon which the train of social improvement is to run, with first, second, and even third-class passengers. But many things hitherto considered unimpeachable—that is to say, conventionally so—are, we rejoice to say, finding their level. Dreary five-act comedies, which we know of as “standard” from the play-bills, as we know of something else of the same name in Cornhill from the milestones; dismal dinner-parties, the battles of which are desperately fought with heavy silver spoons, different champagne-glasses to any one ever saw before, new methods of drinking wine, and wine-coolers in which bottles are stuck without an atom of ice, but merely put there because the coolers are silver; the notion with some men that a cigar must be smoked after breakfast or during billiards, if they would have their lives worth a day's purchase; putting different trousers on on Sundays; declaring that you derive more pleasure from the Ancient Concerts, or listening to “Septettes” in ever so many flats, played to many more, than from Bellini or Auber: all these things—very slowly, but surely—are disappearing; and we hope soon to number also amongst them the frequenters of English watering-places.

We do not say the places themselves, but their habitués; for with these latter lies the fault of making them so dreary as they are. Let us take three resorts, by way of example, as typical of what we wish to explain—Brighton, Ramsgate, and Margate. They are Cockney specimens—*pur sang*—we admit; but after all, the much-abused and burlesqued epithet pertains to a great deal that is ardently followed and copied amongst those who would be the last to confess it. We might, perhaps, except Margate, on the ground that there is a rampant, glorious vulgarity about it, which makes it at times marvellously entertaining. There is no aiming in the deportment of the Margate visitors: you may dress as well as you please all day long, and still be allowed to go unnoticed. Nay, if we recollect aright, there was some sylvan retreat within scent of the sea-weed,

where you could procure a tea "in a pleasing style of rusticity at eightpence per head," without being stared at; and if, after the Arcadian meal, you had chosen to dance a fandango amongst the cups and saucers, in the style of the renowned Baron of Rosherville, and in your own buff slippers, you might have done it, and yet, somehow or another, kept within the pale of Margate society. And so, we will not further speak of Margate beyond two words of praise—one for its breakfast-bread, and the other for Cobb's ale.

But at Ramsgate all this is very different. The good advice which we once saw pasted under a kitchen clock, of "a time for everything and everything at its time," might well be engraved at the end of the pier. For there is a proper order of doing things there whether you like it or no. You must bathe at a certain time, in order to be ready at the proper period to read old novels on the sands, and tumble backwards in your arm-chairs, or have your shoes—they don't like slippers at Ramsgate—filled with specimens of the aforesaid sands by the ceaseless toil of the infantile labouring classes with their spades. And when this period has elapsed, woe betide you if you are not ready to go home to lunch! To be seen about at such a period in the streets would be as bad as a West-end man to be detected in London on the Derby Day, the Middle Horticultural Fête, or the beginning of September; it would be taken that you had neither lunch nor lodgings. Having lunched on bread-and-butter—if at a boarding-house, yesterday's joint cold in addition—you dress for the time of going on the pier, and there you must walk with a pertinacity that would tire the Wandering Jew, until it is time "to see the boat come in." The spectacle is not exciting; if you have a friend on board, you recognise and nod to him; and then do not know what else to do but to keep nodding on like a mandarin, and smiling, until he dives after his luggage; if you know nobody, you wait for the grand finale of seeing the passengers come up the steps, and then the show is over. And then comes the sadness of the after-promenade—of meeting those you know, once, and having a small conversation with them on the topics of the day; and then meeting them at the next turn, and saying, "Still here, you see;" and then meeting them coming back, and gasping, "What, not gone yet!" and then not knowing for twelve more turns what the deuce to say, but trying not to see them at all, or smiling blandly sideways

as they pass. This goes on until it is time to go home and do nothing for an hour before dinner, literally from having nothing to do; and then you dine. If you are in lodgings, a desolate chop from a sheep who may have been fed on shrimps, or anything else that came handy; or a melancholy fowl who may have been brought up upon those marine plants you pop with your fingers, and so inflated rather than fattened, is your meal. If at a boarding-house, you meet those wonderful old ladies one never encounters anywhere else; who, when they have said, "Have you been out to-day, Miss Pippy?" to the very person they met on the pier, think that the dinner-conversation is established. And to see them squabble afterwards at cards: that certainly, for a little time, is amusing. Then comes the library—the time for that is nine; the "chances"—well may they be termed so—for the six-shilling ticket; the watch, or work-box, or caddy, that is to form the grand sweepstakes; the same people you have seen in the morning, noon, and night, whom, if you do not know, you are bound to look at disdainfully. This, a little after ten, concludes the day, and has only one good point—you may win a ticket, and that is a safe employment for two hours the next morning in selecting out its value from the mass of purses, pomatum, bandoline, mats, and chimney ornaments that confound you. In this respect, let us award all praise to Mr. Sackett and Mr. Fuller for their oft-tried patience, their courtesy, and wish to oblige.

The same remarks, with little variation, apply to Brighton. But here less is aimed at; it is Regent-street planted quite at its ease upon the cliffs. You know all the faces and equipages you meet, and you meet them as a matter of course. Sensible people do not go there for relaxation, but as a conventional duty they owe to society: the weak-minded believe that it is pure tranquil enjoyment. Look upon Brighton as a bright amphibious resuscitation of the London season, and it is glorious; talk of it as a sea-side resort for letting down the tightly drawn strings of your occupied life, and the failure is painful. If you "went in" for comfort and carelessness you would soon find out your mistake. In a shooting-jacket, a ballet-girl shirt (or a quieter pattern if you choose), and a loose single-tied Joinville, you would directly be taught to shrink from the noon sun like a convolvulus. An Ojibbeway would not attract more attention. You might as well, being grown

up, ride from Norfolk-square to the Albion Hotel in a goat-chaise.

In contradistinction to all this imaginary enjoyment, let us take the pleasant, careless Boulogne. It has been customary to deride this new keyhole to the Continent; to joke about the mobs who fly there, like the ships, for a harbour of refuge; to allude to "stags" and sharpers, and broken incomes—in fact, to throw every possible slur upon it and its inhabitants. And yet there is no place in the world where really pleasant relaxation can be so readily procured, and at such a cheap rate. You will be told by its enemies that Boulogne is now quite an English town. Don't believe them. What is there English in its gay, lively port, and lines of smart hotels—its thoroughly continental Rue Neuve Chaussée and *moyen-âge* Upper Town—its *poissarde* population, with their short red petticoats and naked legs, or blue stockings—its hundreds of glittering white caps in the *Place* on market-day? Walk a mile away from it in any direction—towards Wimereux, Wimille, or Portel—and you will see as much of France as though you had been right across it from Boulogne to Besançon. Where will you show us such a glorious stroll as that along the cliffs to Ambleteuse, with the sea and the picturesque rocks and martello towers so far below you, and literally in sight of home all the way, if the day be but moderately clear?

You need not make yourself smart to go on the pier at Boulogne; you might wander about dressed in the popular costume of Robinson Crusoe all day, if you pleased, and no one would turn his head to look after you; and if there is no better amusement than to watch and hear the small impish children play marbles, and squabble in French, why that is something. But seeing the boat come in is here something worth waiting for. It is a glorious sight to watch her, if the wind is strong, and the tide somewhat low, rolling and plunging over the bar; and the debarkation of the passengers is as good as a farce, especially if there are two or three undecided in their minds as to their abode, for then they are sure to go to all manner of hotels at once, so urgently do the touters urge the claims of their various establishments.

There is no *ennui* at Boulogne, because there is no conventional observance of rules for deportment. Everybody does what he likes; not what he thinks he ought to like. And,

if you wish it, there is a charming private society. In fact, Boulogne is fining down to exceeding respectability; for it has become a trifle too expensive for the outlawed tribes, and they have emigrated, many, we believe, to Calais. It is still much cheaper than England, even to casual visitors, the ordinary expenses of staying there being, compared with the resorts above alluded to, as two to three. The pleasant excitement of a trip thither lasts to the very return; for are you not in duty bound to smuggle eau-de-Cologne, gloves, embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs, and trifling jewellery? It is true, to be sure, you may get everything at the same rate in the Lowther Arcade; but that is a very dull way of procuring them. Every contraband article becomes an object of interest, far more valuable than the unmeaning "trifle from" any of the home watering-places we have before alluded to.

Newspaper statistics show you, from time to time, the numbers who pass from Folkestone to Boulogne, compared with the last year. Increase the proportion every season, and you will not repent of having done so.

XXVIII.

THE COMPLAINT OF THE FOREIGN-OFFICE CLERK.

CONFOUND the telegraphs and war,
 And letters sent off wet!
 Confound the Russians and their Czar!
 Confound the whole *Gazette!*
 I thought at last upon the Alps
 That you and I should meet,
 But *now* you are at Chamouni,
 And I'm in Downing-street.

I made my plans, I fixed the day,
 I got some thick-soled shoes
 To "do the Alps;" and on the way
 I meant to buy a blouse.
 I lost myself in visions bright,
 Day-dreaming of the treat,
 To be with you at Chamouni,
 Away from Downing-street.

I thought of those dark pine-tree woods,
 Those fern-clad granite cells,
 Those channels of the glacier floods,
 Those sweet-toned cattle bells.
 That milk—these girls—those *fraises du bois*—
 In fact, those things you meet
 At every turn in Chamouni,
 But not in Downing-street.

And, Annie dear, I thought of you—
 A poet would say "thee"—
 In that "unclouded weather blue"
 (That's Tennyson, not me,
 Or rather "I"), but all my wits
 Have beaten a retreat,
 Whilst thinking you're at Chamouni,
 And I'm in Downing-street.

And worst of all, I thought of *him*,
 And came a shadow dark—
 That wretched boy, with figure slim,
 You rode with in the Park.
 I know at every table d'hôte
 By *you* he'll take his seat,
 And you will talk of Chamouni,
 Nor *think* of Downing-street.

Annie! I'm sure that you must own
 You can't like such a muff,
 Whose small moustache has not yet grown,
 But still remains like pluff.
 His French is vile—he cannot dance,
 I'd waltz him off his feet;
 But muffs come out at Chamouni,
 Who're crushed in Downing-street.

I feel that it is very wrong,
 But get him to go up
 What he, no doubt, would call Mont *Blong*,
 And at the Mulets sup;
 And in the dark down some crevasse
 A proper end he'll meet,
 And then, perchance, at Chamouni,
 You'll think of Downing-street.

A postman's knock—they're very long—
 A letter! and from *you*!
 You dear, dear thing! I was *so* wrong!
 You're still as nice as true.
 And "muff" has not been there at all!
 All love then till we meet;
 And *you* shall talk of Chamouni,
 And I—of Downing-street.

XXIX.

MR. GRUBBE'S NIGHT WITH MEMNON.

IN the far west of London—preserving many traces of its original characteristics, amidst the wide expanse of architectural innovations which are continually springing up around it—there is a sober and antiquated, but withal respectable, locality, known to those travellers whose enterprise has led them thus far into the occidental suburbs, as Brompton. It is a district principally inhabited by theatricals, literati, and small annuitants; and is much esteemed on account of the salubrity of its climate, the mildness of its society, and the economy of its household arrangements. Its chief natural curiosities are tea-parties and old ladies; and its overland journey to London is performed in omnibuses, unless the route by water is preferred. But this is somewhat circuitous—Cadogan Pier, which is the nearest port, standing in the same relation to Brompton as Civita Vecchia does to Rome.

Mr. Withers Grubbe, who was an old inhabitant of this pleasant village, resided in a modest tenement situate at the edge of the great Fulham-road. His establishment comprised himself and his housekeeper—a staid woman of matronly appearance—from which circumstance it may be fairly presumed that he was either a widower or a bachelor; but the uncertainty as to which of these two orders of single life he came under will be quite removed when we state that he was an antiquary, an entomologist, and a general natural philosopher, somewhat resembling a cocoa-nut, being shrivelled in external appearance, but possessing a good heart or kernel, and not entirely destitute of the milk of human kindness. As his favourite pursuits had been, from time immemorial, at variance with matrimony, he had never taken unto himself a wife. Once, and once only, did his friends speak of his falling in love. It was in the Park, one bright frosty morning, when he saw a lady, whose cloak somewhat resembled the delicate tintings of the privet moth; but this lepidopterous attachment was very

transient, and the next chrysalis of the Sphynx Atropos, or number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* that came to hand, immediately banished it from his mind. And he was an occasional correspondent to the aforementioned humorous publication. He had sent them a drawing of the old key of his dust-bin, and a dissertation upon several worn-out brass button-tops he had from time to time picked up in his walks, believing them to be ancient coins; as well as a plan of the Roman encampment on the Birmingham Railway, and other interesting articles, the majority of which were "declined, with thanks," by the venerable and undying Mr. Urban. He belonged also to most of the learned and scientific bodies, to all of whom he read the rejected contributions, so that his time was pretty well occupied, and more especially in the spring; for then his larvæ and aureliæ broke forth into a new life, and there was such a buzzing, and fluttering, and pinning, and labelling all over the house, with intrusive butterflies getting into the bedrooms, and strange caterpillars walking up and down stairs, that people of ordinary nerves, and uninterested in insect architecture, were afraid to go into the house. But he cherished all his living things with singular affection, even to the moths which had fattened upon his waistcoats, and the cockroaches which ran about his kitchen; although Mrs. Weston, the housekeeper, could never understand that the former insects only did any mischief in their first stage of existence, and that the latter were looked upon as sacred things, from the high veneration they were held in amongst the ancient Egyptians. The poor ignorant woman, in the darkness of her intellect, classed them as "warmint."

The great aim of Mr. Grubbe's labours was to get up some paper that should produce a striking sensation in the learned world by the novel facts that it might disclose—a consummation which had never yet arrived, for his most interesting discoveries had always been forestalled. To this great end did he consume his midnight patent stearine; for this did he burn holes in all his carpets with the contents of his galvanic battery, and get phosphorus under his nails, or take all the colour from his table-covers; in prosecuting this endeavour, by rubbing his buffer of black lead over cartridge paper, laid upon engraved stones and brass tablets to take the impression, was he three times apprehended for Swing, and once for sacrilege. But hitherto he had never produced any extraordinary impression beyond that which his appearance created with the rustics;

and although he was a walking catalogue of the British Museum—far more copious and elaborate than those hired by country visitors at contiguous fishmongers' and public-houses—he found every object therein had been so often and so minutely described that nothing fresh was left to dilate upon. And this opinion for a time subdued his energy, until one evening he was present at the unrolling of a mummy. He listened with intense attention to the remarks of the lecturer, and envied him the proud position he was for the time placed in, as the descriptive link between the present and the long-past epochs. But when the ceremony was finished, and Mr. Grubbe found, upon reviewing the lecture, that our acquaintance with the ancient Egyptians extended just far enough to show that we knew nothing at all about them, a fresh chain of research presented itself to his mind, and from that time every other pursuit was merged in the depths of the Great Pyramid, or perched upon the edge of Belzoni's sarcophagus. He made a mummy of his favourite cat, called his abode Sphynx Cottage, and allowed the kitchen to swarm with cockroaches—which he called scarabæi, and Mrs. Weston black beads—more than ever.

Things stood thus when, one sultry July morning, a learned friend called to beg his company in a visit to the docks, to view some wonderful organic remains, not yet landed, which a ship had brought from a distant country. Mr. Grubbe immediately prepared for the excursion; and after having drawn an odd pair of boots upon the wrong legs in his absence of mind, as well as omitted to take off his duffel dressing-gown, he gave himself up to the care of Mrs. Weston, who finally pronounced him fit to appear in the public streets. He accordingly started with his friend, taking the omnibus to the Bank, whence they proceeded to the docks on foot, saving the other sixpence; and beguiling the journey with many curious arguments and opinions upon ichthyosauri and the blue lias clay.

The inspection of the fossils was most satisfactory, and they were pronounced highly interesting, the more so because several of them were perfectly incomprehensible; and notwithstanding the confined and heated places in which they were stowed, Mr. Grubbe poked about amongst the packing-cases, covered with dust and perspiration, and dragging his friend after him, until every available object had been investigated, and they emerged from the hold into the free air. A fresh treat now awaited him. His friend was attached to everything old equally with

himself, and old wine possessed no insignificant share of his affections. With praiseworthy foresight he had provided a tasting-order as a crowning finish to their excursion; and having raised Mr. Grubbe's curiosity by mysterious hints of pipes and casks that had long slumbered in cool excavations below the level of the Thames, and wine more generous, oily, and sparkling than ever came into the dealers' hands, they were not long in providing themselves with inches of candle in split laths, and following their guide—a priest of Bacchus in high-lows and corduroys—into the bowels of the docks. How long they lingered therein we are ashamed to state; nor will we tell the world too ruthlessly how many casks were broached by the relentless gimlet; how the wine leaped bright and creaming from the wood; how the glasses held twice the ordinary quantity, and how they were even rinsed out with claret and Madeira, which was thrown about amongst the sawdust like water. Neither will we betray the number of samples tasted by the visitors; nor do more than just hint at Mr. Grubbe's slapping the cellarman on the back for a good fellow, and endeavouring to strike up an ancient bacchanalian melody, sung by Dignum in his young days. We only know that this subterranean sojourn was protracted to a period we blush to chronicle, delayed, no doubt, by a learned disquisition, poured forth by Mr. Grubbe, upon the home-made wines of Thebes, which ended just as they got to the top of the staircase, and stood once more, blinking and confused, in the glaring sunshine of a July afternoon. And terrible was the effect of the warm atmosphere upon their temperaments before a few minutes had passed. Whiz-z-z-z-z-z went their eyes and brains together; the ships flew round and round like the revolving boats at Greenwich fair, and the warehouses heaved and rolled as the billows of the sea. It was with great difficulty, amidst this general *bouleversement* of surrounding objects, that the two men of science staggered to the gate, and deposited themselves in the first omnibus that passed. They had not particularly inquired in what direction it was going; and, in consequence, after much travelling, Mr. Grubbe was somewhat surprised to find the vehicle stop in Tottenham-court-road, when he expected to be at the White Horse Cellar. But he was in the humour for treating every mishap that might have occurred with exceeding levity; and finding that the locality suited his friend just as well, even better than Piccadilly, he wished him good-by very affectionately, and took advantage

of its proximity to pay a visit to his favourite British Museum, partly in the belief that its cool tranquillity would allay his cerebral excitement.

He left his inseparable gingham umbrella—which answers the double purpose of keeping off the rain when open, and serving as a portmanteau of collected curiosities when shut—with the porter upon entering; and then turned his steps towards the Egyptian Gallery, which was his usual lounge, still cherishing some vague notion that his skull had turned into a bag of hydrogen, so elastic and vivacious was his step. There were, as usual, a great many people gaping about and asking foolish questions of the attendant; some mixing up the Sphinx with the fossils they had seen, and asking if it ever was alive; others feeling rather afraid of going too near the mummies by themselves; and the others lost in mental arguments as to whether the colossal fist of red granite was a thunderbolt or the hand of a petrified giant; together with a great many ill-conducted little boys, with no veneration for antiquities, who laughed at the different objects as they would have done at any of Mr. W. Bradwell's wondrous creations in pantomime. Heedless of the visitors, Mr. Grubbe was soon lost in mighty speculations upon the mysterious productions by which he was surrounded; and so continued until the constant shuffling of feet and increasing influx of strangers, whose inane remarks grated upon his learned ears, drove him from the block upon which he was sitting to some more remote corner of the gallery. Ensnaring himself in a recess behind one of the enormous heads, and screened by a sarcophagus, he fell into a fresh train of intense thought upon hieroglyphics in general, and those of mummies in particular. To this succeeded a confused picture of wine-vaults, pyramids, docks, claret casks, and megatheria; and finally, overcome by the influence of heat, fatigue, and the tiring-order, he fell fast asleep.

How long he slumbered remains to this day a mystery, and probably ever will be so. But when he awoke, all was still and quiet as the interior of the Theban tombs; the gallery was entirely deserted, and the moon was pouring a flood of light through the windows, which fell upon the statues and remains, rendering them still more cold and ghastly. In an instant the truth broke upon the unhappy antiquary: he had been overlooked when the Museum was cleared at seven o'clock, and was locked in—bolted, barred, almost hermetically shut up in

the gallery, in the most remote part of the building, with nothing but stony monsters and crumbling mortality for his associates! Chilled to the heart with terror, despair, and the reaction of his previous excitement, he started from his corner with the intention of trying the doors, when his movement was arrested by the chime of a clock. He knew the sound well: it was the bell of St. George's, Bloomsbury, and it proclaimed the hour of twelve! And he was there alone—alone, at midnight, in the Egyptian chamber of the British Museum. In a frenzy of terror he rushed towards the large doors, in the hope of finding them open; but they were fast closed, and he rattled the handles until the whole building rang again with the echoes. Hark! what was that sound? The echo had died away, and was now renewed, although he had desisted from his impotent attempts to gain some mode of egress. It sounded from above, and now came nearer and nearer, louder and louder, like the deadened and regular beat of muffled drums. There were footsteps too—he could plainly distinguish them, in audible progression, coming down stairs, and now a fearful spectacle met his horrified gaze. The immense marble scarabæus on the floor of the gallery vibrated with incipient animation; and then it stretched forth its huge feelers, and opened its massy wings, like a newly-born insect trying the properties of its novel limbs; and next, with the heavy cumbrous motion of a tortoise, it crept across the floor, throwing back the moonbeams from its polished surface, towards the principal entrance of the gallery. Tramp, tramp, tramp,—onward came the noise, as of a great assembly, the drums still keeping up their monotonous accompaniment, and at last they approached close to the door, which quivered immediately afterwards with three loud knocks upon its panels from without. As the hapless Mr. Grubbe shrank still further into the recess, the large beetle scuffled nearer the door, and then raising one of its hideous feelers, it turned the handle. The gigantic granite first moved by itself towards the entrance, and repeated the signal on the panels; and, at the last blow, a sound like the low rumbling of thunder echoed through the edifice, and the door flew open, admitting a glare of purple light, that for a few moments blinded the terrified intruder, whilst on either side the Memnon and the Sphynx retreated back against the wall to allow room for the dismal cortége that approached.

The whole collection of mummy-cases in the rooms above

had given up their inmates, who now glided down the staircase, one after another, to join their ancient compatriots of the gallery below, lifting up the covers of their painted tombs, and stretching out their pitched and blackened arms to welcome them. And next, the curious monsters with the birds' heads, who up to this moment had remained patiently sitting against the side of the room with their hands upon their knees, rose courteously to salute their visitors. The light which filled the apartment, although proceeding from no visible point, grew brighter and brighter, until it assumed the brilliancy of oxy-hydrogen, and when the last of the dusty and bandaged guests had arrived, the doors closed violently, and the orgies began. The figures in the pictures became animated and descended from the tablets, being by far the most attractive portion of the company, either male or female, as they were semblances of life, bearing amphoræ of the choicest wine from the vineyards of Memphis; strange birds in long striped tunics, and stranger creations, whose shapes inherited an attribute of every class of the animal kingdom, acted as attendants, and obsequiously waited upon the superior deities; whilst the great feature of the gallery—the mystic, awe-inspiring Memnon, moved in stately progress to the end of the room, and commenced pouring forth that wondrous harmony with which at sunrise and twilight he welcomes his early worshippers. Then commenced an unearthly galopade—a dreary carnival of the dead, to the music of their master, accompanied by the strange sounds of instruments brought by the mummies most inclined to conviviality from the glass-cases up stairs. But the strangest sight in the whole spectacle was the curious way in which Mr. Grubbe, despite his fears, perceived that they mingled ancient with modern manners when the dance came to an end. Some of the animated Egyptians betook themselves to pipes and beer; others brought large aërolites from the different rooms, and began to play at ninepins with the inferior household gods of blue glazed clay; one young Memphian even went so far as to thrust an enormous hook, as big as an anchor, through the body of the scarabæus, and then spin him at the end of a rope round the room; and finally, they wheeled a sarcophagus into the centre of the gallery, and filled it with what Mr. Grubbe's nose told him was excellent mixed punch, which they tiddled until the eyes of Memnon twinkled with conviviality, as he snuffed up the goodly aroma; and at length, forgetting his

dignity altogether, volunteered to play the Aurora waltzes (in compliment of course to his mother) out of his head. The monumental punch-bowl was directly pushed on one side, and they began to dance again, Mr. Grubbe getting gradually more and more excited by the music, until, unable to contain himself any longer, he rushed from his recess, and seizing a fair young daughter of the Nile round the waist, was in an instant whirling round in the throng of deities, mummies, hieroglyphics, ibises, and anomalous creations which composed the assembly. The hours flew along like joyous minutes, and still the un-earthly waltz was continued with persisting energy, until Mr. Grubbe's brain became giddy and bewildered. His strength also began to fail, in spite of the attractions of his young Memphienne, whose soft downy cheeks, roguish kissable lips, and supernaturally sparkling eyes, had for a time made him forget his age. He requested her to stop in their wild gyrations, but she heeded him not; breathless and exhausted, he was pulled round and round, whilst the Memnonian orchestra played itself louder and louder, until at length, losing all power, he fell down in the midst of the dancers. Twenty others, who had been twirling onwards, not perceiving their prostrate companion, immediately lost their footing; and finally, the whole assembly, like so many bent cards, giddy with wine and excitement, bundled one over the other, the unfortunate antiquary being the undermost of the party. In vain he struggled to be free—each moment the pressure of the superincumbent Egyptians increased; until, in a last extremity—unable to breathe, bruised by their legs and arms, and half-suffocated with mummy-dust—he gave a few fruitless gasps for air, and then became insensible.

It was broad daylight when he once more opened his eyes; and the motes were dancing in the bright morning sunbeams that darted into the gallery. There were sounds of life and motion, too, on every side (although no one had as yet entered the apartment), and the rumble of distant vehicles in the streets. It was some little time before Mr. Grubbe could collect his ideas, for his brain was still slightly clouded—his lips also were parched, and his eyeballs smarting with the revelry of the night. But there he still was, in the room, surrounded by his late company, although they had now resumed their usual situations; the Memnon and the Sphynx were vis-à-vis, and the scarabæus in his customary place, as cold and inani-

mate as ever; whilst the gigantic fist had once more taken possession of its pedestal, and the gentlemen with the curious heads were sitting with their hands upon their knees in their wonted gravity. But, notwithstanding all this chill reality, the antiquary's mind was in a tumult of excitement. The dim undying magic of ancient Egypt was still in force, unconquered by time or distance. He had been admitted to the orgies of Memnon; he had watched the revelries and manners of the hitherto mysterious race; above all, he had gleaned information for a paper that would bring the Society of Antiquaries at his feet in wondrous veneration!

The doors were, ere long, thrown open, and Mr. Grubbe left the gallery unnoticed. On arriving at Brompton, he found Mrs. Weston in a state of extreme terror and exhaustion, having watched the whole night for her master's return, that worthy gentleman never having passed so long a period from home. He retired immediately to his study, and laboured until dusk with unceasing industry; and from that period Egypt alone occupied his thoughts. He thought of nothing else by day, and dreamed of that subject only at night. The subject grew beneath his hands and ideas, and what with the circumstances he imagined, and those he dreamed about—for in his labours he ever confounded them together—the work is still unfinished; and he will not give it to the world in an imperfect condition, although his most intimate friends already fear that his application is affecting his brain. But when his task is concluded, great will be his triumph: he will have furnished—at least such is his expectation—a key to all the mystic customs of the early Nile; the hidden lore of Memphis will be unravelled to the million; he will walk abroad a thing for men to gaze at and reverence; and his name will go down to posterity in company with Memnon and the Great Pyramid.

These are his own anticipations. His intimate friends have only one hope—that he will be spared from Bedlam sufficiently long to perfect his colossal undertaking; and that on no account will he be induced any more to venture with a tasting-order to the docks.

XXX.

ADDRESS SPOKEN BY MRS. KEELEY

ON THE FIRST REPRESENTATION OF

“ MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT,”

At the Lyceum Theatre, July 8, 1844.

No ghostly legend cull'd from mouldy page,
And “ carefully adapted to the stage;”
No grand romantic drama, deep and dire,
Filled with “ terrific combats” and red fire,
Boast we to-night. No flimsy plot shall trench
Upon our scene “ translated from the French;”
But one in deep emotions far more rife—
The powerful romance of common life!

We owe this story of the present hour
To that great master hand, whose graphic power
Can call up laughter, bid the tear-drop start,
And find an echoing chord in every heart.
One we have learned to deem a household friend,
Who, 'midst his varied writings, never penn'd
One line that might his guileless pages spot,
One word that “ dying he would wish to blot.”

We know there is around his simple name
A prestige thrown, your sympathies to claim;
But our poor playwright, feeling well his task,
Has sent me forth your clemency to ask.
And some old friends, selected from the rest—
Of human kind the sweetest and the best—
Presuming on the fellowship of yore,
Crowd forth, your patient hearing to implore.

Good *Mr. Pickwick* first, with smiling face
And kindly heart, implores your patient grace;

Then arm in arm, led onwards by one will,
The *Brothers Cheeryble* endorse our bill,
And warm by kindness, ever both alike,
The timid hopes of poor neglected *Smike*;
Whilst not unmindful of your past kind deeds,
Oliver Twist next for indulgence pleads.
Dick Swiveller, who has crept here by stealth,
"Passes the rosy" ere he drinks your health,
Surrounded by those friends we know so well,
Watch'd over by the shade of *Little Nell*.
Next laughing at *Joe Willett* in our train,
Dear *Dolly Varden* flirts, and laughs again,
And hopes your pleasure will not be alloyed
Because she knows that *Miggs* will be annoyed.
And lastly, whilst around both cot and hall
The echoes of the Christmas Carol fall,
Bob Cratchet on raised wages, spruce and trim,
Leads forwards, with his crutch, poor *Tiny Tim*.

The others are to come. In anxious state
Behind the scenes your fiat they await.
Be satisfied, for yours and their behoof,
They'll do the best they can; now to the proof!

XXXI.

THE DILIGENCE.

A SKETCH ON THE ROAD.

“ ALLONS, messieurs, montez ! Monsieur Schmeet ! Numéro un ! ”

There is no response.

“ Monsieur Smeece ! ”

Still no rejoinder.

“ Monsieur Schmits ! ” cried the conducteur, after an oath ; and then, having some vague idea that “ Smith ” is the name intended, and that it must be meant for ourselves, we climb up the step, and tumble down into the corner of the intérieur, doomed to be our prison for the next thirty hours.

Thirty hours ! All the people now clustering about the office will dine, and go to bed, and sleep, and get up again, and dine once more, and we shall still be in that corner ! That foreign gentleman in spectacles and a felt hat, without a shirt-collar, who has not washed his face, and is breakfasting from a cigarette, will get through the day at his “ bureau,” and idle away the evening at his café, and sleep—the chimney-pots only know where—and perhaps be here again to-morrow morning : and the corner will still contain us ! They have written up over the door, “ Dijon in thirty hours ! ” as if it was an achievement of rapidity. We look upon it with different views ; to us it only suggests a note of alarm instead of admiration, that we have all that time to pass before we get there.

The lading is completed. The men have pulled tight the leathern rick-cloth-looking coverlid by the thongs and iron rings ; the three leaders are fighting and neighing, and being sworn at by the postilion, as they try to turn round and run against their own splinter-bars ; the passengers have all climbed into their respective places, and settled down in them hopelessly, as though they meant to grow there for ever ; the conducteur mounts on to the box—he will not come into the banquette until night approaches—with his portfolio between his teeth ; and at last we are off.

“Hi!” The huge whip cracks like a succession of discharges from a mighty electrifying machine, as we lumber round the corner, and every thin pane of glass in the hatter’s shop rattles with the vibration of our great vehicle over the stones. The signs, and names, and people who come to the door to see us pass, go by like objects in a magic lantern. We catch them rapidly one after another — “Nouveautés et Rouenneries.” “Cachot, Ferblantier-Lampiste en tous genres.” “A la Ville de Lyon.” “Café du Midi.” “Boidart-Minet, Marchand de Vins, en gros et en détail.” “Au Sanglier. Charcuterie.” “Maison succursale de la Belle Jardinière: Vêtements d’homme: grand choix de vingt-cinq mille paletots de Paris” — and then more streets, and gapers, and carts that will get in the way, and rattling shop-windows, and oaths, and whip detonations, until we squeeze through a small arch, about half the size every way of the diligence, and emerge into the country, when the excitement suddenly ceases, and the pace drops from the display of the streets to the heavy six miles an hour that we are doomed to for the rest of the journey. We look for the first time at our companions. They are all foreign; and, as such, have crammed the straps of the roof with those wonderful caps, baskets, sticks, umbrellas, and odd parcels, that you only see abroad. An old man is opposite to us, with a black velvet cap and snuffy neckcloth tie: and we know we shall have many encounters with his legs during the night. Then there is a woman in a cap, who appears to be going hundreds of miles with no other luggage than a bird-cage and a basket, in which last are some sour plums and pieces of bread. Next to us is a dirty man with a velveteen coat and two days’ beard, who has been eating garlic, and has no luggage at all. And the other passengers are two fat women, who will look worse, we know, when they wake up in the morning than it is possible to conceive.

Why do all French women get so fat and hideous, and have the air of sinking at once into monthly nurses after they turn forty? The matron, who forms so beautiful a class of our unequalled English females, is not known amongst them: the “grosse maman” of Paul de Kock and Daumier is really and truly their only phase of maturity. They can’t help it, to be sure; but they might avoid light jean trodden-over boots and short petticoats under similar circumstances.

“Hi!” We are crawling on. The people have pulled up all

the windows, to stew and swelter according to their wont; for your foreigners have a great dislike to fresh air. We have, however, the command of one pane, and we let this down, and resolutely keep it so; it is more agreeable, even with the dust and flies.

Oh! don't begin to talk, there's good people: your conversation is as wearying and uninteresting as that of farmers in an up Monday morning train. We know all you are about to say; you are sure to tell one another where you have come from and where you are going to; and it is all nothing when we know. Your affairs, too, have little moment in them. Do you imagine, madame, that it can possibly beguile our time, or interest us, to know that you have a sister married at Dôle, and that last year she went for two weeks with her husband to Paris? We shall not utter any of those exclamations of surprise at the remarkable occurrence that your compatriots will; tell them, and they will be astonished; but don't bore us. It is nothing to go to Paris—it is not, indeed; even the Lord Mayor did it the other day. And what is there in the fact of your married sister living at Dôle? She must live somewhere; and why not there? It is a dull, common-place town enough. If she had chosen to live half way down the crater of Vesuvius, the position might have interested us.

They are all off; and now they won't stop for some hours. The old man in the velvet cap informs the society that he has something the matter with his skin, and is going to some famous baths in consequence. We don't see the necessity of his mentioning that; but immediately all the others tell him that they have had relations with refractory skins, and each recommends a different course; and this pleasing subject, and the observations it gives rise to, last full two hours.

"Hi!" Still the monotonous cry of the postilion, and the djing-djing-djing of the bells on the horses' headpieces, as they walk at a snail's pace up a small rise. A miserable beggar knows they always walk up here, so he lies in wait at the bottom, and whines by our side all the way to the top. Presently we come to an inn where they change. We are hurried into a rude *salle-à-manger*, where there is feeble soup and tasteless bouilli, and something very nasty made with veal, and a thin warm fowl with cold water-cresses, and some hard pears and rough wine and sourish bread, and three francs to pay. But we eat eagerly and pay cheerfully; anything for a

relief from the dusty intérieur! Only the coupé dines with us; the others have some potage and an omelette, and pay sixteen sous, at a side-table. One woman—she with the unripe plums—makes a light repast without leaving the diligence; and another, in the rotonde, finishes a hard-boiled egg, which she has fished up from amongst the cherries, rags, birdseed, and chocolate crumbs of her basket. At last the sun goes out of our eyes, and night comes on; the passengers have got quiet—some of them, even now, are having a dusty doze; and we begin to think about sleep.

Only to think about it, though. We never yet slept in a carriage, and we don't suppose this night will be different to the others. The corner is uncomfortable; you can't lay your head against it for your shoulders, and the loop at the side of the window is too high up, or too low down. At all events, it is useless; for when you put your elbow in it and rest your head upon your hand, and you think you are all right, it flies away and lets your face down suddenly, and chucks your chin, perhaps, and you are much worse off than ever. All the old programme is gone through once more. You arrange your legs with your neighbour for the fiftieth time, and place your cheek gravely and philosophically against the side of the vehicle, and say to yourself, "Now I will go to sleep." But we do not, still. After flattering ourselves that we are falling off gently, we open our eyes, which we closed to strengthen the belief, and find that we are as wide awake as ever; and so, for a little diversion, we wind up our watch, rearrange our legs, and then shut our eyes again. Nearly off, by Jove! We lost our train of thought, and fancied we were in another place, surrounded by strange people. Can we have been asleep long? Alas, no; our watch has not made half a minute since we wound it up, and we are more wakeful than ever. The chins of our fellow-passengers have dropped upon their breasts, and they are dreaming. For us, we can still hear the "Hi!" of the postilion and the djing-djing-djing of the rumbles. And yet we are desperately tired. A sofa, a rug—nay, the boards, with something to put our head upon—would be paradise.

It is very evident that we cannot go to sleep leaning on our right side, so we turn over on our left. That will do beautifully. No it won't; it is not so comfortable as the other. Then we sit upright, and lean our head back, as if we were going to have a tooth out; that is worse than all. Oh dear! oh dear! we

could kick all the people violently in our watchful irritability
How nice it would be to be in bed!

At last we get into a wide-awake, dogged, open-eyed state of watchfulness that lasts quite through the night. We are reconciled now; we shall not sleep, and so we bear it patiently, in that dead calm of irritation which attends the later stages of the nettle-rash, after having scratched your wealed skin raw with a comb, or raised it to red heat with your hardest hair-brush. Heigho! we give a long, wearied yawn, and look out at the stars, for we do not even shut our eyes now—we have found out the failure.

Gaunt trees pass the windows in endless processions; thus we go through a village, locked in repose, with nobody stirring but the man with the lantern at the relais. The lamp of the diligence shines on a board, and we read “*Messageries Générales de Caillard et C^{ie}, Rue Saint-Honoré, No. 130, Paris.*” We have read that often before, but we have nothing else to do. There is a clumping about of wooden shoes, a dialogue in a rude, incomprehensible patois, a neighing and fighting of the leaders, a string of French oaths, and then the postilion once more cries “Hi!” and the bells jingle as we are on the road again.

At last morning comes—there is one consolation, it always must, if you wait for it—and we can see our companions, including the new one, who came in in the night, when the dirty man got out. They are wonderfully wrapped up, and do not look pretty; but we expect we are nothing remarkable ourself. Our eyes are smarting, and we feel caked with dust—French dust, too—not common road powder, but plaster of Paris, that would take a mould of our face if it came on to rain.

We come to a long hill, and the conducteur asks us to walk up it. Not very conscious of what we are about, we join in the blushing train of scaramouches who follow the diligence; and then, at the top, climbing and diving once more into our destined corner, we rearrange our legs with our vis-à-vis, dry-rub our face with a pocket-handkerchief, and prepare for six hours more misery, whilst the postilion still cries “Hi!” and there is no cessation to the djing-djing-djing of the bells.

XXXII.

CUCUMBER CASTLE.

THE following squib was privately printed, immediately after the opening of the Crystal Palace in 1854. It has never before been publicly circulated, but is now reproduced to show how very truly all its prophecies have been carried out.

What has been the end, in the Crystal Palace, of all the nonsense which various solemn noodles talked about "the cultivation of Art amongst the People"—whose palace it was stated to be—the unfortunate shareholders know too well. It has come down, and come down badly, to a mere trysting-place for an out-of-town holiday—and certainly a very pleasant one, which might still be made a great deal better: its only hope. The brilliant success of the original Exhibition in 1851 had nothing in the world to do with "Art" and "The People." It was a charming novelty—it was in an admirable position, where folks have ever loved to congregate, even in its normal state; and it was to be kept open only for a time, and that time during the blaze of the London season. And most beautiful, in truth, it was; but "Art" had nothing to do with its success, or its results. After all its pottery puffs, "The People" still clung to the Toby Philpot brown jugs and willow pattern plates, as they do still.

Every show since started on the Art-cant principle has been a failure, simply because the really common-place and unsuggestive, people whose names have become wound up with its direction, from nobody caring to oppose them, do not understand what the public—not "The People"—will pay for. New York, Dublin, and Manchester have failed, or barely cleared their expenses, and now another is again talked of in London! And another beyond that; and avowedly for our old friends "The People" again, in a remote northern region somewhere on the road to Hertfordshire, called Muswell Hill. If it *is* for "The People," it will, of course, be open for nothing (for they will not pay to go anywhere where they are bored), and this is

very kind of the company who have undertaken to erect it. But if any charge is made, "The People" will most likely prefer Highbury Barn, where they can amuse themselves, if they please, as they like.

After all, Mr. Gye's Floral Hall, which has nothing to do with "Art" or "The People"—in spite of its doubtful *prestige* derived from that scene of comfort and refinement, the Volunteers' Ball—will be quite as beautiful, and more accessible, than anything else. No fuss has been made about it, and nobody will be let in for "shares." The friends of "The People" at present appear to think that "Art," like cucumbers, can only be brought to perfection under glass.

Programme.

SCENE—*The Interior of the Crystal Palace on the 10th of June. There are a great many People assembled; some are very nice indeed, more are very common-place, and many excite doubts as to their having paid their two guineas for the Season Tickets, bearing a great resemblance to upper-box orders out for the day. Several Gentlemen, in evening costume, are charming; several more, in unwonted Court attire, are very uncomfortable.*

CHORUS of DISCONTENTED PEOPLE.

Oh, dear! what can the matter be?
 Hear, hear! what can that clatter be?
 Dear, dear! each will mad as a hatter be—
 Why are we seated out here?
 We paid our two guineas to place us in clover,
 But now the baize barrier we may not climb over;
 For the sight, we might all just as well be at Dover,
 Or sitting on Hungerford Pier!
 Oh, dear! &c.

LAUGHING CHORUS—"Der Freyschutz."

DIRECTORS.

Why, good people, are you raving?
 For *our* friends the seats we're saving;
 You are let in here to-day—

OFFENSIVE PARTY.

“Let in!”—yes, you well may say!

DIRECTORS.

Never mind—you’ve had to pay!

Ha, ha, ha, ha! &c.

GRAND MARCH—“*Norma Vieni.*”

The sun bursts through the Crystal roof, as THE QUEEN enters, with a brilliant army of attendant sprites. The Directors betray nervousness, as well as the Authors.

SONG—MR. LAING.

(*To the Heads of the Departments.*)

AIR—“*To all you ladies now on land*” (or, more popularly, to the celebrated Cantata, “*The Whale,*” as sung by M. Billet Roussel, the present primo tenore at the Théâtre de la Guerre, Varna).

The highest Lady in the land
Will now your Handbooks take.

In walking back, pray understand,
That no *faux pas* you make,

Brave boys!

With a fal lal, lal, lal, la, la, la! &c.

Th’ occasion for the greatest care

And best attention begs,

Lest any one should chance to get

His sword between his legs,

Brave boys!

With a fal lal, lal, lal, la, la, la! &c.

DUBIOUS CHORUS OF PRESENTERS OF HANDBOOKS.

AIR—“*Such a getting up-stairs.*”

Such a getting up-stairs, such a bowing in the middle,

Such a kneeling at the top, I never did see!

Such a backing down stairs—quite an acrobatic riddle!

If it’s toilsome to Breadalbane, oh! what must it be to me?

MR. LAING now advances, and sings to Her Majesty the following well-known Air, from "*Bombastes Furioso*."

AIR—MR. LAING.

AIR—"What will your Majesty please to wear?"

Here will your Majesty please to turn,
And Mr. Fuller's medals take,
Whose general eye o'er the whole concern
Has for some months kept him wide awake?

SONG—MR. FULLER.

AIR—"Jolly Nose."

Jolies choses you here see 'neath the Palace of Glass,
All beauties of form and of colour;
And the greater the labour, I find come to pass,
The fuller I fill it—Frank Fuller!

Jolies choses! jolies choses!

Jolies choses are displayed in your Majesty's sight,
For instruction in science and art meant,
And these medals I tender as having a right
To meddle with ev'ry department.

Jolies choses! jolies choses!

AIR (*repeated*)—MR. LAING.

Here will your Majesty please to look;
Sir Joseph Paxton now presents
The Crystal Palace's History book,
Of how it was built, and at what expense.

RECITATIVE—SIR JOSEPH PAXTON.

This is the House that Joe built.

And this is the book, if in it you look,
That describes the House that Joe built;

And its height immense, and its lavish expense,
And its horticultural ornaments
(Though we dare not say that we think it will pay,
But the best shall be done in the newspaper way),

And its acres of glass, and gardens and grass,
 And frescoes and models, and illustrious noddles,
 And stuffed bears and lynxes, and palm-trees and sphynxes,
 And lightly-clad figures of Earthmen and niggers,
 And temples and shops, and statues and strops,
 And its things for sale, and pints of pale ale,
 That lay in the House that Joe built!

AIR (*repeated*)—MR. LAING.

Here will your Majesty please incline?
 Here's Owen Jones, who's quite at home
 (Though not in an ambassadorial line)
 With the Courts of Alhambra, Greece, and Rome.

MR. OWEN JONES *advances, gracefully dancing a bolero, preceded by the Corps de Ballet of the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, specially drilled for the occasion by Mr. A. Harris.*

PAS MAURESQUE.

At the conclusion of which, MR. OWEN JONES thus declaims:

Where the Vega of Granada all its gushing wealth displays,
 And the snows of the Nevada temper summer's fervent rays,
 Where along the Alpuxarras little rills run drivelling cool;
 And his mother to Boabdil said, "Shut up, you snivelling
 fool!"

Where the wizard, David Roberts, took those views beyond
 compare,
 And the less ambitious Burford brought the spot to Leicester-
 square,
 Where the silver-winding Xenil through the plains and gardens
 smiles,
 There I found my bricks and borders—thence I brought my
 tints and tiles.

'Tis my hobby, and I ride it; but without me, all may see,
Who would bring out Longman's Missals—where would Julien's Albums be?

Gold leaf, green, cobalt, vermilion—leaves and cherries, fresh and bright;

Put me by the side of Sang—the leaden-hued by candlelight!

Crabbed minds may say mine is not like the Lion's Court at all—

That the fountain's too extensive, or the alcoves are too small;—

Never mind—I've been and done it,—jealous eyes may pry and quiz:

Bound by columns, rods, and girders, they must take it as it is.

Though the gold leaf sized upon it has a pretty penny cost,
That the shareholders may settle—*my* great chance has not been lost.

Mine the pride, and mine the glory, of these colours, tints, and tones:

Please to recollect the name—not Owen Swift, but Owen Jones.

The GITANAS form a circle round him, under cover of which he retreats.

AIR (*repeated*)—MR. LAING.

Here will your Majesty please behold
Digby Wyatt, who's got by heart
A Court-Guide of Pompeii old,
And all the Courts of Christian art?

MR. DIGBY WYATT *advances with "true courtly grace" (as the newspapers observed), and sings the following:*

SONG—MR. DIGBY WYATT.

AIR—" *Il segreto per esser felice.*"

So great is the lesson I teach ye,
I scarcely know where to begin;
Byzantium, Paris, Portici,
Are all to my service pressed in;

I have Courts Mediæval, Renaissance—

What that means I have not time to explain;

So at once will I make my obeisance,

And back myself down stairs again.

At the conclusion, MR. DIGBY WYATT backs down with great success, amidst the cheers of the Spectators, after a course of six lessons from Herr Deani (not Johnny), the celebrated Sprite, who comes backwards down stairs on a globe.

N.B.—About this time, THE QUEEN begins to be rather bored, but with graceful courtesy suppresses the yawn.

AIR (*repeated*)—MR. LAING.

These will your Majesty please to read?

Samuel Phillips* has compiled

General Handbooks, suited indeed

To the grown-up man or the sensible child.

MR. PHILLIPS advances very imposingly, in a costume something between that of an Undergraduate and Zamiel.

SONG—MR. PHILLIPS.

AIR—"Nix my doily."

At books in which the minor fry

Rank nonsense scribble, the *Times* and I

Blaze away;

With my sharp steel pen, for slaughter ripe,

Through a column or two of well-spaced type,

Oh! isn't it jolly to blaze away?

Isn't it jolly to blaze away?

CHORUS and DANCE of Mr. Phillips, Ambassadors, M.P.s, Shareholders, and all the Company in the reserved places:

Oh! isn't it jolly to blaze away?

* The late amiable and gifted literary critic of the *Times*.

And if such knowledge you would diffuse,
 Unfettered let every kind of news
 Make a way—
 The penny take off from the news-sheet damp,
 Which at present is not of a popular stamp ;
 Oh ! it would be jolly to take it away,
 It would be jolly to take it away !

CHORUS *and* DANCE *as before* ; *during which*, MR. PHILLIPS
dances down.

AIR (*repeated*)—MR. LAING.

This will your Majesty please peruse ?
 Layard's Assyrian Gazetteer ;
 But another has modelled the Doctor's views,
 For Mr. Fergusson *does* lodge here.

MR. FERGUSSON *advances, ill at ease.*

SONG—MR. FERGUSSON.

NURSERY RHYME—" *Dickery, dickery, dock.*"

Diggery, diggery, dirt,
 Stripped to the sleeves of your shirt ;
 We've long since begun,
 And for ages to run
 'Twill be diggery, diggery, dirt.

In retreating, MR. FERGUSSON *gets still more nervous, and at last, in his confusion, turns round three times, throws four somersets, pitches a pie, cuts six, and ultimately goes round on his hands and legs like a wheel, and so exits, amidst loud applause.*

AIR (*repeated*) MR. LAING:

Here will your Majesty please to own
 Professor Owen (not Owen-ap-Jones) ?
 As the " Antediluvian Pell" he's known,
 He's so uncommonly great on bones.

DUET—PROFESSOR OWEN *and* MR. WATERHOUSE
HAWKINS.AIR—" *The Monks of old.*"

- P. O. 'Tis here we unfold what monsters of old
Were masters of earth and sea ;
W. H. And what we don't know of their colours, we show
As we think they were likely to be.
P. O. Megatheria laughed and Iguanodons chaffed
W. H. At the Ichthyosaurus's fears ;
P. O. And they shrieked ha-r-r-ha-r-r !
W. H. And they squeaked ha-r-r-ha-r-r !
ENSEMBLE. In the Antediluvian years.

HER MAJESTY *being graciously pleased to encore this Duet, they sing it again, and then retire with their arms over one another's shoulders, like Acrobats after they have made their bow at the lamps.*

AIR (*repeated*)—MR. LAING.

Here will your Majesty please to scan
Books of ethnological lore,
With every sort of plant and man
Described as never they were before ?

ARIA—PROFESSOR FORBES.

AIR—" *Guy Fawkes.*"

We've here *Saforthia elegans*, *Sparmannia Africana*,
The *Phoenix dactylifera*, *Sabal Blackburniana* ;
Strange lilies will the water deck, when in the tanks we let it ;
But a little thing prevents us, for as yet we cannot get it.
But they'll grow, grow, grow,
And have a great blow out, and blossom à fleur d'eau.

SONG—DR. LATHAM.

AIR—" *A man's a man for a' that.*"

Oh! why should prudish folks pretend
To turn the head, and a' that,

From my collection made of men
 White, black, and red, and a' that?
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Tattooing, paint, and a' that;
 Though piggy's ring be in his nose,
 A man's a man for a' that!

POLACCA—MR. LAING.

Very good songs—very well sung,
 Heads of departments every one!

CHORUS of PEOPLE.

Heads of departments every one,
 We're very glad you have all of you done!

CHORUS of HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS (*despondingly*).

Such a getting down stairs, such a stumbling in the middle,
 Such crab-like locomotion, we never did see;
 And after presentation, only greater is the riddle,
 What good or use to any one such etiquette can be.

BENEDICTION—THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

(We are requested to repel, on authority and with indignation, the report that the Archbishop of Canterbury is open to engagements, during the ensuing season, to bless the Rosherville Bazaar, Cremorne, Cooke's Circus, High-bury Barn, the Lowther Arcade, the Pantheon Conservatory, Vauxhall, Madame Tussaud's, the Wellington Dining-rooms, the Plaster-cast Shops in Drury-lane, or any other shows that in their aggregate may form the Crystal Palace.)

God bless the season-ticket swells,
 God bless the shilling days,
 God bless the water-pots and wells,
 God bless the scarlet baize!

God bless the man who rents a space,
 God bless the ginger-pop,
 God bless bold Spiers and his case,
 Bless Mechi's magic strop!

God bless the road—God bless the rail—
 God bless the Sheffield wares—
 God grant there may not be much hail—
 And oh! God bless the shares!

At the conclusion of the Benediction, clouds obscure the entire building, and the Old Hundredth is heard—By degrees the mists disperse, and disclose a

GRAND ALLEGORICAL TABLEAU,

REPRESENTING

THE FUTURE!

The fountains burst forth, and arches of flowers rise round the walks in which the People are enjoying tea, with shrimps, at ninepence a head, preparatory to the Grand Display of Fireworks on the Model Picture of Constantinople during the Ramazan, at the end of the Gardens, under the direction of CHEVALIER MORTRAM.

The Old Directors, disgusted at the progressive attraction for the People, of the refreshments and amusements over the Love-of-the-Fine-Arts-Inculcation Departments, have retired; and their places are now supplied by Messrs. Wardell, Simpson, Tyler, Jullien, Laurent, and Franconi, whose experiences in catering for the essential shillings are producing a rich harvest.

The Pompeii Rooms are turned into "Cabinets Particuliers" for suppers, &c.

In the Roman and Greek Courts, Madame Wharton exhibits her Poses Plastiques—with the most severe regard to decency—every day, at 12, 3, and 8.

The Centre Transept forms a beautiful Ball-Room, under the direction of M. Laurent, of the Argyle Rooms. Masters of the Ceremonies: Messrs. Mott, Frere, and Gouriet.

The Egyptian Jugglers in the Temple of Abou-Simbel, every evening at 9; and the Great Nineveh Necromancer, in the Enchanted Palace of the Winged Bulls, at intervals.

Dr. Kahn having bought the Ethnological Parties, their places are supplied by the Zulus, Earthmen, Aztecs, Bosjesmen, Esquimaux, and others—all alive.

Unparalleled Feat of Selling Seven Hundred Muslin Dresses in Seven Minutes, by the Bouncing Brothers of Barège.

Terrific Descent of Joel Il Diavolo, on a single wire, from the Centre Transept to the Sydenham Station; Grand Fine Art Distribution of Plaster Casts by Tickets in the Wheel of Fortune; American Bowling Alleys; Shooting Gallery of Moving Hares; Swings and Roundabouts, horizontal and perpendicular; Climbing the Greased Statues of Rameses for a Shoulder of Mutton,—and a variety of other attractions too numerous to mention.

GRAND FINALE by ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND VOICES :

God save the Queen !

A WORD TO THE DIRECTORS.

Gentlemen,—You have, beyond all doubt, observed that the two great attractions at present in the Crystal Palace are the Dinners and the Brass Band. There is no mistake about this. It may be humiliating to the lover of the Fine Arts, but, nevertheless, it is hard truth. All the newspaper paragraphs in the world can't alter this.

The people—a vague class, but, I suppose in your classification, one comprising those who can pay a shilling at your show (and, in serious truth, a most beautiful one it is), care more for amusement than instruction. I watched them for more than two hours the other day. They wandered and wondered, and occasionally gaped; but when the band struck up, or a visitor played an attractive polka in the Music Court, they hurried off at once in that direction, and the gates of the Baptistery, or the Farnese Bull, might have gone to Hades for aught they cared, until the music was over. You must, I repeat, *amuse* them; and you must not talk nonsense about “position” and “high aims.” There is nothing so silly in any

suburban tea-gardens, as that collection of bogies and stuffed things near the dining place; where you may sit amongst camellias, and look at a bear climbing over an iceberg of whitewashed something sprinkled with Epsom salts; or watch a party of dirty aborigines—you don't care where from—doing something, you don't care what—as you enjoy your excellent lobster salad, or really good three-and-sixpenny claret. *That's* the hit of the whole show—Nimrod, Phidias, Sesostris, and the Parthenon into the bargain.

Pray, pray be *honest*. Say boldly that your undertaking is a mere commercial, City speculation, in the hardest, clearest sense—that all your newspaper puffs are only other ways of shouting, “Walk up, ladies and gentlemen!” Your sole aim is to collect the halfpence—“Twopence more, and up go the fountains!” You showed this too palpably in your Handbook mistake, when, at the very opening of the Palace, you removed all the names from the busts and statues, to force the sale of the catalogues. And don't call it “The People's Palace.” Why is it “The People's Palace?” What have they had to do with it?—what have they now?—what will they ever have? It is quite beautiful enough to stand on its own merits without all that cant.

There are so many excellently-good fellows holding situations about your establishment—names widely known and affectionately esteemed—that the success of the Crystal Palace is the wish of everybody. If you find the people merely walk through the courts and say “How pretty!”—as five minutes' observation will show you they do—don't get angry and drag them back, and say to them, “You *shall* be elevated,” because, if you bore them in that way, they won't come again. Watch which way their likings incline, and gratify those likings. You will only bewilder that old lady, who has come up with a basket from Banbury, by endeavouring to *make* her take home a clear notion of the Byzantine and Renaissance styles of architecture.

If your only aim is “to inspire the masses with a love of art,” go on as you are now going. But if you don't want to lose all your money, attract the public by every possible means. You have much to combat, and above all things, the distance from town. There is no blinking the fact. There is as much looking at your watch, and calculating the time, and squabbling with cabs, and struggling through the City, and waiting at the

station, as if you were going to Folkestone—with the exception that in the latter case you are on the South-Eastern line, and in the other you are on the Brighton, which is not quite so preferable.

Your obedient, humble servant,
WILLIAM JONES.

GRATIFYING CORROBORATION.

MR. WILLIAM JONES *thus writes, July 10th :*

“Beyond all doubt, the two great attractions at present in the Crystal Palace are the Dinners and the Brass Band. There is no mistake about this. It may be humiliating to the lover of the Fine Arts, but, nevertheless, it is the hard truth. All the newspaper paragraphs in the world can't alter this.”

THE TIMES *thus writes, July 24th :*

“The brass band on the terrace will take away from the Alhambra its most enthusiastic admirers, and leave the restorations of Egyptian Architecture as deserted as their originals on the sand plains of the Nile. As luncheon and dinner time arrive, Mr. Horne's department becomes by far the most important in the building.”

ANOTHER WORD TO THE DIRECTORS.

Gentlemen,—The costly mistake of Art-attraction has never been dealt with in a spirit of hard common sense. The huge mass of the public, I repeat, do not care two straws about Art. The gaping crowds that stream through the British Museum on holidays, go there because it is something in the middle of London that they can see for nothing; and they would like it better still if Memnon had an organ in his inside, and nodded his head, and moved his eyes. And talking of Memnon reminds me that you must have spent more on those hideous large figures of Rameses—which have only the merit of being big, and which any lot of boys could have built in snow if they had had sufficient—than would have furnished an

entire court of amusement. And, as I have told you, visitors prefer to be amused. You remember where the crowd always was in the old Crystal Palace of 1851? Not before the dear "Art Manufactures" (as sixpenny cream-jugs were called when they were altered in shape and sold for ten shillings), but before the wonderful stuffed animals from Wurtemberg. They will do the same at Sydenham if you will provide things for them to look at, and you want a few *entertaining* objects terribly. At present, the ruling genius of your Show, apart from the lobster-salad and pale ale, is BORE—costly, wearying, ponderous, fine-artistic BORE.

A clever statistician, who sat one day for five hours under King Charles at Charing-cross, states that only one person in every five hundred who went by looked at it, out of those going westward—out of those going eastward, one in four hundred and thirty. He believes the sun caused this difference, which is, however, worth investigation.

Now, if they don't care for the *real* thing, what value will they set on a cast of it?—except the trivial pleasure of seeing a familiar object when you are at a distance from it, as you see your lodgings at Gravesend reproduced in the Camera on Windmill Hill.

Again, the power of association has been overlooked. When you gaze at the Venus de' Medici in the Tribune of the Palace at Florence, you are looking at a wonder of the world—the actual priceless treasure—after a walk across the bright Piazza Gran' Duca, or a rest in the shaded Loggia de' Lanzi, with the Florentine sky above you, and Italian colours glowing around you, and the Tuscan accent everywhere floating about you. You are away from home, and smoke, and worry; and, above all, you have nothing else to do. You have had a pleasant breakfast, with girls throwing flowers at you, at the Café Donin, and you are looking forward to an agreeable dinner at the *table d'hôte* of the Hôtel du Nord, and a lively drive in the Cascine at night amongst the fire-flies and glow-worms. You have left the Alps and are going to the Apennines; and all this increases your enthusiasm about the Venus. A great deal different is that which you experience when you are looking at a mere cast, and remember that whether the trains go fast or slow—every ten minutes or every hour—are full or empty—you must eventually be turned adrift upon the world at London-bridge, and struggle with a cab through the Borough or Cheapside, just as

much as if you had come from Boulogne, or been to Bermondsey to buy leather.

“We took seven hundred pounds again yesterday, for refreshments!” This is the reply to all questions about “How are you going on?” Carry this out still further—have small private rooms (not poked about here and there, but commanding charming views, internal and external): get the water about as quickly as you can, for its plashing sparkling presence is always delicious: continue to improve your excellent commissariat: *fight your hardest for something about Sundays*; and, in another season, Blackwall, Greenwich, Richmond, Virginia Water, and Thames Ditton, will not be heard of.

And do not run away with the notion that you are “swells,” to be approached with awe, and praised for everything you do, and placed above receiving suggestions. You are nothing of the kind. You want either to ride your respective hobbies to death, or make as much money as you can out of the Public; and I am really anxious that you should do this with pleasure and profit on both sides. You are all gentlemen of position, talent, and unimpeachable respectability; but you are showmen, and you and the Public must assume an appropriate relation to each other. Please them, and they will be sure to support you. Let them go away with a bright impression; so that when you stand outside, and beat your drum and cymbals (the Press), and cry, “There is no deception!—inquire the nature of the exhibition of the company who are now leaving the caravan! As you like it, so we hope you’ll recommend it!”—when you do this, let them so well report of you, that every one may send a dozen.

Your obedient servant,
WILLIAM JONES.

XXXIII.

HOW MR. STRAGGLES WENT CHEAP TO ASCOT.

MR. STRAGGLES sat by himself, on a high stool, in his lonely chambers, which were up at the top of the house, thinking on things in general, and looking over his garden.

His garden was not very extensive, being of necessity confined to his window-sill; but it was sufficiently varied. He had one root of mignonette restrained within bounds by a light fence of matches, and that vegetable string, whatever it is, by which the early vagaries of lettuces are curbed: a pot of nasturtiums, the leaves whereof turned yellow successively, and then dropped away; some delicate creepers producing small yellow flowers, which in the fulness of a generous imagination he termed canary-birds; and two scarlet-runners, which he would watch, and wonder, as they grew, whether they would ever form a bean-stalk similar to that renowned one of the nursery chronicles that Jack ascended with such ultimate profit to his family.

Mr. Straggles's garden would have been in a better condition, had his disposition been less impatient or inquiring. But a desire to become acquainted with the beautiful workings of nature led him so frequently to poke up the seeds with a steel pen, to see how they were getting on, that their growth was much affected by these investigations. And as they were replaced in a careless manner, topsy-turvy, or half uncovered, or much too deep, their health was considerably deranged. Nor was the soil favourable to their growth. Many years ago it had been mould, but was now composed of little chips of mortar, washings of the house-tops, fragments of glass and crockery, bits of stick, and sweepings of the floor. Life, however, goes on under marvellous disadvantages; and, somehow or other, the seeds struggled into stalks and leaves, which climbed and fluttered, and caught the blacks, and died, around what old authors would have called "Mr. Straggles his windows."

No one knew precisely what profession Mr. Straggles fol-

lowed. He had chambers, and people called on him, and he was seen flitting about Westminster Hall, and Mark-lane, and the General Post-office. He knew a great many respectable persons, and a great many who were not. He had a small property of his own; was never known to be in debt; wore fancy shirts; loved cheap steam-boats; and took walks to Dulwich; generally wore shoes; liked theatres; dined at Hancock's in Rupert-street; was rather feeble-fibred than strong-minded; and in stature somewhat approaching the style popularly known as "gangling." He always looked as if he wanted training up a ladder, or hop-pole. If you pressed him into a corner by asking point-blank what he was, he would confess to being an "Agent," which meant, he could get your coals, wine, second-hand books, cigars, bottled ale, musical boxes, fish-sauce, or misfit Lehocq's boots, in any quantity and upon the most advantageous terms.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Straggles, addressing the scarlet-runner as he gave it a little water from the carafe on his wash-stand — "ah! you may well look dried up. I am. Pheugh!"

And Mr. Straggles threw open his waistcoat, and displayed all the huntsmen on his shirt, with their red coats and blue horses, to the best advantage. Having done which, he finished the contents of the water-bottle himself, and directly afterwards appeared to grow an inch higher.

"Paper!" shouted a boy at the door, as he accompanied the last syllable with a loud knock. Mr. Straggles had yesterday's *Times* every morning; and having taken it in, he began to read the news.

"Bless me!" he said to himself, as his eye fell upon a string of advertisements of the things presumed to be indispensable for the races, from guinea hampers and paletots, to gents' sporting handkerchiefs and "nobby" pattern'd shawls—"bless me! it's Ascot, and I meant to go to-morrow. How are the funds?"

Mr. Straggles looked in his desk, and there was a little purse apparently made to just fit the top of his thumb. He found, on examining its contents, that he had a sovereign less than he thought he had. And the man who owed him five pounds was always out of town when he called.

"Well," he thought, after a little philosophical reflection, "go I must; but I won't do it expensively. No, no, I'll go

cheap. None of your fast coaches there and back for thirty shillings. I won't spend more than ten; and when I'm on the course, who'll know how I went?" And in this resolve he immediately caught a boy in the street, whom he despatched on a message to his laundress to let her know that he should want his white trousers on Wednesday night; and he went himself after the two pair of kid gloves that he had left to be cleaned the week before at the bonnet-shop where the young lady was with the nice hair, whom Mr. Straggles had promised to escort some fine evening to Cremorne Gardens—when he got an order.

Thursday morning arrived—as Thursday morning always will do if you only wait patiently for it—and Mr. Straggles rose with the lark that hopped about a bit of turf outside the second floor window of the opposite house—for second floors are partial to larks in various ways—and betook himself to the Golden Cross. It was early in the morning. The young men were setting out the shop windows; omnibus loads of inward bound suburban clerks loitered up the Strand; coffee-room windows were open to let out the fumes of the night before; wet morning papers fluttered round the coach offices, and the man with the cheap cutlery commenced cutting his gloves to pieces. How Mr. Straggles pitied everybody who remained in town!

"Cab, sir! Here y'are, sir!" said a driver.

"Nonsense," replied Mr. Straggles, pleasantly bantering in the lightness of his heart. "How can I be there, when I'm here?"

"Better ride, sir, it's pourin' of rain where you're going."

But Mr. Straggles walked on.

"I say, sir," cried the driver after him, "mind your legs don't bolt away from you. You'll never keep up with them at that rate."

Which pleasant humour so delighted a boy who was playing on the bones to an old fruit woman as she set out her stall for the day, that he preceded Mr. Straggles with a Nubian melody, occasionally warning the passengers of the important person he preceded by telling them to get out of the way. And in this manner Mr. Straggles reached the Golden Cross, having thus far avoided all expenditure.

"South-Western Railway, sir?" inquired the book-keeper. "Omnibus gone about five minutes, sir. I should recommend a cab, or you'll lose the train."

There was no other way: it was two shillings gone, but what was to be done? Mr. Straggles performed the difficult feat of getting into a restless Hansom, and told the driver to overtake the omnibus. But the driver could not, all he could do. He dropped his whip, and got hemmed in by coal-waggons at Millbank, and blockaded by numbers going into the new Houses of Parliament, right across Abingdon-street, so that when he reached Vauxhall-bridge there was no trace of the bus. And then came two pikes, which, with their natural voracity, swallowed large sums of halfpence: so that when he got to Nine Elms, he had anything but a Cup-day temper.

Careless people would at once have taken a seat to Woking, but Mr. Straggles was cautious to a fault. "No," he reasoned; "the vehicles at Woking will make a harvest and combine. I know their ways. I will stop at Weybridge, where there will be no rush, and make a quiet bargain." So he took a second-class return ticket to Weybridge, and saved something besides.

Off went the train, gasping among the nursery-grounds, and screaming across Battersea-fields; rattling over the Wandle, and rushing through the wilds of Wimbledon as if Jerry Abershaw had been again at its heels; squeaking past forlorn Kingston-upon-Railway; scaring the goslings on Ditton Marsh, and racketing through the cutting of St. George's Hills, until it pulled up at Weybridge, and Mr. Straggles got out.

Here he found nothing but a four-wheeled chaise which went to Chertsey, where, the driver told him, "there was lots of things to the races."

"Oh!" said Mr. Straggles; "what's your fare?"

"Take you to Chessy for three shillings, sir. Perhaps somebody else is going: then it'll come cheaper."

Mr. Straggles cast his eyes towards the station, and thought he saw a passenger who looked as if he was going to "Chessy," as the driver called it. He did not know why; but in his anxiety he caught at men of straws. The passenger came up, looked to the right and to the left, then at the four-wheeled chaise, gave a whistle of indecision, shook his head in answer to the hail, and walked off across the common, as if he had seven-leagued boots on. Hope left Mr. Straggles's bosom, carrying with her the three shillings from his pocket.

"Never mind," thought Mr. Straggles; "I was going to the Haymarket on Saturday, and now I won't: so it will not make

any difference in the long run." Then he added aloud to the driver :

"Now on to Chertsey with your sacred load."

The man had not read Shakspeare—he had not got to Chertsey yet—but the speech seemed to imply a wish to start, and off they went, Mr. Straggles singing "The Standard-Bearer," to German words of his own, until it verged into "Robert toi que j'aime;" in which ballad, when he came to "Grace!" he shouted it out so lustily, that the old horse actually jumped forward, and the man thought his companion a little touched. But Mr. Straggles's joyousness was more hysterical than real, as his expenditure increased. He was singing to drown reflection, in that noisily absent manner which Mr. Punch affects after he has thrown his infant out of window—the mask worn by a hollow heart, as was once beautifully observed. And so they went on until they arrived at their destination.

Chertsey is a mild market town, which once boasted a powerful abbey, nobody knows where; where Henry the Sixth was buried, nobody knows how; and finally annihilated, nobody knows when; for it escaped at the time of the dissolution of the religious houses, nobody knows why. Its natives are friendly, tranquil persons. If the Wandering Jew paid periodical visits thereto every quarter of a century, he would find the inhabitants precisely in the same places, doing what they did five-and-twenty years ago; unmoved by external excitements, and unaltered by popular progress. But at Ascot time the heart of Chertsey commences to throb faintly. The inhabitants see people they do not know about the streets, and run out of their shops to look at them. Horses, whose existence was never suspected, emerge into active life; and long-departed coaches, pertaining to the good old times of drawling locomotion, are pulled from their mausoleums, and mopped and greased, and once more put upon the road.

"Where's that trap going to?" inquired Mr. Straggles, as he saw a coach waiting at one of the inns.

"Ask-it," answered the man.

Mr. Straggles put on a severe expression at what he considered the man's impertinence, for he did not at first perceive his meaning. But when he found it was going to Ascot, and that there was just one place left, which he could have for ten shillings, he closed at once, and climbed on to the roof, behind.

"In for a penny in for a pound," he thought. "Thank goodness, this is the last expense!"

The man touched his hat, and begged a trifle for himself. Mr. Straggles gave him a shilling, and told him to keep sixpence. But he had not got it; so Mr. Straggles, perceiving a pretty girl inside who was looking at him, said, "Ah! well, never mind, keep it all," with dashing liberality. When the man had driven off, Mr. Straggles found he had left his gloves in the chaise, so he had just fifteen seconds to jump down and buy some more. In his hurry of trying on, he split one pair into ribbons, which he had to pay for; and getting up quickly into the coach, he blacked the others against some dreadful composition put on to make it look new for the day: and by this time he was getting perfectly reckless, so much so that he began to sing "The Standard-Bearer" again, and after some bottled ale at the Wheatsheaf at Virginia Water, volunteered it aloud for the delight of his fellow-passengers.

"I think we must have a sweepstakes," said a traveller in a cut-away coat on the box. "Are you all agreeable, gents?"

"Oh yes—certainly:" they were all agreeable; and Mr. Straggles could not say he was not. It was to be half-a-crown a chance, which he paid, and drew a horse he never heard of. Never mind: outsiders did win sometimes.

"I'll take your fares, if you please," said the coachman, as they crept up the hill beyond Blacknest. "It will save trouble on the course."

Again Mr. Straggles's hand was in his pocket, and the song of "The Standard-Bearer" died as faintly away as did the voice of the bleeding hero. But the arrival on the course for a time chased away his despair.

"We shall keep here," said the coachman, as he at last drew up in the ranks below the distance; "and we'll meet after the last race, if you please: you'll hear a horn. Now, just leave the horses alone, will you?"

This was said to half a dozen men, who were violently unharnessing the horses, to take them, by force, to all sorts of stables. Then Mr. Straggles got down, with some others, to support the coachman; and directly he put his feet to the ground, two men seized him, and insisted upon brushing him almost into a state of electricity, until he had bribed them to desist, after which he was permitted to go at large.

How Mr. Straggles walked up and down within the rails, and assumed refined attitudes as he eyed the ladies in the front rank of carriages; how he bought an "Oxley's c'rect card," and read it with an air of great depth and interest; how he met some friends who had lunch, and gave him some, luring him into more sweepstakes, all of which he lost; how he was also attracted by some wonderful eyes, that had driven him mad at an evening party the week before, to go into the Grand Stand; and how the same bright eyes complained of the heat, and accepted ices and expensive accompaniments; and how Mr. Straggles determined upon not going to the Haymarket there-upon, but also gave up a notion he had of a new paletot and a week at Boulogne—all these things might have happened had he gone by any other way to the races, and therefore need not be particularly chronicled.

At length the last race was run, and Mr. Straggles sought the trysting-place. But however easily to be found out it had been when the coach first came on the course, it was now a matter almost of impossibility; for there were hundreds of coaches alike all along the densely crowded ranks right down to the corner. And the same number of horns were blowing in every direction—the sound being to the ears what the Will-o'-the-wisp is to the eyes, leading the wanderer here and there, only to laugh at him as it rose in another place. He got almost frantic. Like Leonora, he ran up and down the lines wringing his hands, and asking for his particular vehicle, but none could give the information. The clouds of dust around the course showed how quickly the company were departing. He dived under drags, and got behind horses' heels—stood on strange wheels, and clambered across unknown front seats—mounted wrong roofs in his agony, and was thought to be one of the swell mob in consequence—until the last coach went off and again carried Hope away on its seat, together with half of his ten shillings, and the return of his day-ticket.

"Now then, who's for Slough?" shouted a man, who was driving a curiously fragile car with one horse—one of those vehicles formerly denominated "flying bedsteads," in the days when we went Greenwiching by the Kent-road. "Take yer to the rail, sir?"

This was addressed to Mr. Straggles, and he immediately hailed the driver, regardless of consequences. He was not off

yet, though. The man would ply all along the booths and taverns, and got invited to have a drink at all of them; so that it was actually getting dark when he started. Then the horse would not go beyond a slow trot; and one of the wheels was obliged to be watched every minute, for fear it should catch fire, until the bell for the last up-train was ringing when they crossed the old high road at Slough and neared the station.

"There's the train!" cried Mr. Straggles, "I can see the smoke. Drive on! drive on! What's to pay?"

"Ten bob," answered the man, pithily.

"Ten what?" screamed Mr. Straggles. "Ten! What for? Pooh! stuff!"

"Can't let you down, master, if you don't. That's my rights," said the man, with great coolness.

"I'll pull you up," said Mr. Straggles. "There's your money. And mind, you shall hear of this again, you damned infernal scamp! Where's your number?"

"That's werry unlucky," answered the man. "Lor! where can it be? I'm sure I don't know—do you?"

The train had stopped at the station, and the doors were closed. With the recklessness of desperation, Mr. Straggles vaulted over the rails of the platform, and just as it was moving on, rushed into the only carriage that appeared available; and, closing the door after him, was in another second rattling off towards London; and then, completely exhausted in mind and body, he sank down into a corner, and fell asleep.

He was roused by the lantern of the guard glaring in his eyes, as his ticket was demanded at Paddington. Of course, he had none to give, and they fetched the superintendent. In vain he assured them that he had got in at Slough, acknowledging that the doors of the station were closed. He looked in his dishevelled state such a suspicious character, that the policemen entered the carriage to accompany him to the terminus, when he was immediately marched between two guards to the secretary's office.

"I cannot help it, sir," said the functionary, after a rapid and feverish attempt of Mr. Straggles to explain his case. "The by-laws of the company order that any person found without a ticket must pay——"

Mr. Straggles groaned.

"Must pay full fare from the most distant station."

“And that is——?” gasped our luckless friend.

“Let me see. First class, single journey, from Exeter. Two pounds four shillings and sixpence.”

Mr. Straggles heard no more. The lights whirled round him; the noise as of a thousand engines letting off their steam at once sounded in his ears, and he fell into the arms of the nearest policeman.

* * * * *

He recovered from a brain fever a poorer, but a wiser man. And he made two great resolves: first, never to go to the races again, if he could help it; and secondly, if at any time his feeble mind yielded to the temptation, not to try any cheap methods, however tempting they might appear, since cutting short the expenses, like short cuts in general, was certain to end only in trouble, and wearing and tearing disappointment.

XXXIV.

THE GILT-BUTTONED YACHTMAN.

(DEDICATED TO THE AMATEUR MARINES WHO DID NOT GO OUT.)

SEE West Cowes thronged with gazers—the race has begun,
 And that swell with the girls thinks the scene “rather fun.”
 The Club-house is crowded—the steamers are crammed—
 Yachts, gigs, and Hythe-pherries together are jammed.
 In a somewhat short jacket, with air of command,
 Whilst he eyes all the rigging he don't understand;
 As the bark is blown over the mildest of seas,
 The Gilt-buttoned Yachtsman feels “rather the cheese!”

Now, up ye bold mariners, over the sea,
 Launch out on the Channel so daring and free;
 No longer round Harwich or Babbicombe creep,
 But, hardy as Norsemen of yore, rule the deep.
 The sea topped with breakers, the heavens like lead,
 The deck running water from big waves ahead,
 With a yearning to be once again on “firm earth,”
 The Gilt-buttoned Yachtsman is ill in his berth!

War curses the earth, and the cold Ural blast
 Sweeps over the steppes to our army at last,
 Half-clothed and half-famished! Do such ills betide
 His old cherished friends of the Lobby and Ride?
 You have called each “old fellow”—behave, then, as such—
 A few English comforts would cheer them so much!
 But instead of embarking to soften their rubs,
 The Gilt-buttoned Yachtsman talks trash at the Clubs.

And now, at Spithead, by the trains carried down,
 To watch the review, we find out the whole town:
 How truly our brave sailors fought, and how well,
 The Baltic, Crimea, and Azoff can tell.
 As the “gallant” bark bobs up and down like a buoy,
 Turning out but a costly and fine-weather toy,
 When he thinks that he, too, could have witnessed each scene,
 The Gilt-buttoned Yachtsman feels horribly mean!

XXXV.

OF FAIRS, FAIRINGS, AND FAIRIES.

I tell of festivals, and fairs, and plays,
 Of merriment, and mirth, and bonfire blaze,
 I tell of brooks and blossoms, birds and bowers,
 Of April, May, of June and July flowers,
 I tell of groves, of twilights, and I sing
 The court of Mab, and of the fairy king.

QUAINT old Herrick—from whose pleasant synopsis the foregoing lines are taken, reading as though they were meant to be written upon green leaves, and sung only to the music of a glancing rill, tumbling, gurgling, and whirling down a hill-side over glittering pebbles, and through beds of sunny forget-me-nots—what a mercy it was, with his summery and country feelings, that he was born in those happy times when May was green and warm, and such things were as fairs and festivals; before daisies were driven, back and back, from their prairies like wild tribes, or trampled under foot by civilising colonists; when all the practical use to which steam had been applied was in removing the tight lids from the state-prison kettles of the middle ages!

How would his heart have broken gradually—(there were hearts, too, in his day; real home-made hearts, warranted sound, not very clever imitations—Birmingham hearts with sentiments of electrotyped brass, which the “frequent robberies” called into fashion in later times, like spurious plate)—how would it have gone piecemeal, one string after another, in the fashion of a harp in a hot room, if he could have witnessed the desecration of his groves by “junctions” and “extensions;” of his twilight by gas and colza; of his real fairs by fancy ones; of his festivals and fairies, by what professional philanthropists call “an improved condition of the people,” and country policemen.

We regret this state of things as deeply as he would have done, but our heart has not yet broken. It is incrustated with

the barnacles of the world's rubs, as old submarine timber is coated and preserved by other *crustacea*. We cannot tell whether this may, or may not, be an advantage. We only know that so it is; but that, notwithstanding, we lament the gradual decay of all those pleasant things, which Herrick sang about, so rapidly hastening to the state of organic remains. Man has not yet been found in the form of a fossil—why not, we leave it to the geological disputants to determine—but we firmly believe that in a few ages, the British Museum, should it be still existing, will be graced with fossil fairies and petrified maypoles.

Of those objects quoted at the head of our paper, the departure of the fairs and fairies are most to be lamented. They went together, and within our recollection. We know not where to, but are comforted in a theory of astronomy—that the stars are suns to other solar systems; and that, if this be the case, perhaps one of these brighter orbs, where improvements have not arrived at the high-pressure pitch of our own globe, has offered them an asylum.

Not many years ago the village in which we lived, scarcely a score of miles from London, could boast both of fairies and rustic festivals. It was a quiet, sleepy-looking place, off the high road; and when you ascended the hill near it, on a fine summer's afternoon, you saw its steeple peeping above the foliage in which the houses were embosomed, with the weathercock dozing and glittering in the warm sunlight; and all looking so tranquil that it required no small degree of harsh matter-of-fact persuading to make yourself believe the place was really inhabited by the bustling and industrious natives, who squabbled and wrangled as they carried on the trade in "malt, brooms, and poultry," for which the *Gazetteer* told us the place was remarkable. There were long, long lanes, too, whose thoroughfare was the best compromise between turf and Macadam ever known, going away into the country, and arched over by bending trees, which in the absence of other excitement appeared to me bowing to one another all day long for amusement. And the limes that overhung the pathway across the churchyard grew at one point so close to the chancel window that they swept its casement, as their morning shadows fell, in quivering patches, upon the old brasses and tablets of the interior; whilst without, the sunlight darted through their leaves to flicker on the green turf of the quiet graves below.

Beyond this was a wooded pasture where the fairies lived. Nobody we knew had actually ever seen them, although everybody else knew somebody that had. But we were sure they were there, for the rings where they danced were very plainly seen; and in hot summers, when everything else was parched up with drought, these rings were always fresh and green, as though a circular spring of water ran beneath them. How the mushrooms grew on these rings too! Tight, button-like little fellows, lifting up their heads above the grass, no doubt on purpose for the fairies' own use, but whether as food, tables, or umbrellas, we never knew. It was something of a mystery where the tiny spirits went in the daytime: we opine that they never were caught in it, but followed the twilight round the earth, riding on its last shadows. A young lady who wrote poetry in our provincial paper, and was thought to be a little mad, said they lodged in the cowslips. But this was nonsense: the children could never have made chains with the petals if such had been the case.

It was on this spot, with its high wavy boundary of trees, that the fair was also held. And it *was* a fair—a downright earnest one, where you could buy a fiddle for sixpence, and not tender a five-pound note for a *Louis Quatorze* pen-wiper or a wire-gauze nothing, worked with floss silk impossibilities, and get no change. There were shows, too—wonderful shows—we have never seen any like them since; the exhibitions of London have, in fact, merely excited a feeling of contempt. Nothing of Landseer's ever came up to their canvas of the "Lioness attacking the Exeter mail!" The surprise of the gentleman on the box in the fashionable coat, the terror of the respectable lady inside, the agony of the horses—it was grand! And how Maclise's great pictures fell in our estimation when we thought of the vivid cartoon which showed "The Circassian negress with the silver hair!—The smallest man now travelling!—The black wild Indian captured by the bravery of a British officer!" All these marvels, together and alive, were exhibiting to elegant company of all nations, in a beautiful room with crimson drapery for a ceiling. The Indian fed on raw meat—real raw meat from the butcher that supplied our own table, and he was a man above suspicion; indeed, he was twice overseer. The Ioways never did that! Certainly the interior of the caravan was not of the splendid description represented outside, but then a painter's licence is very great, as the Academy por-

traits, especially, yearly prove. What a blessing is photography!

All day long the people from the neighbouring villages could be seen coming over the fields towards our fair, on every side; rosy-faced girls, in smart cotton prints that would have shamed your *mousselines de laine* into utter insignificance, as much as their cheeks would have outdone those of the metropolitan *belles* who wore them; smart young fellows, who looked like country editions of the chorus in "La Sonnambula" and the "Elisir d'Amore;" chubby children, who had dreamt of trumpets, gingerbread, and halfpence at their actual disposal, for months previously. What a day it was for everybody; and what a great one for the Red Lion public-house! Alas! the Red Lion public-house became an inn, then a tavern, and is now a railway hotel. But then it stood on the edge of the fair green, out of the dust and crowd, yet not too far removed but "the swarming sound of life" came pleasantly to its door, and here the visitors rested, and drank its famous ale—such ale, too!—like liquid amber, through which the bubbles rose in myriads of tiny balloons, hastening to be drunk. The secret of brewing it has evidently been lost, with those of painting missals and making mummies. And there was amusement, too, for those who rested here: the wandering curiosities strolled from the crowd to exhibit before its doors. Here the small boy in ochre-coloured tights, which fitted indifferently, sang the song standing upon his head; here the Dutch girls carolled their *Lieber Augustin*—nobody knew where they came from, except from "abroad," and that was a locality somewhere in France, comprising India and everywhere else, in the judgment of the audience; certainly we preferred their singing to Heinefetter's or Devrient's; indeed, we do not think the latter would ever have been so popular with the villagers as the broom girls. The only person who never thought much of them was the host's daughter; but this was because a gay fellow, who was much struck with them, was strongly suspected of being her "young man," and it required all his wit, and more than his usual fairing, to make all smooth again. And these fairings were very smart; they were of the same class as those objects of *virtù* which young English gentlemen of playful temperaments, and who are not proud, throw at with sticks at the races—pincushions, thimbles, and money-boxes. We never knew the swains buy "bunches of ribbons" in our time, and therefore look upon the

vague "Johnny"—of whose long stay at the fair a lyrical tradition is extant—to have been a fiction.

At night the revelry must have scared the fairies; what laughs and pretty screams, and "Done, thens!" resounded on every side. Fancy-fairs do not terminate so now-a-days; goodness, if they did, how popular they would become! There was always a game at "kiss in the ring" before dark. Imagine what "kiss in the ring" would be in the Regent's Park Gardens, and all the stall-keepers and patronesses joining in it! And for a benevolent object too!

But we have been idly gossiping of things long past, forgetting they have gone. Our fair is as much an old extinct festival now, as setting the watch on St. John's eve, or meeting in Fenchurch-street to gather in the may. Our fairies exist no longer, but doubtless, like other broken-up families, have emigrated; where their green rings could be seen on the fair green, there is now a railway embankment. The noble trees that surrounded it have fallen, and summer and winter, day and night, engines fly by, blazing, gasping, screaming, roaring, and exulting savagely in their own infernal powers; flinging their glowing cinders right and left to scorch the once velvet turf, and scaring the cattle into downright madness as the steam shoots out from their burnished valves, in passing what were formerly such quiet pastures. Mobs of strangers, too, overrun the village, who get a ride and rheumatism at a penny a mile in cheap excursion trains; and perking cottages, looking as if they had retired from London upon incomes, are springing up everywhere.

We know not if all this innovation be good—we cannot tell; it may be—at least ingenious gentlemen who can write large books tell us that it is so, and we suppose they are right. But we would give a great deal to behold our old-fashioned rustic fair once more—not the suburban riots which now adopt the name. Sometimes we dream of one, and see the old amusements over again; but it is only to be awakened by the blowing of a battered horn, announcing the departure of a miserable omnibus, which half a dozen times a day carries unsympathising strangers backwards and forwards, to and from the melancholy building, in form and proportions so like the Morgue at Paris, which they call the "station." And this, too, on the very spot where the fairies danced, and the dear old festival was held!

XXXVI.

IL FANATICO PER LA MUSICA.

HA! ha! ha! the letter has escaped the keepers in the disguise of a shrimp, and will reach the office. "Why should I go mad?" as the ballad observes, written by Mark and Alfred—not the evangelist and the early Saxon king—but those two sweet fruits, Lemon and Mellon. Ho! melodious Pomona! have I not a nice little Pine to add to Fancy's dessert? Oh! Oranges and Lemmens! and thou, fair syren, of whom East-end Cockneys remark, "Her songs are so Vinning!" But my brain is chirping wildly.

I have gone mad from music. I took checks for years at St. Martin's Hall, and was known and honoured. Ask the linguist Willert, the affable Tom, the bearded Arthur, the researching William. I have sunny memories of my life. I have spoken to "*ce cher Sams*," as Paris lions speak of him. Markwell, *l'ami des artistes*, once bowed to me when I was on an omnibus—I, not he; for a Markwell never rode in an omnibus since Sir Guillaume, in the time of the Crusades, and his family privately poisoned him. I have visited the abode of Joy—I have seen the part author of the venerable Adam Bede. I have witnessed the St. Ledger run—when crossing Piccadilly. And have I not sought Ella's bower, and witnessed that great man ride at the circus of the Alhambra in the morning, and rule at the musical union afterwards? And do I not recollect when he played Harlequin? Ho! I have him there! Who is Osborne? who is he? with a fa, la, la!—but the composer of *La Pluie des Perles*, and proprietor of a house he lets to the Queen, where Brinley Sloper was born.

The haze of my tobacco-smoke opens. The musical shuffling of kindly slippers is heard, and Padre Green looms through it. "Pardon me, my dear friend," he says, "have you got everything you wish? Compliment me, by listening to this glee." *All among the Kidneys*—I know it, sung by the tuneful quire of Happy Land:

The chop is like a cutlet,
 But only not so small ;
 Welsh rabbits taste like toasted cheese,
 And that I think is all.
 Poached eggs are pockets, pink and white,
 Containing all they can,
 But the blithe and bounding kidney
 Makes glad the heart of man.
 All among the kidneys, &c.

“ Now I mount, now, now I fly ”—so listen to one who has heard the *Travitora* and *L'Elisir Borgia*, as sung by Verdigrisi. I have written a song! I will send it to you weekly. The words are by Kingslake, the author of “ Eothen, or from the Yeast.” It is thine own, oh, Charlotte Helen! of whom *Œdipus* wrote :

My *first* is loved in childhood's hours,
 My *second* rifles sweetest flowers,
 My *whole* enchants us with her powers.

It's a *Doll* and a Bee, and a Miss Doll-bee. So list :

NEW SONG.

Three Fishers went sailing to westward afar,
 Heigho! says Hullah.
 Three Fishers went sailing to westward afar,
 Whilst followed the boys, and the harbour bar
 Went rowley, powley, salmon, and Greenwich,
 Heigho! for Headland!

That's all! Phit! *Whiz!* Bo!

THE HONEST FROGLANDER.

Colney Hatch, Nov. 25.

XXXVII.

A VISIT TO ETON MONTEM, 1841.

WE are not going to cry down the celebration of this triennial festival; on the contrary, we enter into its innocent follies with keen delight. On the score of antiquity alone it is to be venerated, for we adore all these fast-fading relics of the customs of our ancestors; and we look upon their quaint ordinances with the same feelings of mingled respect and amusement that would be inspired by gazing on an old piece of china, which, fashioned in the present day, would be pronounced both ludicrous and absurd, but, as a memorial of bygone times, is endowed with value and interest. We love the pageantry of the Montem dearly, and we trust the period is far off when refinement and the schoolmaster shall have done their worst, and the holiday shall only be mentioned among the *fasti* of other days.

Many circumstances combined to render the late Montem far more attractive than it had been for several years. The presence of Prince Albert for the first time at its celebration was one principal source of interest: at the same time he had rendered himself extremely popular with the Eton scholars. There was also a chance of fine weather, tolerably well assured, as far as corns and quicksilver guarantee a change in our variable climate; and last, though not least, the trains of the Great Western Railway offered facilities to the Londoners to enter into the amusements of the day which they had never before enjoyed. Whispers also arose, from the glittering magazines of the masquerade warehouses, that the fancy dresses would be numerous and costly; and perhaps the anticipation of seeing Greeks and Circassians walking about the public roads in broad daylight was as important as any of the other inducements.

It was in one of those bright moods of joyousness and hilarity which a fine summer morning in the country excites, that we walked through Windsor Park. We were in perfect good

humour with ourselves and everybody around us, and we hoped the feeling was reciprocal. We say we hoped, for their hearts must be indeed withered upon whom sunlight and a clear blue sky, the blithe hum of insects and the scent of wild flowers, have no influence, and are unable to make them feel, at least for the time being, both happier and better creatures. Our road lay apart from the beaten track, amidst coverts of fern and fair pastures, encompassed by ancient and picturesque trees. Indeed, it needed little imagination to reverse the flight of Time, and fancy ourselves once more living in the feudal ages; with the keep of the noble castle rising above the surrounding foliage, and the herds of deer grazing below in quietude, until the clanging horn of the merry green-coated hunters should scare them from their repose. We thought of the many changes some of the old trees had seen—how they had calmly budded and flourished when the kingdom was torn with inward contention, and inundated with its best blood—how they would still push forth their verdure when the very recollection of those who now loitered in their shade would have passed away. We traced in our own mind, heedless of all antiquarian directions and disputes, the spot where the sack-loving Sir John Falstaff suffered from his fair tormentors; and in another direction we pictured William de Wykeham surveying, with honest pride, the first elevations of the structure which was hereafter to become so favoured.

Our arrival at Windsor soon broke this train of thought, and turned it upon another set of rails—to adopt the steam-loving language of the day—for here all was activity and movement. Long lines of carriages near the principal inns showed that we were not the first who had arrived to “don observance” to the Montem; and others were every instant pouring in from the different roads, together with crowds of foot-passengers, who, being principally from the neighbouring villages, would have formed, by their clean, homely dress, and healthy, open countenances, a strong contrast to a like assembly in London.

We passed down Thames-street, and at Windsor-bridge encountered the first real indication of the Montem, in the shape of a *salt-bearer*, attired as an Albanian, who, attended by a runner, proffered us a handsome pink satin bag to receive our contribution. We gave a trifle consistent with our means, and received from the attendant in return a small green-paper ticket, inscribed as follows; the possession of which, we un-

derstood, was to free us from any further demands being levied upon our purse. We accordingly stuck it in our hat, such appearing to be the fashion upon the present occasion :

MOS PRO LEGE.

1841.

Vivat Regina.

The narrow High-street of Eton tended to condense the influx of company, who were arriving from all parts, in no small degree, acting like the extremely contracted inlet at the pay-place of the pit-door of a theatre ; and opposite the College, at the union of the separate roads from London, Windsor, and Dorney, the carriages and foot-passengers were wedged into one dense mass ; amongst which, however, the salt-bearers were assiduously plying their vocation, creeping before the horses, and behind, and in some cases under, the carriages, whenever the absence of a ticket betokened the presence of a defaulter, who had not yet tendered his offering.

At this stage of "the order of the day," the Quadrangle of the College was the chief point of attraction ; where the review, if we may so term it, of the entire school was to take place under the inspection of her Majesty. Here admission was only to be obtained by tickets, and we had neglected to procure one previously from the proper quarter. It is, however, an axiom with us, at all public sights, to see as much as we can ; and in any case of exclusiveness, provided we are not furnished with the regular passports, we invariably "try it on" without. We argue that we may succeed, and that if we do not, we can but be turned back. In the present instance, we followed closely upon an elderly gentleman of corpulent proportions, and whilst he was searching in the profundity of his waist-coat-pockets for his card of admission, we contrived to slip in by mistake, like the Irishman's bad guinea amongst the halfpence. We have some faint recollection of a policeman seizing us forcibly

by the shoulder ; but at this critical period a crowd of *polemen*, with their blue jackets and wands, came driving through the arch, and we were borne on before them, until we found ourselves in the Quadrangle, at the foot of the statue, whose stolen sceptre caused so much noise a short period since.

The large area was filled with a crowd of elegant company, mixed with the boys of the school, who were flitting about from one acquaintance to another, or running to execute imaginary orders of ideal importance, in all the pride of their red coats, cocked-hats, swords, and fancy dresses. A cluster of beautiful women had assembled upon the stone steps leading up to the chapel, from whence one of the best *coups-d'œil* was obtained ; and they formed a strange contrast, by their delicate and breathing forms, to the rough old carved work and tracery of the parapet, to whose outlines they were clinging.

The roofs of the Long Chamber and Upper School, which form the northern and eastern boundaries of the Quadrangle, were equally tenanted by groups of fair spectators, as were the various windows looking into the square, with the exception of the larger one in the Clock Tower, which was reserved for the Queen and Prince Albert, and towards which many anxious glances were cast. At this period (half-past ten A.M.) the spectacle was exceedingly animated and striking ; the scene owing its chief brilliancy, of course, to the fancy dresses of the boys ; and some of these were remarkably elegant. There were several parties of hunters in "Lincoln Green," with bows and arrows ; various Grecian and Turkish costumes ; more belonging to no country at all, but a happy confusion of the attributes of each ; several Hungarians in fur edging and red tights ; and a formidable army of field-m Marshals, lieutenants, and other military officers, who, in addition to their swords—"real sharp swords," as we heard a little girl designate them—each carried a taper black cane. A Charles the Second, a Captain Macheath, and a Greek with long black ringlets, and some what taller than his compatriots, struck us as being the most faithful costumes : the most elegant we opine to have been two *moyen-âge* dresses of light pink satin and silver, worn by two youths (brothers, we expect) about fourteen years old. They were gracefully designed, but, if anything, too delicate for the occasion—the slightest shower would have been instant annihilation to their beauty.

The band struck up the national anthem at eleven o'clock,

which was the signal of her Majesty's arrival at the College. The boys immediately fell into their places for the procession, and when, a few minutes afterwards, the Queen made her appearance at the window in the tower, such a shout arose from their lungs as did one's heart good to hear; and there was such a waving of plumes and streamers, and such a renewing and repetition of cordial welcome, that we can well account for the slight flush that passed over the Queen's fair face when she looked at the delighted assembly of some hundreds of young hearts, many of them beating with the noblest blood in England, amidst whom her presence shed such joyous enthusiasm. It was not the formal greeting of an adult assembly. They were all boys, and they cheered her with the overflowing fervour of a boys' devotion.

As soon as order was somewhat restored, the procession round the Quadrangle commenced, headed by a military band, the space for the *cortége* being preserved by some of the Rifles, who were on duty at the Castle. The fortunate captain, the hero of the day, Mr. Thring, took his place immediately behind the band, dressed in full military costume. The polemen were stationed two and two, at various distances, amongst the wearers of the fancy dresses, to whose brilliancy their blue jackets and white trousers formed an agreeable contrast. We noticed amongst them one very little boy—so small, that he appeared the *beau idéal* of that class of miniature personages who come out of oyster-barrels and flower-pots in pantomimes. At the conclusion of the march we saw him no more. We fear, that when the band laid down their instruments, he tumbled into one of the bugles, and there lay until the next player blew him out.

After parading twice or three times round the Quadrangle, the ceremony of waving the College flag took place, under the window at which the Queen and her royal consort were seated. The ensign of the school, bearing a large crimson banner, now commenced a series of very extraordinary performances indeed with it, to which the flourishing of Miss Woolford's flags, when that lady rode very fast round the Astley's arena upon the nankeen-coloured horse, was as nothing. We marvelled much at his untiring energy, and the wonderful power of his wrist, which would have raised even Cartwright's jealousy. The only thing the whirling and twirling of the flag reminded us of was

the tomahawk performance of a black wild Indian we witnessed some years back at a perambulating penny show in Tottenham-court-road; and in which we enjoyed a ride for nothing as far as Broad-street, St. Giles's, from the circumstance of our being one of the audience at the time the caravan was ordered off by the police of the F division. Seriously, however, the ensign displayed considerable dexterity. First, he whisked it about in one hand as if it had been a broadsword; then he cut, in succession, all the problems of Euclid in the air, as well as figures of eight, and strange diagrams only found in Skater's Pocket Companions; next, he swung it round, passing it quickly from one hand to the other, and keeping the silk floating horizontally about him; and he concluded his feats of dexterity by inclining the flag reverentially towards her Majesty, who was, no doubt, thinking, in common with every one else, how very hot and fatigued the poor young man must be, and what an immensity of practice and wrist-spraining was to be gone through before the present pitch of perfection could be arrived at.

As soon as the applause which accompanied the last flutter of the banner had died away, a general rush took place towards the Playing-fields. We elbowed our way with the rest into the cloisters of the inner Quadrangle, and thence along a curiously inconvenient passage, where the squeeze was terrific, until we came out once more into the open air, through a small postern-gate. The majority of the boys immediately scampered off, in a sort of running steeple-chase, towards Salt-hill, in order to arrive there before the Queen. Part of the visitors also left the College to seek their carriages—no very easy task; others followed the line marked out by the boys; and a few waited still in the Playing-fields, to see the royal *cortége* pass from the College, in which number of loiterers we were included. It was during this short delay that the Montem laureate introduced himself to us, with a request that we would purchase his "Ode." He was evidently "a fellow of infinite humour," and was tastefully attired in a fancy costume of glazed calico and window-curtains, which had an imposing effect. We invested sixpence in the purchase of his ode, and had no reason to grumble at our expenditure, for we derived much amusement from it. It is too long to introduce here, and being entirely local, would not be of sufficient interest. Some of the ideas, however, are not bad, and the rhyme throughout is very well kept

up. Here are four lines, introducing a couplet that put us in mind of some of the versifying conceits of the inimitable Thomas Ingoldsby :

Grave *Hallam* tries to act the sergeant,
And *Neville*, practising a frown,
Almost as dreadful as a large ant,
With martial terrors awes us down.

As soon as the Queen and her suite had passed, we left the Playing-fields, and made the best of our way to the Windmill Inn. Countless vehicles were crowding along the road, and thinking we might as well ride as walk, without waiting for the chance of any of our acquaintances overtaking us, we took advantage of a slight check at the Slough-road gate, and established ourselves very comfortably on the footboard behind a handsome chariot that was going in the direction we wished. Here we maintained our seat, in spite of the malicious cries of "Whip behind!" which every little boy indulged in who perceived or envied us; and thus, in great state, riding like a traitor, with our back to the horses—after being seen, of course, by everybody of our connexion whose notice we were most anxious to elude—did we arrive at Salt-hill.

If the throng of carriages, horsemen, and foot-passengers had been great in the neighbourhood of the College, it was "confusion worse confounded" at Salt-hill; indeed, it was with much difficulty, when the royal party arrived, that room could be cleared for their progress. In a short time, the boys again fell into their respective places in the procession, and the indefatigable ensign again prepared to exhibit his powers of flourishing the flag upon the summit of the mount, on which station every one was enabled to catch a much better sight of his dexterity than when he was on a level with themselves in the crowded Quadrangle of the College. We believe the origin of this ceremony is not known: it merely appears to have been coeval with the foundation of the College, as long back as the year 1440, when Henry VI. purchased the perpetual advowson of the parish of Eton for that purpose. The mound in question is supposed to be a Saxon barrow, and the contributions of "salt" (which, as the reader is doubtless aware, signifies the money collected for the captain of the school previous to his leaving for the University) are presumed to have derived the somewhat dubious title from a monkish procession which, in the

olden time, took place annually to this mount, and on which occasion consecrated salt was sold to the spectators. This may or may not be the case: we do not answer for the truth of the tradition, but merely give the reason as we have heard it.*

At the conclusion of this part of the day's observances, the royal carriages departed, the Queen and Prince Albert receiving the same hearty cheers which greeted their arrival, and which they acknowledged with extreme courtesy. It was long before the other carriages could be extricated; they were locked together in so intricate a manner, that it was necessary to wait until the outer ones of the dense mass had cleared off, before the least attempt to move could be made. A course of whipping, plunging, and clashing then commenced, which can only be imagined by picturing the Haymarket after a crowded operanight, if all the carriages had been allowed to come up just as their drivers chose, without paying the least attention to the regulations for the direction of their horses' heads and tails.

A fresh rush to dinner now took place amongst the boys, and although we heard many imprecations launched against those who had abolished the "champagne tent," yet, by the alacrity with which they hurried to the Windmill, we perceived that the meal had still great attractions. We ourselves could have joined them with much pleasure; but we were not of Eton and its school, and anything like quiet refreshment at the inn was out of the question. Fortunately, we lighted upon some friends, at whose carriage we procured the usual race-course sort of luncheon, of dusty sandwiches and warm sherry, which was, nevertheless, very acceptable. A vast portion of company still remained, and these were admitted to Botham's Gardens, upon

* Since the above was written, we have been favoured with the following information: It is the opinion of Mr. Lysons, that the Eton Montem originated in the ceremonial of the Bairn, or Boy-Bishop. He states that it originally took place on the 6th of December, the festival of St. Nicholas, the patron of children, being the day on which it was customary to elect the Boy-Bishop from among the children belonging to the cathedral or college. This mock dignity lasted till Innocents' day, and during the intermediate time the boy performed various episcopal functions. If it happened that he died before the allotted period of this singular assumption had expired, he was buried with all the ceremonials which are used at the funerals of prelates. In the collection of antiquities bequeathed by Mr. Cole to the British Museum, there is a note which mentions that Geoffrey Blythe, Bishop of Lichfield, who died in 1530, bequeathed several ornaments to Eton College, "for the dress of the Bairn-Bishop."

each presenting a ticket, which was to be purchased for a shilling, at the bar of the Windmill.

How the dinner went off, we cannot tell; the chronicles of this part of the ceremony remain a sealed book to the vulgar. It was, doubtless, of first-rate excellence, and the *carte* indisputably perfect; for the Eton boys are "queer customers" if they think they are not treated in a manner befitting their importance; and glass, moreover, is of a fragile and perishable nature. We doubt not that they were well entertained, for their countenances were of most hilarious expression, when they sallied forth into the gardens at the conclusion of the banquet. And now began the scene of spoliation, for which the company had been waiting the last hour in patient expectation. The swords, which up to the present time had rested idly in their scabbards, now flashed wildly in the air, and a general attack was made upon everything in the gardens endowed with vegetable existence. The first onset took place against a hollow square of cabbages, which they charged as furiously as did the Cuirassiers against our own human parallelograms at Waterloo; and in two minutes, nothing but stumps remained. Potatoes, lettuces, and asparagus followed, without appeasing their fury: on the contrary, the taste of sap seemed to have given fresh edges to their swords; and when not even a currant or gooseberry bush was left, half a dozen of the most stalwart warriors directed their attacks upon a large apple-tree, which, after being much hacked about, tumbled to the ground amidst the cheers of the bystanders. In another quarter of an hour, the blooming Eden was converted into a blank desert; not a plant being left to sigh out the story of the destruction of its companions to the next zephyr which came that way on its road from London to Bath. The last object on which they attempted to wreak their remaining vengeance was the garden-roller; but its cast-iron cylinder resisted their most strenuous efforts; and having broken two or three of their swords sharp off at the hilt, they abandoned the attempt in despair.

Boyish and trifling as was this part of the day's festivities, there was much in it to afford food for the reflection of a philosopher, even in the midst of the turmoil of the Windmill Gardens. Many who were now turning their bloodless weapons against a shrub or currant-tree, might hereafter occupy a well-earned and honourable position in the list of our country's defenders. The Cabinet, the Bar, and the Church would, perhaps, each draw

its most brilliant members from the frolic crowd of thoughtless youths who were now revelling joyously in the ruin they were creating ; and the pastime of the present day—the trifling occurrence of a passing moment—might, years hence, recal thoughts of the Montem and its harmless follies, amidst meditations of a deeper and sterner cast, when those who now entered into its observances with the careless enthusiasm of boyhood, had themselves become the parents of the next generation.

It was generally understood, in consequence of the departure of the Queen for London after the second display of the flag, that the usual promenade upon the terrace of Windsor Castle would be transferred to the Playing-fields of Eton College ; and the change was greatly for the better. As soon as the diversions in the gardens had terminated, there was a temporary cessation of proceedings, until the call of “absence” in the precincts of the College, at six o’clock—the term *absence* being applied, somewhat contradictorily, to the reading over the roll of boys’ names who are supposed to be *present*. We took advantage of this entr’acte to inspect the schoolrooms and dormitories of the College, which are certainly contrived with a praiseworthy disregard of splendour or decoration, nothing more costly than plain unpainted board being anywhere to be found. We afterwards paid a visit to the Library, which is well worth seeing. Amongst several remarkable objects of interest, we were shown a curious map of Pekin, the production of a Chinese artist ; a small box of slips of papyrus, on which is written a manuscript in an Oriental character ; and some early illuminated missals, including a French Bible, and an elaborate Roman history. The quiet of these rooms, which look into the cloisters of the inner Quadrangle, formed a singular contrast to the noise and revelry that reigned without. In the apartment appropriated to the provost there is a portrait, painted on a panel, of Jane Shore ; we were informed that a former provost of Eton College officiated as her confessor, and that it was under his orders that the present portrait was taken. The hair is of the true Saxon auburn, and the forehead high and intellectual ; but we could not discover in the features those traces of beauty which led to this fair creature’s ultimate infamy and death.

By half-past six o’clock, the Playing-fields presented a most animated spectacle, as most of the morning’s company were

réunis on this fine tract of pasture, as well as the whole of the boys; and two military bands played continually during the evening, which was pre-eminently fine. The indefatigable salt-bearers were still working hard at their calling, and they singled out with scrutinising gaze any individual who had no green ticket displayed to frank him from further demands. A handsome collection had been the result of their labours, the captain receiving exactly 1233*l.* 13*s.* 10*d.*; out of which sum, however, he had various expenses to defray, which amounted to nearly half. Most of the boys were promenading with their friends, and it was gratifying to see the guileless pride with which the younger branches of the different families clustered round their brothers—with what ecstatic admiration the little girls regarded the scarlet and gold heroes, who, for that day at least, would not have changed places with any one in England. Some of the boys were sleeping on the grass, under the fine trees; we heard that several had scarcely closed their eyes throughout the preceding night, and all were moving between four and five in the morning. Indeed, the salt-bearers and their oppidans had worked like horses; and certain of them had no trifling distance to travel over in the performance of their duties, as, independently of their demands upon the visitors, it is their custom to call at the houses of the families in the neighbourhood for salt, and some of these are situated five or six miles from Eton.

By nine o'clock, all was again quiet: the company had departed, and with them the glories of the Montem for three more years. For that period the flag will sleep in tranquil inactivity, and the cloisters will resume their wonted gravity. Many who participate in its boyish parade will, ere its next celebration, have been scattered over the earth, and, perhaps, found distant homes in strange lands. Others will be gradually following the path to fame in the course of life that destiny has allotted to them, and some—but we will stop all gloomy anticipations. Let us hope that all who, this year, witnessed the Montem and its mimic glories, may be enabled to enter into the spirit of the succeeding ceremonial, without one bitter thought or retrospection of aught that has occurred since they last gazed upon its harmless pageantry.

XXXVIII.

HOW MR. STRAGGLES ATE WHITEBAIT AT GREENWICH.

JULY came on, and it was more hot than ever in London. You might have poached eggs on the pavement, and there was no shade anywhere. Even in Covent-garden the strawberries sweltered and baked in their pottles; the gold and silver fish languished in globes of tepid water; Mary Johnson's bouquets drooped over their lacework papers; and the heat forced the crimson pendants of the fuchsias into long pink trumpets, which, being blown, shrivelled and died.

The only thing cool in all London was the block of Wenham Lake ice in the Strand, and that appeared to be perspiring at such a rate that its dissolution was always being immediately expected. The curds-and-why on the stalls positively steamed, and the small dusty high-dried crabs, at three a penny, rattled again, as every one became its own oven. How the gasping passengers in the omnibuses survived the inside transit is difficult to conceive; the Fire King himself would have suffered. The only people who underwent but little inconvenience were the cooks at the chop-houses, and the stokers in the river steam-boats, and they never perceived any difference, as they faced their ever glowing ranges and furnaces. But the wild beasts under the mighty bell-glasses at the Surrey Zoological Gardens yawned, and blinked, and stretched themselves out at full length upon the hot floor of their dens, and thought they were once more at home, dreaming of torrid jungles, and simoons, and scorching sands, until cool evening dispelled the illusion, and the besieging of Gibraltar, with its rockets, and drums, and crackers, recalled them once more to a sense of their true position.

No one suffered more from heat than did Mr. Straggles in his small chambers before alluded to, immediately under the roof, which now collectively formed a hot-house, wherein he might have grown pine-apples. He could not get cold. He opened all the doors and windows, but a draught of heated air

was all that came to refresh him. He left off wearing waist-coats, and bought a blouse, but he only felt the oppressiveness of the sun the more when he put on his ordinary attire to go out; and then he longed to be July, as Spenser once described that month; envied the performers in the Poses Plastiques, and fell into some wild notion of taking the diving-bell at the Polytechnic Institution for a week, and living at the bottom of the tank.

But it was worst of all when he went to his dinner. He took this meal, generally, at the restaurant of an ingenious foreigner, somewhere in the rear of the National Gallery, who was reported to have the right of shooting over Leicester-square, to supply the varied preparations of rabbits on his carte. Here it was that Mr. Straggles could scarcely breathe. For the soups, and the gravies, and the stews, the plates of pallid meat, and the tough and piping portions of unholy puddings, formed such a hot thickened atmosphere, that the very flies had difficulty in forcing their way through it to the open windows, from which dense vapours might be seen rolling; and these, diluted with the air, pervaded the neighbourhood for some distance round to such an extent, that you might almost have believed the inhabitants lived upon the odours. Mr. Straggles stood this a long time, for the place was cheap, and the races had cost him so much money that he was obliged to retrench. But at length he got nearly stewed himself, and in a desperate plight of not knowing what to do next, formed Arcadian plans for living on bread and fruits, or periwinkles and pickled eels, beneath the coolest arcades of Hungerford. "Ullow! Straggy!" said a voice down the letter-box to our hero. "Are you at home?"

"What, Joe!" exclaimed Mr. Straggles, stopping in the attempt he had persevered in for some months to play the minor part of "The Standard-Bearer" on his octave flute. "That's not you?"

"Isn't it though: look out."

And then the end of a small walking-stick was pushed through the letter slit, and the box opened, not having a trustworthy fastening, as its contents fell on the floor. Mr. Straggles's box formed the receptacle for all sorts of fugitive donations, presented by the men in the other chambers, as they went up and down stairs—kings and knaves of playing-cards, cherry-stones, straws from sherry-cobblers, pit checks of theatres the night

before, advertising tailors' brochures, sometimes crackers, and once he found a mouse.

"Come in, old fellow: who'd have thought of seeing you?"

The new arrival looked something like a fashionable gentleman who had been kept from last year, with a dash of the Leicester-square foreigner about him. He had only one glove, which he held in his hand, and this had once been yellow. His boots, though trodden out and cracked at the outside, were intensely polished, and had long toes which somewhat turned up; and protuberances at the ankle, before and behind, under the trousers, which were strapped down, showed that they were shorts. He had a long black stock, much perforated by pins, and no collar; in fact, the general style of his get-up was the "seedy," a word implying approaching extermination as forcibly as reproduction.

"Why, Joe, what a Mossoo you look!" said Mr. Straggles.

"Mossoo," was the Straggles for "Monsieur," picked up from a course of six lessons in French, and the received stage pronunciation, and applied by our friend generally to all foreign gentlemen of peculiarly continental cut.

"And where have you been?" he added.

"Boulogne, sir, Boulogne—the land of the free. Ever since the railways blew up, I have been obliged to come to Dan Tucker. Eh, twig? pheugh! yerg! yerg! yerg!"

And here the friend put himself in an attitude of banjo-playing with his stick, made Ethiopian noises, and lyrically described the excitement caused by the coming to town of the person above named.

"But I say, Joe, where have you been living?"

"Till within two months on board the Nore Light—provisional director of the floating beacon. They never thought of looking for me there. I've made great friends with the keeper; very jolly fellow, who never goes on shore, because he says it makes him so sick. He gets qualmish sometimes on board, when it's calm."

"Are you all right now?"

"Right as twenty trivets: only they'd have me, if they could, about that cursed Slushpool and Landmark Heath Extension. There must be as many writs out against me as, pasted together, would reach the whole length of the line?"

"Then what are you here for?"

"Oh! I was obliged to come over. I've got a plan, and

been sitting up all night with capitalists and accountants to carry it out. Ten thousand pounds down, and half a million a year safe."

"Have you got the ten thousand down, Joe?"

"No; but as good—as good. I'm going back to Boulogne to-night to see about it."

Mr. Straggles thought that Boulogne, from what he had heard of it, was not exactly the place to go for ten thousand pounds; but he knew his friend, and did not say anything.

For Mr. Joseph Flitter, as he was called, lived in a self-created world of gigantic schemes, and had never been out of hot water since Mr. Straggles had known him. Their agencies had first thrown them together, and they had never met but he had something to propose that must return five hundred per cent. No matter what the scheme was; he got up companies, and railways, and newspapers, with equal facility. When a junction-bank failed he started a floating-bath, with the same prospects of liquidation; and as soon as he found that one bushel of the new argillaceous shale would not fuel a steamer over the Atlantic, he had the galvanic decomposition of water patent all ready, the apparatus for which, to work the Great Western, could be put under a hat.

"I suspect one or two are on the look-out for me," said Mr. Flitter; "so I'll tell you how I'm going to Boulogne. That London-bridge wharf is never safe. Sir, I believe the writs walk about there bolt upright by themselves, all day long, to catch the passengers. But the steward of the boat is a capital fellow; I wear coats and shawls on shore for him, and carry uncorked bottles of brandy; and he is going to look out for me, and hook on to a boat if I'll be in it, off the Isle of Dogs to-night. Now, where do you dine?"

Mr. Straggles suggested the place above mentioned, near Leicester-square.

"Oh no, no!" said Mr. Flitter. "Fancy this weather, too—pah! Let's dine at Greenwich, eh? Do the thing for once; oceans of water souchée; swamps of stewed eels; no end of salmon cutlets; pyramids of whitebait; and an acre of brown bread-and-butter."

"Beautiful!" cried Mr. Straggles, carried away by his friend's enthusiasm.

"I believe you, my boy," continued Mr. Flitter. "Gallons of cyder-cup, too, and Badminton. Iced punch! ducks! peas!

cutlets! and brown bread-and-butter again! And then the wine, and the river, and the strawberries! Ah!"

This time Mr. Straggles sighed.

"But it costs so much, Joe," he added, sadly.

"Cost be (something)'d," replied Mr. Flitter. "You can do it at all prices. Look here"—and he pulled a small bill from his pocket—"Tea with shrimps, a shilling; ditto with children, sixpence."

"I don't seem to care much about children," observed Mr. Straggles.

"No—no nonsense, Straggy. I mean to pay, you know. You shall be my guest, and see me off. I say, you haven't got such a thing as a pair of boots to lend a fellow, have you? Yours would fit me."

Mr. Straggles had a cherished pair with red tops, so smart, that he often regretted that he could not wear them outside his trousers, when they would have given him the air of a Polka nobleman. Under other circumstances he would not have thought of lending them, but Mr. Flitter was going to stand the dinner, so he brought them from his bedroom.

"But I say, Joe," he asked, "if you are off to Boulogne, what will become of my boots?"

"Oh—all right. You must come with me as far as Gravesend, just to see me off; you can get back for a shilling, and take your boots with you. A collar, too, I think; yes, a collar, and then I shall be slap up. Recollect—for I've got business to do, and must be off—if we don't meet again, the Hospital Terrace, at seven o'clock."

Mr. Flitter went into Mr. Straggles's room, and put on the articles, and then took his departure.

At five P.M. Mr. Straggles locked his outer door, and went to London-bridge by water for a farthing, in a new steamer called *The Earwig*, and then waited on the pier, and enjoyed a penn'orth of cherries, as he watched the flock of steamers crowding along the river.

"Now, who's for Grinnidge?" bawled a man. "Outside boat!"

Mr. Straggles took his ticket, and found the boat would start at the half-hour; but as it wanted a few minutes, he went back to buy another bunch of cherries, to beguile the journey. He was kept a little time waiting for change, the woman having hunted under every leaf in her basket for the coppers, and he

then went and took his place in the outside boat, by the man at the wheel, just as she was starting.

"I say!" exclaimed Mr. Straggles, as the boat appeared to be off the wrong way, "where are you going to?"

"'Ungerford," was the reply.

"But I'm going to Greenwich!"

"No, that you isn't; leastwise now," said the man. "That's the Grinnidge boat just moving."

"They told me it was the outside one," cried Mr. Straggles.

"So she was till we come round," said the man. "This here's The Earywig."

The very boat he had come by! But there was no appeal, so Mr. Straggles went back to Hungerford, and there had to wait half an hour for the next chance, in which interval the tide turned the wrong way. But at last the hospitable Waterman No. 9 received him, and he got fairly off, looking ruefully at the unavailable ticket he had before taken, and munching his cherries rather than enjoying them.

But the journey to Greenwich by water on a bright afternoon, with a whitebait dinner in anticipation, is not calculated to nourish blue devils, albeit it does good to spirits generally. There is so much to look at, and it is always amusing, even if you have gone backwards and forwards every day, from the restless, scuffling, swarming steamers, to the lumbering barges, that will get in the way of everything by choice, as the man, pulling them by the heavy oars—or rather conceiving that he does so—appears so disproportioned to his work, as the diligent flea who draws the man-of-war; old tumble-down wharfs, and crazy public-houses with singularly unsafe galleries, and warehouses so lofty that they have as many stories as the "Arabian Nights," as Mr. Straggles pleasantly observed; little boys bathing in the mud under the shelter of stranded lighters; heavy continental boats, like drowsy leviathans, just breathing from their funnels, with their crew idling over the sides; huge manufactories of articles hitherto unheard of, or scarcely supposed important enough to have a room for themselves; and a border of flag-staffs, steeples, chimneys, scaffolds, and more ships, out and away at the distance, and apparently built into the very heart of London,—all these things furnish plenty to look at. And so Mr. Straggles forgot his lost ticket, and determined to make up for his loss by not having a cigar for two days, unless somebody gave him one.

He got to Greenwich safely, and found Mr. Flitter on the Terrace, accompanied by whom he went to one of the taverns that look so agreeably on the realms of the whitebait beyond the Hospital. There was a large private dinner in the regular coffee-room, so a smaller apartment on the ground floor had been substituted for it, and here Mr. Flitter and Mr. Straggles fortunately got a table by the window, as a party was just leaving. Mr. Straggles unfolded his napkin, and disposed his green-and-white wine glasses, and assumed the air of a bon-vivant, as though he had always dined at the Clarendon.

The room was quite full. There was that pleasant buzz of life which always makes a coffee-room dinner so agreeable, and, to our thinking, assists digestion. Mr. Flitter ordered a course of fish—"the usual thing," he said, "with a duck and peas, or something of the sort"—then he inquired of his friend what he usually drank. Mr. Straggles usually took half-and-half; but the elegant atmosphere of the room, and the contiguity of ladies, awed and refined his feelings, and he suggested "pale ale."

"Oh, of course," said Mr. Flitter; "but I mean besides. Punch, you know."

"Certainly, certainly," said Mr. Straggles.

"And Badminton, eh?—of course, some Badminton?" continued Mr. Flitter.

"Of course," said Mr. Straggles, as he felt that the ladies were looking at them. But if Mr. Flitter, instead of Badminton, had suggested Chippenham, or Devides, or Cricklade Cup, the answer would have been the same.

The fish was brought, and then, in his first excitement, Mr. Straggles quietly told Mr. Flitter that he had never dined at Greenwich before. Whereupon Mr. Flitter told him to eat lots of everything, and then he would do the proper thing.

So Mr. Straggles commenced with water souchée (which at first he conceived to be flounder broth), and ate all the parsley into the bargain, and then got timid at the imposing waiter who came to change his plate, and said he preferred the same; but this the man would not allow by any means, and took it away with a strong-minded effort. After which, Mr. Straggles was lost in admiration of the stewed eels, and in wonder at the pickles which nestled amidst the salmon cutlets, and in fear at the pyramid of whitebait which soon made its appearance; so much so, that he drank deeply of punch to regain his presence

of mind. And then he watched Mr. Flitter closely—how he slanted his plate with a wedge of bread, whilst he squeezed the lemon over the cayenne pepper; how he helped himself recklessly to ravenous quantities, and devoured them as voraciously: all this Mr. Straggles did, even to slapping one bit of brown bread-and-butter upon another, face to face, as carelessly as though he had done so for years.

“Well, Straggy,” said Mr. Flitter, “what do you think of whitebait? What are they like?”

“I can’t make out,” replied his friend. “Baked curl papers I should say were the nearest things to them. But the bread-and-butter’s first rate.”

“More bait,” ordered Mr. Flitter; and more after that; and then devilled bait; and the Badminton. Capital stuff it was, too. “I’ll tell you how to make that,” said that gentleman. “Pour out a bottle of vin ordinaire into a jug, and shoot a bottle of soda-water into it. Add some sugar, and some knobs of Wenham ice. Put a suspicion of your favourite liqueur, or a phantom of lemon-peel, into it, and there you are. Ah!”

This last expression accompanied a deep draught, which Mr. Straggles imitated to perfection, as the devilled bait had made his throat all of a blaze. And upon this he put pale ale, finishing with champagne, which Flitter would order.

“I don’t seem to care much about any more to eat,” said Mr. Straggles, as he felt the whitebait almost up to his throat.

“Oh, but you must. Here are lovely peas! and duck, too! or perhaps you’d like some of this ham?”

Mr. Straggles thought he would; it was less to eat. But it was so salt that he was obliged to have some more Badminton, and soon got very jolly indeed.

“This is doing it, Joe, isn’t it?” he said.

“Rather,” answered Mr. Flitter. “Waiter, some of that old port.”

“And strawberries, sir?—yes, sir,” replied the man.

The dessert came; and the day wore away. The sunset gun was fired; the yachts below the taverns took down their flags; and the lights alone, before long, marked the passage of the steamers towards the Pool. The company, too, left the coffee-room; but the large party up-stairs, who were going to finish with a ball, kept the tavern alive; and as, in addition, Mr. Flitter told the waiters he expected a friend to sup there before he started from the Aberdeen wharf at midnight, they

were not disturbed. Mr. Straggles had drunk himself into a halo of poetry and romance, and when the band above played "The Standard-Bearer Quadrilles," he sang the song so loudly that the boys below the windows cheered him for very admiration. All this time Mr. Flitter was looking anxiously from the window upon the river, as, like Mariana, he gazed "athwart the glooming flats" of the Isle of Dogs. At last he said, when Mr. Straggles had uttered his dying declaration that he would not name the lady of his love,

"Straggy, you haven't such a thing as five pounds about you, have you?"

"Lord, Joe! no!" replied Mr. Straggles, as much astonished at the possibility even of such a thing being entertained for an instant by his friend, as aghast at the question.

"Because," continued Mr. Flitter, "I must have had my pocket picked coming down; I can't find my purse."

"Why! what can we do?" cried Mr. Straggles, now in real terror.

"Well, I can't see exactly; we must get away without paying."

"Without paying! Now, Joe, don't! we shall be taken up for swindlers."

"We shall, if we stay," said Mr. Flitter. "But of course I shall pay; you shall bring back the money."

"I won't go away," answered Mr. Straggles, now quite gravely. "I'll stop in pawn."

"You can't. Now look here, Straggy. Would you ruin me, your friend, and dash down ten thousand pounds at a blow? Ha! here he is. Stop!"

As he spoke, the splash of a pair of sculls was heard, and a boat came underneath the window. A waiter entered the room at the same time, so that Mr. Flitter could not attend to it; but he ordered coffee, and, the minute the door closed, he beckoned to the waterman, who stuck a note on a boat-hook, and gave it to him.

"I thought so," said Mr. Flitter, as he read it hurriedly. "Some of them have seen me in London, and Sloman knows I'm here. It's about the time, too. Wait a minute."

Mr. Straggles did as he was ordered—he could do nothing else—and waited in great fear and trepidation.

As soon as the coffee was brought, Mr. Flitter placed a bottle of wine that was on the sideboard in Mr. Straggles's hand; and

assuming a determined sepulchral voice, pointed to the river and said,

“Descend into the boat!”

“What! there! Pooh! stuff! I can’t. What do you mean?”

“What I say; the bailiffs are after me, and I shouldn’t wonder if they take you too, as an accomplice. Get into the boat; we have not a second to spare. Away!”

Bewildered with the dilemma and the drink, Mr. Straggles took the bottle, and climbed down the iron work in front of the window, scarcely knowing what he did. Mr. Flitter followed, when, as he was stepping down, he heard a cry, followed by a plunge amongst the billows on his lee, which the last steamer had called up, and, on turning round, could just see the luckless Straggles disappearing under the surface of the water, his hand in the air, however, clutching the brandy bottle as firmly as his friend “The Standard-Bearer” ever did his colours. In his flurry he had stepped on the side of the boat and gone over. Fortunately, however, it was not deep. Mr. Flitter and the waterman pulled him in again; and then the former said, “Go ahead!” as the dark form of the Boulogne boat was observable coming down the river.

“Now, give way!” he said. “Get as close as you can on her larboard side, and go as if you were trying to race her.”

As Mr. Flitter had expected, there was somebody on board looking out. When the boat came up, the man pulled near enough to her paddles to be interesting; a rope was thrown out and caught, and, when it was dragged amidst the boiling water in their wake to the side, Mr. Flitter pulled Mr. Straggles after him, and they stood on the deck. The waterman received a few shillings; a hurried recognition passed with the steward, who appeared to be a friend; a waiter was seen looking out of the distant coffee-room window; and the Boulogne boat kept on as if nothing had happened.

“I’m dripping!” were the first words that Mr. Straggles uttered, as, with chattering teeth and trembling frame, he formed a small pond about him on the deck, till it ran out at the scuppers.

“Dear, dear! of course you are,” said Mr. Flitter. “Here, come down to a berth, and get off your clothes as quickly as possible, and take some brandy.”

Mr. Flitter dragged Mr. Straggles down to the cabin, and assisted him to skin off his wet clothing. Then making him

swallow a glass of pure brandy, he put him into a berth, and told him to keep warm whilst his clothes were dried in the engine-room; and that he would let him know when they were near Gravesend, where he could be at once put on board the first steamer that was going up to town in the morning.

* * * * *

Mr. Straggles had curious visions. He dreamt he was a whitebait in a river of Badminton, wearing patent boots with red tops, and fighting for liberty and truth as Mr. Flitter's standard-bearer; then everybody he knew in the world was dining with him in a vast coffee-room, where all the tables kept going round and round in the air like an up-and-down at a fair, when the river rose, and all the fish got out of their dishes and attacked the company, until they called in the pensioners, who drove them out of the window; and as a beautiful girl of the party was just going to ask him to take her out for a row in a continental steamer, he awoke.

It was broad daylight. The paddles had ceased to work, and the people had left their berths, and were now rushing down and snatching bags and baskets from remote corners of the cabin, ere they hurried up again. There were many feet shuffling overhead, and uncouth voices were heard vociferating unintelligibly all at once.

"Gravesend!" cried Mr. Straggles, as he started up; "and I am undressed! Halloo! Steward, where are my things?"

"All right, sir," said the man, bringing his things dry and folded. "We've had a rough passage, though."

"Passage! Why, where are we?"

"I thought you'd wonder," said the steward. "You slept so heavily we couldn't rouse you, all we could do; so Mr. Flitter said we had better leave you alone. Where do you go?"

"Oh! back to London by the next boat."

"Yes, sir, that's the *Harlequin*, she goes at twelve to-night; and there's the *Magician*, to Dover; and the *Queen of the French*, to Folkestone, at eight to-morrow morning."

"Dover! Folkestone!" gasped Mr. Straggles. "What the devil do you mean? Where am I?"

"Just under the douane, sir, in Boulogne harbour," was the reply.

Mr. Straggles gave a shriek of anguish, and covering his face with the sheet, to the discomfort of his legs, gave way to the wildest despair.

XXXIX.

MR. STRAGGLES HAS A DAY'S FISHING.

MR. STRAGGLES contrived to get back from Boulogne, to which place he had been so unceremoniously carried against his will. But if Mr. Roberts, of the boarding-house upon the port, had not kindly given him credit until he got a remittance from England, he would have been in a sad way, for his friend appeared to be no better off in France than at home, in spite of his gigantic expectations; in fact, he disappeared suddenly one night after a game of billiards at the café, at the corner of the Grande Rue, and was never heard of again. The men who were building the new bridge that crosses to Capécure, dragged the harbour; and the gardeners below the ramparts of the Haute Ville searched the ground for the body, believing that he had committed suicide in consequence of his losses that evening, which were known to be great. But as the winners never got anything, it was fairly presumed that Mr. Flitter had never paid them; and as no body was found, it was also, with some plausibility, conceived that he had not made away with himself. In Boulogne, however, he was not. After the first shock, Mr. Straggles got on well enough. There were some pleasant people at the house, and it fortunately was not a busy time in London, so that he did not fret at his absence. He walked to Portel and Wimereux, and half fell in love with a pretty girl who waited at the inn at Wimille, on the right hand of the route going towards Calais, and if she is still there she will repay the walk. He went to the balls at the Etablissement and Salle Delplanque, and knocked over more old ladies and chairs in his polking than had ever been known; he had cheap baths from the little sentry-boxes that wheel down to the edge of the tide; he walked through mud to the chapel of the hamlet of Jésus Flagellé, and was perfectly scared at the votive offerings hung round it; he joined in all the rows about the parsons which so interest the English residents; and, finally, was sorry when he left. But it was a case of "must," so he braced up

his nerves, and gave his last farewell to his fellow-boarders, who ran along the pier, by the side of the steamer, to see him off, and finally waved their handkerchiefs from the rounded extremity, until the *Queen of the French* was out of sight, on her way to Folkestone. For a few weeks after he returned, Mr. Straggles kept very quiet, for his funds partook of what the City articles called "the general tightness of the money market." He limited his dinner to a shilling, and gave up all notion of cabs anywhere. He found discarded clothes of past gaiety, at the bottoms of his drawers, that would still do—in fact, like old clothes generally, they were wonderfully improved by inaction, for turning an old coat into drawers is as beneficial as turning a worn horse out to grass. He did without suppers, and never went to the play but with a newspaper order—not an actor's, because he knew he should pay for it with remarkable interest when the benefits came round. Instead of having his pennyworth of the *Times* every day, he found out some coffee-rooms where he could indulge in the fragrant berry, or whatever it was, at a cheap rate, and could read the papers for nothing; and whenever he felt elastic, and wanted an excursion, he paid a penny, and rode from London-bridge to Hungerford and back again, or took a short trip in a Parliamentary train, and walked home. But through it all he was still the same joyous Straggles.

It was a touching thing, though, when his friends called upon him as they were leaving town. One was going to Gravesend—that was Mr. Knapps, of Mincing-lane; another was on his way to Ramsgate—that was Mr. Howard, of the West-end emporium. Mr. Brown, of Brixton, came to inquire about Boulogne; and Mr. Ricketts, the stockbroker, spoke largely of pheasants in Surrey. In fact, everybody was off somewhere, and Mr. Straggles not liking to be thought behind them, kept a gun in his chamber, which he always began to oil and polish when any one came to the door, hung up a shooting-coat and fishing-basket behind it, threw old gaiters and thick shoes carelessly about the floor, and hoisted an ancient hat, with artificial fly-hooks stuck all round it, on the back of an old arm-chair, telling everybody that he meant "to see what the barbel were like next week," which, as he had not the least idea, was, in a measure, a praiseworthy and instructive investigation.

"What! going fishing?" asked his friend Mr. Hackle, one day, when he called.

Mr. Hackle was a decided fisherman; that is to say, he believed in the killing properties of baits that the fish could never possibly, by any chance, have met with before—old cheese, rusty bacon, raw dough, and the like. He never caught a fish, were it only a bleak, but he allowed it to play and flap about on the top of the water before he pulled it out. He never crossed a rivulet without stopping to watch it with much affection for half an hour, perfectly satisfied if, at the end of that period, he saw a roach wriggling up against the stream; and he never passed a weedy, froggy, willow-bordered swamp, but he would say, "I'll be bound there are some fine jack there." Au reste, he wore blue spectacles, and made other things he fondly believed to be flies, from bits of old hat, bed feathers, and the lining of chairs.

"Straggles," observed Mr. Hackle, "you coop yourself up too much—quite like a caddis worm; you want air and exercise. Come with me for a day's fishing. I see you've got a basket."

It was all Mr. Straggles had got in the angling line, and even that had not been purchased for its proper purpose. On short trips, he was accustomed, once upon a time, to carry his wardrobe in it; but now he had given that up. For the rude omnibus cads used to call him a "jolly fisherman," and "young Ikey Walton," and the little dirty boys persisted in walking by his side, singing, "In the days when we went hangling, a long time ago," and Mr. Straggles could never stand the little boys. Once, to be sure, he had taken to fish, mildly, in the Serpentine, but the boys drove him away; for they used to come and sit down by his side, entering into conversation, without any encouragement or introduction, recommending him to "Pull him out, sir; you've got him at last!" telling him, "There's a bite!" examining his kettle, and committing other familiarities, until at last they came to pelting his float, which ultimately drove him away.

However, he agreed to go with Mr. Hackle; and he bought a cheap rod and line at a fishing-tackle-maker's, whose stock was so large that he had been for years selling it off "at an enormous sacrifice," and who kept a tin fish suspended over his door, which had spun a dozen bilious opposite neighbours away from their abodes, by its restless gyrations. His friend was to provide baits and appliances generally, and the day was fixed upon.

When the appointed morning arrived, Mr. Hackle made his appearance, so laden with apparatus—rods, and poles, and rakes, and landing-nets; bags, and baskets, and kettles, and a camp-stool—that he looked as if he was about to start on a pedestrian tour round the world, carrying everything with him. Mr. Straggles merely carried his own basket with some sandwiches in it, from the “splendid-glass-of-ale” shop; and then being told that they were going to a very likely piece of water beyond Hampstead, he started with his friend, guided entirely by him; for if Mr. Hackle had proposed dragging for lobsters at Sadler’s Wells, or angling for mackerel in Highgate Ponds, Mr. Straggles had that reliance on his piscatorial experience that he would directly have accompanied him without a misgiving.

They got up to Hampstead pretty well, and without much annoyance. The boys, to be sure, were as vigilant and attentive as ever, occasionally inquiring of Mr. Hackle, in a friendly commercial spirit, “What he would take for his straw hat without the lining?” and they also asked, in allusion to his spectacles, “Why he didn’t light his lamps?” and gazing at Mr. Straggles’s tall proportions, they recommended him “to mind he didn’t knock the moon out when he came back again at night.” But the anglers merely smiled at these sallies, pretending to be highly amused thereby; whereas, internally, such was far from being the case.

It was tolerably hot when they had toiled up the last hill to Hampstead Heath, and as they had still some little way farther to go, Mr. Hackle proposed they should ride. Mr. Straggles directly consented, and without much difficulty they soon found some animals.

There are various localities in the vicinity of London where donkeys flourish; they have peculiar districts, like hops and sausages. In the suburban ruralities of Primrose Hill many fine studs may be met with; at Blackheath they form a staple means of peregrination; at Gravesend, they delight the poor deluded people who fancy they are at the sea-side, and bear them to shrimps-and-watercresses-devouring localities. Still more distant, at the convivial Margate, they bake in the sun on the chalk cliffs above the Fort, until they become as tawny as the slippers of their riders; and at Ramsgate, the adjacent bay of Pegwell—promising and hunger-implying name—owes much of its commercial importance to the means of transport they afford. But it is at Hampstead Heath alone that they are to

be seen in all their glory. What matters it if the saddles be old and time-worn? An expanse of calico, bound with gay tape, conceals the blemishes and improves the appearance. So have we seen the tail-coat, when somewhat seedy as to the lappels, converted into the dress garment by a silk facing. If they are idly inclined, are there not boys to run behind, and provoke activity by a pointed stick? originating the offensive but widely-known comparison between donkeys and lollipops, inasmuch as the more they were licked the faster they went. Did a donkey from Hampstead ever get tired?—did it ever break its knees?—was it ever blind?—did it ever run away?—did it ever shuffle off any other coil than the mesh of string, tape, tin, jack-chain, and old thongs that formed its bridle? Never.

The fineness of the morning, the light air, and the holiday altogether, coupled with some pale ale at Jack Straw's Castle, so elevated Mr. Straggles's spirits, that he sang the "Standard-Bearer" louder than ever; and following Mr. Hackle, held his fishing-rod like a lance, and assumed a martial bearing, only interrupted when his feet dragged against the ground, which, from their length, they occasionally did. They crossed the Heath, and wound along the pleasant roads beyond it; and at last stopped at a gate, where Mr. Hackle said they were to dismount, as it must be the one he had been told of by a brother angler. They then sent the boys back to the inn, with directions to bring them some bottled ale, together with bread and cheese, at two o'clock; and pushing their way through a wet copse, the trees of which caught their tackle every minute, arrived at the edge of a piece of water.

"I say," observed Mr. Straggles, "look at that board: 'Persons fishing in this water without permission will be prosecuted as the law directs.' We mustn't try here."

"Oh! that's nothing," said Mr. Hackle; "a mere form. Besides, nobody can see us: we're quite hidden."

"Well, I suppose you know best," answered Mr. Straggles, with resignation, as he sat down upon the ground. "Here goes."

Mr. Hackle was less precipitate in his movements; for with your anglers it is a great point to elaborate everything as much as possible. He performed a great many intricate feats with his floats, and caps, and split shot, and plummets; and spread everything out with great display at his side. Then he made several small stone dumplings, with a light crust of bran, clay,

and gentles, which he distributed, here and there, in the water. After this he took all his hooks out of their parchment envelopes, one after another, and, having looked at them, shut them all up again. Then, after plumbing his depth, which he did over every square inch within reach of his rod, he found he had too many shot, and took some off. Then he had not enough, and was obliged to put some on again. Next, his top-joint was the wrong one, and all his tackle had to be taken to pieces again. But as all this is a great part of the contemplative man's recreation, Mr. Hackle was rather entertained than otherwise.

"Why won't my float sail along upright?" said Mr. Straggles, pointing to his porcupine's quill, which was lying horizontally upon the water.

"You're too deep," answered Mr. Hackle.

"No I'm not," said Mr. Straggles, taking him in a moral sense. "I really don't know."

Whereupon Mr. Hackle set him right, put on his bait, and committed it to the depths of the water; upon which, Mr. Straggles, feeling all comfortable, began to sing:

"Upon the tented field a minstrel knight
His lonely midnight standard watch is keeping."

"Hush!" cried Mr. Hackle; "you mustn't do that."

"What!" observed Mr. Straggles, stopping suddenly; "not sing? Oh, bother! What did I come out for?"

"To fish," said Mr. Hackle, gravely.

"Well, so I do," returned Mr. Straggles. "Hullo! here he is! I've got him!"

And hereat he pulled out a fish with a jerk that sent it whirling over his head, and even amongst the willows behind him.

Mr. Hackle here uttered those common sounds of regret which are as difficult to spell as the horse-impelling noise which the ostler beat his boy for not knowing how to express in letters on his return from school. "You should play him," he continued, "and draw him out quietly. Ho! there's a bite. Now, you see, I have him. So ho! it's a roach."

"How can you tell?" asked Mr. Straggles.

"How should I, but by my eyes. Can't you?"

"Deuce a bit. I've got a fishing-book, with pictures, but they're all alike. Pull him up."

“No, no—steady,” said Mr. Hackle; for this was evidently the great pleasure. “See how he fights! Now I have him.”

“No you don’t,” cried Mr. Straggles, as the fish suddenly vanished, shooting off into deep water. “There, now, which is the best way?”

Mr. Hackle was so angry at the failure, that he only replied, “It was all the noise Mr. Straggles was making.”

“Well, never mind,” replied the other; “be convivial. There’s as good fish in the water, I dare say, as ever came out of it. Hurrah! here’s another! Why, what the devil is it—a red herring?”

He pulled up the glittering, wriggling fish as he spoke, and showed it to Mr. Hackle. It was a gold-fish; and almost at the same instant Mr. Hackle caught another.

“This is very strange!” he said.

“But famous, isn’t it?” observed Mr. Straggles. “Put ’em in the kettle. I’ve got an old globe at home, and I’ll keep them in it. This is fishing with a vengeance!”

“It’s not sport,” remarked Mr. Hackle, throwing back the prize.

“Oh, isn’t it, though? What do you do that for?” said his friend.

“Now, pray keep quiet,” exclaimed Mr. Hackle.

“Very well; I will, then. Let’s see who catches the next. Give them some more bait. That’s the thing.”

And Mr. Straggles commenced throwing in the dumplings so recklessly, that he was obliged to be severely checked. But they went on fishing with varied success; now catching bleak, now the gold-fish again, and now piebald ones, until the time arrived for luncheon.

“I wonder where the donkey-boys are,” said Mr. Hackle, looking at his watch. “They ought to be here.”

“I hear them, I think,” said Mr. Straggles, “coming through the trees. Yes—it must be them. Hulloo-o-o!”

“Ullo-o-o-w!” cried the boys, in return.

“All right,” said Mr. Straggles; and he turned to receive them, when the trees were put on one side, and two men in velveteen jackets and gaiters made their appearance.

“So, we’ve got you at last, have we?” said one of them. “Now I suppose we shall find how master’s gold fish got into Covent-garden. Out with the handcuffs, Bill, and cripple him first.”

The man pointed to Mr. Hackle, who, from his display of apparatus, they took to be the ringleader, and they advanced to take him, having been put up to the capture by the donkey-boys, whom they had met at the gate, bringing the ale, which they immediately appropriated. As they advanced towards Mr. Hackle, all the better feelings of Mr. Straggles deserted him. He ought to have stood by his friend and seen him through it; but his terror was so great, picturing Newgate, Norfolk Island, and even the scaffold, all at once, that he lost all feelings but that of self-preservation. Committing his rod and basket to the water, he darted into the copse, and the next moment was wildly fighting his way through the wet trees and underwood, and trying his strength against that of long black-berry brambles, which, if they did not lie on the ground and coil about his ankles, hung in festoons at the level of his face, and behaved accordingly. He was afraid to look back; but he soon perceived, from the noises behind, that he was pursued, and he redoubled his energy. He went over banks like a bird, stumbled into ditches, recovered his legs, and bolted through fences and brushwood clumps, as if he had been a hunted hare; until at last he came to a wall, stretching to the right and left so far away that he could see no end to it. His pursuer was close upon his heels. Fortunately a hurdle was leaning against the wall, forming a rude sort of ladder, up which he hurriedly scrambled, and got to the top just as the fellow came up and tried to clutch his ankle. He had a vague bird's-eye view of a house and pleasure-grounds below him; but without pausing an instant to look where he was going, he leaped wildly away from the grasp of his follower. There was a loud smashing sound of glass, and the following instant Mr. Straggles found himself on the floor of a hot-house, having broken through the roof, and borne down the vine beneath his weight, which, whilst it broke his fall, now formed the bed of crushed bunches of grapes upon which he was lying. He was directly seized by the men about, including the one that had pursued him. The proprietor of the grounds, who was also a magistrate, was from home at the time; but the round-house was close at hand, and to that dreary dungeon Mr. Straggles was immediately consigned, with the intimation that he would not be long without company, as his accomplice would soon join him. And then they closed the double doors upon him, and left him to his miserable reflections.

* * * * *

He, however, procured his liberty, and was indebted to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the manner in which this was effected, for Mr. Hackle and the magistrate had long known one another as fellow-contributors. They had each sent sketches of extinct fonts and unintelligible inscriptions, and enormous rusty keys, the locks whereof had long been missing, to that light periodical; and when the latter returned—which was just as Mr. Hackle was about to be locked up with his friend—he immediately ordered them to be set at liberty, and even prevailed upon them to dine with him. It appeared that a grotto and fountain in his garden communicated with the water in which they had been fishing, but that the depredations constantly committed had got to such a pitch, that he had set his servants to watch and apprehend all invaders.

And so the affair ended in a laugh, and the gentleman insisted upon Mr. Straggles keeping all the fish he had caught. But they never proved a source of much pleasure to him: he could not regard them without shuddering at his past scrape. And as for fishing itself, he so far hated the very name, that had it been possible for him to have bought up every copy of "The Complete Angler," he would willingly have expended his last farthing in so doing, rather than another disciple should be gained to what he termed "the slowest twaddling any rational man could believe he found amusement in."

XL.

A LETTER FROM AN OLD COUNTRY-HOUSE.

DEAR ARTHUR,

'Tis so very slow,
 I can't tell what to do,
 And so I've got a pen and ink,
 And mean to write to you!
 You know how intervening space
 I reckon'd bit by bit,
 Until this time arrived: and now
 It has not proved a hit!

'Tis very well. The house is old,
 With an enormous hall;
 I think what learned architects
 Elizabethan call.
 With mullion'd windows, shutters vast
 And mystic double floors,
 And hollow wainscots, creaking stairs,
 And four-horse power doors.

And authors who could write a book
 Might subjects find in hosts,
 Of civil wars, and wrongful heirs,
 And murders, bones, and ghosts.
 And this you know's all very well
 'Neath a bright noontide sun;
 But when the dismal nightfall comes,
 'Tis anything but fun.

I'll own—but this is *entre nous*—
 I was in such a fright
 At my gaunt bedroom, that my eyes
 I never closed all night
 When first I lay there: for each thing
 Associations brought
 Of bygone crimes, and mouldy deeds,
 With frightful interest fraught.

'Twas like the room where Tennyson
 Made Mariana stay—
 A chamber odorous with time,
 And damp and chill decay.
 The moon looked in with ghastly stare
 On those who haply slept,
 And 'gainst the casement all night long
 Some cypress branches swept.

And tapestry was on the walls—
 Dull work that did engage
 Fair fingers, fleshless long ago—
 Now dim and black with age.
 And when I trod upon the floor,
 It groaned, and wheezed, and creak'd,
 And made such awful noises that
 One's very temples reek'd.

And in the middle of the night,
 Half dozing in my bed,
 Although beneath the counterpane
 I buried deep my head,
 I saw most ghastly phantom forms
 Of mildew'd men and girls,
 With axe-lopp'd heads, and steel-pierced breasts
 And long gore-dabbled curls.

I was so glad when morning came,
 For then all fear was o'er :
 I slept 'till Fox had three times changed
 The water at my door.
 And when I reach'd the breakfast-room
 The eggs and game were gone,
 And I was tied to marmalade
 And haddock all alone.

Now nothing can make up for this,
 Nor horse, nor game, nor gun ;
 Nor yet charades, night after night,
 Until they lose their fun ;

Nor Emily's contralto voice,
And dark and floating eyes ;
Nor that young countess—belle de nuit !
Nor Julia's smart replies.

I long to be in town again,
For all the world recalls
The raptures of a private box,
Or comfort of the stalls ;
Those cozy dinners at the club ;
Those rich regalia fumes ;
A whirl at Weippert's ; or, perchance,
A supper at our rooms.

So tell the boys I'm coming back,
No more this year to roam
(Don't send the birds to Collingwood ;
He never dines at home).
The second dinner-bell has rung,
I'll finish, then, forthwith,
And so,

Believe me to remain,
Yours always,

ALBERT SMITH.

XLI.

MR. STRAGGLES IS PREVAILED UPON TO GO A SHOOTING.

THERE are certain things the appearance of which on the stage of a theatre during the performance of a pantomime ensures their doom, either to total destruction, insult, or treatment of the worst description. As examples, we may mention sedan-chairs, frying-pans, bandboxes, and old ladies ; for the first, we know, will be broken in at its top by the reckless attempts of the clown to obtain a seat to which he had no right ; the second will have its bottom knocked out in forming a species of pillory necklace for the maltreated pantaloon ; the next will be crushed and comminuted to atoms in that ill-organised outburst of popular fury, in which, at the same time, fish and images always come off so poorly ; and the last—the defenceless old lady—will have to undergo such a series of frights, ill usage, and even violence, in comparison with her years, that the extent of suffering which female heroism can support under certain circumstances is really marvellous to contemplate.

Just as these things are upon the mimic stage, so was Mr. Straggles upon the theatre of real life. With every good intention and caution in the world, he was constantly in trouble. Whether acting for himself, or striving to stand in the shoe of another, he always, so to speak, put his foot in it. He was the sedan-chair that only led to the injury of the person he tried to succour ; he was the frying-pan that was sure, somehow or another, to hamper those he associated with ; he was, in a row, the human bandbox that always came off worst ; and it is a question if the clown ever felt so wickedly towards the old ladies as did the impudent boys in the street whenever he appeared. And so, with his constant dilemmas, it is a wonder he ever engaged in any expedition at all. But his nature was so inclined to festivity and relaxation, that his perpetual scrapes had little effect upon him ; indeed, he was always ready for

anything in the way of an excursion at the slightest hint, a want of funds being his only stumbling-block.

It was a very slow time in town. The leaves had fallen at Vauxhall; and such people as were left living on one side of the squares began to see those on the other, once more, through the withering foliage. Nearly all the theatres were shut, so there was nowhere to go at night; and it was too chilly and dreary to sit at home, and not cold enough to have a fire. People fought against coals and candles as long as they could, apparently in the belief that they could drive winter back by thus opposing his firmest allies; but the water was cold on the washhand-stand in the morning, and the toilet was more hurried than ordinary; and those who still would not demean themselves by yielding to another blanket, were glad to throw their dressing-gown upon the bed. The paletot of last spring was pulled from its closet to see what it looked like; forgotten trousers of once loved winter check were hunted out from the depths of wardrobes; and collections of stout boots, discarded for the gaiety of the summer sunlit pavements, once more came into favour, as they were passed in review with respect to their capabilities of new soling. Dingy muslin curtains, that it was not worth while washing, gave place to newly dyed moreen; and you began your dinner in daylight, went on with it in neutral gloom, and finished it with candles, which, as soon as lighted, made the black fireplace doubly gloomy, in spite of the dismal little soot-peppered ornaments of snipped silver paper that hung from its bars. Mr. Straggles sat at dayfall, at this season, in his chambers, thinking what to do. Inclination said, "Go and have a mild cigar and opera at the Eagle;" prudence suggested it were better to stay at home and work. But everything looked so cheerless in the cold twilight, that he was about to rush out to avoid all chance of autumnal suicide, when he heard the wheels of a cart stop in front of his house, and two minutes after the porter brought him up three partridges with a note tied round their necks. Having spent the usual time in wondering who could have sent them, he broke the seal, which bore the impression of a percussion-cap several times applied, and read as follows:

"DEAR OLD STRAGGS,—Herewith you will receive a leash of birds—not "three partridges," as I know you will already have called them. And now to business. Where these came from

there's more than you can have a notion of; the poultry shop at the bottom of Holborn-hill, if it was to rise and fly away, wouldn't give you an idea of our coveys. So the governor hopes you'll come down and have a shy at them, in return for your kindness in seeing about his commissions in London. We can find you a gun, but you must bring everything else. The Brighton Railway's the nearest line, and get down at Hayward's Heath. So, mind you come, and

“ Good afternoon.

“ Yours no end,

“ JOE.

“ Bramblesly, Oct.”

The birds and the note put Mr. Straggles to much perplexity. For, in the first place, you cannot send a more distressing present to a man in chambers, who dines out, than a leash of birds. He does not know what in the world to do with them. The first day he hangs them up to look at, and hopes that somebody will call to see them, and believe in his connexions. On the second he begins to think whom he shall present them to, and the inquiry puzzles him until the third, when he wavers between six friends of equal claims upon his attention. Arguing the case occupies two days more, until at last they get very high; and not having any servant to send on the instant with them, and mistrusting other methods, he gives them to his laundress, who sells them to the poulterer, and where they go to after that the dealer only knows.

This was one cause of distress to Mr. Straggles; the other was, that his experience in shooting was limited. He knew that, to let off a gun, you put a percussion-cap on a little knob, and pulled a thing underneath; and then if you had previously rammed some powder down the barrel with a bit of paper, it made a bang and kicked against the shoulder; but to this was his knowledge confined. As to taking an aim at anything, he might as well have attempted to shoot the moon, at which, in its commonly received sense, he might have succeeded; so he made up his mind to go to a shooting-gallery, thinking that after a dozen shots at three-halfpence each, he should be ready for anything. So have we known landmen about to take a voyage, go off quite contented with a sixpenny handbook on swimming.

There is in Leicester-square a remarkable establishment,

appropriated to many purposes in its different compartments. It was once the repository of Miss Linwood's needlework, a popular exhibition, which, however, we never saw ourselves—nor, remarkably enough, did we ever know anybody who, being driven to the point, could say he had either—but which is believed to have been immensely popular with well-regulated country families visiting London once a year as a compulsory pleasure. At that time a little Turk upon horseback used to trot across three panes of glass in one of the windows every half minute, to the delight of the passengers, especially the boys, who always enter keenly into everything exhibited for nothing. But when the needlework went, the Turk went with it; and then the establishment became so divided by different interests, that few could tell whether it was a theatre, a wine-vaults, a billiard-room, a coffee-shop, a gunsmith's, or a Royal Academy; or if they could, they never knew, amidst the ascending and descending steps, and doors, and passages, which one to take to get anywhere. The Egyptian Hall is as mystic in this respect as is the interior of the Pyramids. Nobody ever went to see Tom Thumb without finding himself amongst the Ojibbeways by a wrong door; and the visitor to the Model of Venice, having been so confused as to pay separately for the Speaking Machine, or the Fat or Mysterious Lady, ultimately never got there at all. But the Piccadilly labyrinth is nothing to the one in Leicester-square. A confusion of sounds tends further to bewilder the visitor; the noise of everything is heard everywhere else. The click of billiard-balls; the music of poses plastiques; the thwacking of single-sticks; the cracking of rifles, and the stamping of delighted Walhalla-ists, all mingle with each other; and it is only by taking refuge in the lowest apartment, which partakes of a coffee-room, a cabin, and a cellar, that you find repose. But Mr. Straggles had been told there was a good gallery here, and with some trouble he at last found his way to it.

It was a large room divided down the middle; one half being taken up with swings, ropes, bars, ladders, and various contrivances for performing fearful feats of strength with; and the other was appropriated to shooting against an iron target at the end. A gentleman in shirt-sleeves, whose life was passed in loading fire-arms, received Mr. Straggles as he entered.

"I want to shoot," observed Mr. Straggles, with assumed indifference.

"Yes, sir. Rifle, sir?" said the assistant.

"Yes, a rifle," replied Mr. Straggles, unconcernedly. He supposed it was all right, having some vague notions of rifles, and game, and Hurons, and dead shots, from Mr. Cooper's novels. But he would have answered the same had the man suggested a musket or a blunderbuss.

"Stop a minute, sir," said the man, as he painted the target with whitewash. "Now it's ready."

Mr. Straggles took the gun and aimed at the target in the most approved style. He was one of those gentlemen who constantly take aim with their walking-sticks at different objects, to impress bystanders with a belief in their sporting propensities.

"You haven't cocked it," said the man.

"Oh!" replied Mr. Straggles, "to be sure; that's it. Now then."

As the sight of the gun described various flourishes about the bull's eye, Mr. Straggles pulled the trigger, and a black mark appeared on the extreme verge of the target.

"That's not so bad, is it?" asked Mr. Straggles.

"Very good shot, sir," said the man.

"And all the shot are together, ain't they?"

"Beg your pardon, sir?"

"I mean, all the shot went out of the barrel in a heap."

"No, sir," said the man, smiling. "Rifle, sir, 's loaded with ball."

"Oh, to be sure it is! What a fool I am!" returned Straggles.

"Yes, sir," said the man.

Mr. Straggles fired away his eighteen-pennyworth with varying success, and was then recommended to try and hit the swinging bird, which hung from a string before the target. But this he could by no means accomplish, and the bullets went into the floor, and ceiling, and wall, and everywhere, in fact, but near the wooden pigeon.

"It's very difficult," he said. "I think it must be because I shut my eyes, to keep the cap from flying into them, when I pull the trigger."

"Very likely, sir," said the man. "Gentlemen are often taken so when they're not used to it."

"Oh! I'm used to it enough," said Mr. Straggles, quite indignant; "but I'm nervous. I never could bear anything swinging before my eyes. That hit him, though!"

By chance it did. By the common laws of motion the bullet was compelled to go somewhere, and that time it went against the bird. The man complimented Mr. Straggles; and he was so pleased with his skill, that he wrote to Joe Tollit the next morning, accepting his invitation; and giving up cigars for the time, spent all his money in shots until the day arrived.

In one of the streets between the squares of Soho and Leicester, Mr. Straggles found out a valuable shop, which exists still, for we passed it the other day. It was particularly calculated to attract incipient sportsmen, for the window was filled with every implement for the field, set forth in the most alluring manner. There were guns, air-canes, and pistols; flasks, cartridges, and cap-holders; together with packets of gun-powder, and in a corner such piles of catherine-wheels and crackers, that had the house taken fire, there is no knowing where the neighbours would have been blown to. And to excite timid sportsmen there were labels such as these: "Look! twisted barrels, patent breech, and back action—and all for 4*l.* 10*s.*!" or, "The real pheasant astonisher, only thirty shillings!" And to an air-gun was affixed, "Fancy stunning down a bird with this, and no keeper the wiser—three guineas!" Whilst a brace of pistols was labelled, "Men of England! have you your wives' or sisters' honour at heart? Buy these for two pound!" Mr. Straggles was overcome by the friendly nature of these communications, and he bought several accoutrements, including a packet of cartridges, one of which amused him all night in dissecting, and wondering what its contents of shot, sand, and little network wire cage could be meant for. And when he considered that his arrangements were perfect, he put himself into the third class of a slow train, and got out at the nearest station to Bramblesly that evening. The evening passed in chat with his friends, and about half-past ten—a wholesome country hour—he retired to bed, all ready for his first appearance, as a sort of Young Hawthorn, on the morrow.

With the first beams of the rising sun, Joe Tollit was at his bedroom door; and as soon as Mr. Straggles was dressed, he set him to punch an old hat into small discs for wadding, which occupied him until breakfast. During this meal, Joe was constantly clicking the guns, to see that they were all right, to the great terror of Mr. Straggles, as the barrels were generally pointed to his head. They were not loaded, to be sure. Of that he was aware: but empty guns occasionally did such won-

derful things, that he was very glad when the direction was altered. And at last, after breakfast, they went and let the dogs loose, and started for their day; Mr. Straggles being accommodated with a double-barrelled gun, which he had as much notion of handling as if it had been a cornet-à-piston, and, knowing this, he turned it off, saying, "Ah! if that had been a rifle I could have shown you something."

It was not all fun at first. They had to walk over ploughed fields, and into swamps, and through dreadful hedges, composed entirely of blackberries, holly, and stinging-nettles. And Mr. Straggles did not understand the dogs as he ought to have done. He had formed his notions of their attitudes from a tin pointer on a chimney-pot behind his chambers; and not seeing them copy this exactly, he occasionally gave them a kick on, when they stopped, thinking they were pointing at rubbish; and then he was rebuked by Joe. For take it as a rule, that in certain sports, as well as at whist, your dearest friend will insult you, and you have no appeal. Now and then some birds rose, and went whir-r-r-ring off, one of whom Joe generally brought down; but if he didn't, Mr. Straggles was so long taking his aim to make sure, that they got away comfortably, before he fired, into foreign covers, and felt small. But he was still self-confident outwardly, and always said, "Ah! they'd better not come in my way again!"

They did not, however, come to the countless flocks of birds Joe had spoken of, although the man with them beat the bushes into splinters. Indeed, it seems an immutable fact in all sporting invitations, that hopes held forth are seldom realised. For if a man tells you as an inducement that somebody caught twelve dozen gudgeon at a particular pitch the day before, be sure you will never get a bite. Rabbits vanish underground, like barbel worms before a lantern, at the approach of a visitor; no one who had expressly asked a friend to course ever found a hare; and we should mistrust that day's subsistence which depended upon all the birds brought down on estates where they were said to be as thick as flies in a sugar-tub.

After going on for some time without a chance, during which Mr. Straggles longed to shoot at the small birds, but was not allowed, Joe came to the conclusion that they had been frightened into other covers.

"There's a shaw over there," he said, as they at last halted to take some refreshment, "which I know swarms with them."

"Ah!" gasped Mr. Straggles, as he put down a little tub, from the cork-hole of which he had been taking a long pull of ale. "Well, let's go there."

"But you see it's not the governor's land; it belongs to Worthy, the brewer."

"Well, then, let's stop here, it's very jolly. Have you heard 'The Standard-Bearer?'"

Joe would not say he had not, because he foresaw Mr. Straggles would offer to sing it, and then the day would end in conviviality. So he said he knew it well, and so nipped the symphony in the bud, which his friend was beginning to hum; and then he added, "Our lands join, to be sure; so if we skirt the copse, we may do something. Come on."

They started off again, but with no greater success; still they kept hearing shots around them, which proved there must be some birds somewhere, until Joe got desperate, and, crossing the boundary, plunged into the adjoining property, telling Straggles to follow him, as well as he could, through the tangled brake.

"I say, Joe!" said Mr. Straggles, suddenly, from the centre of a nut-bush.

"Well, what is it?" asked his friend, who was down in a quarry.

"I see a pheasant; shall I shoot him?"

"Of course; but put him up first."

"No, I can hit him better as he sits. Here goes."

Mr. Straggles took his aim, and pulled the trigger. Bang-bang! went both barrels in rapid sequence; and the echoes carried out the sound into a prolonged rumble like thunder round the corner of the world.

"Why—I say, Joe—I'm d——."

We break off; there is no occasion to state what Mr. Straggles said he was.

"Well, what's the matter?" inquired his friend.

"Why, he's sitting there just the same as ever; not even frightened."

Joe climbed up the side of the old quarry as his friend spoke, and looked in the direction of the furzes.

"Why, Straggles," he said, "that's a wooden dummy, put up

there to trap the poachers. What a pity to have wasted your powder and shot upon it."

"Never mind," replied Mr. Straggles; "'on we goes again,' as they say"—he was getting ahead with the effects of the ale—"I'll punish 'em yet."

"Hush!" said Joe; "I thought I heard voices."

"No," said Mr. Straggles; "echoes, Joe, nothing more. Listen!"

And hereupon he imitated a cornet-à-piston with the air of "The Standard-Bearer," and waited for the echo. But there was none.

"Ah! that's nothing," he said; "some echoes only repeat voices, not notes. There!" he continued, as he gave the finishing ram down to his charges. "I should think that would do it."

"I'd rather keep away from you," said Mr. Tollit, "if you've no objection."

"Not at all," observed Straggles. "I'd rather; then, if I hit a bird, we shall be sure about who's done it."

The pair accordingly separated. They forced their way through the copse, and were now upon a ridge of furze field that sloped down towards another shaw similar to the one they had just left. Mr. Straggles was first, and was pushing vigorously on, when a pheasant rose from the lea below them, and the same instant a voice exclaimed, "Mark!"

"Go on!" cried Joe, earnestly. "Here, Juno! Rover! come here! Straggs, do you hear? go on! go on!"

"I'm a going," said Mr. Straggles, misunderstanding him; and again, bang-bang! went both his barrels, and the bird fell.

Elated with his success, he rushed towards where he conceived it would be found. He bounded over the fern like a fawn—pushed through the furze as if his legs had been adamant, and rushed through the saplings like a thunderbolt, until he came to the clump of nut-trees into which the bird had fallen. As he drove through it, a gentleman and two keepers received him.

"Oh! that is it, is it?" said the gentleman. "And pray, sir, who are you?"

Mr. Straggles was so frightened that he could scarcely speak. He had read of affrays with poachers, in the newspapers, and imagined that he was to be shot forthwith.

“Where’s your license, sir?” continued the gentleman.

A flash of hope illumined Mr. Straggles’s mind. He called to memory a legend he had heard, that nobody could ask for a license without showing his own; so he gasped forth:

“Show me yours first.”

The gentleman directly complied; and took from his pocket a flimsy piece of paper, printed upon with green ink, acknowledging the receipt of four pounds and tenpence from the owner.

“And now, sir, let me see yours,” he continued.

Poor Mr. Straggles! He might as well have asked for a thousand-pound bank-note. Anything like a license could not be found; and although he called Joe as loud as he could, and explained that he was a friend of a neighbour, the gentleman would not believe him, but told his keepers to take him into custody; and between them both Mr. Straggles was walked off from the copse, and, for lack of a round-house, deposited as a poacher in a high-walled-in coal-yard of the gentleman’s house.

And so passed the first day of Mr. Straggles’s shooting expedition. What adventures his subsequent day with the harriers gave rise to, the following chapter will show.

XLII.

MR. STRAGGLES HAS A DAY WITH THE HARRIERS, AND
RENOUNCES SPORTING LIFE.

THE residence of Mr. Tollit, to which Mr. Straggles returned with great joy after his respectability had been ascertained, and he had been released from the coal-hole by the gentleman who had seized him as a poacher, was an old country farm-house. The parlour was kept, like the bright poker in the grate, more for show than use, as generally the family resided in the large kitchen; and the front door had as idle a time of it as the great one of St. Paul's that faces Ludgate-hill, which appears only to have been made to be kept shut. On high holidays both were thrown open, but these came but seldom; and the usual ingress to the house was through the back door from the farm-yard. Mr. Tollit and his son were regarded by Mr. Straggles in the light of that class of relationship, now in its decadence, known as country cousins. We say in its decadence, since it has been ordained that everything in the world should become extinct after a certain time, whether animated or inorganic. In the remains of the vestiges of creation which frighten the holiday people at the British Museum, we find the ichthyosaurus, the ammonite, the mammoth, and a vast crowd of monsters terrible to behold, upon the total disappearance of which we have every reason to congratulate ourselves. In later times, amongst things which were, but are believed in no longer, are executions, high art, five-act plays, stage coachmen, great actors, and Dutch weather houses. Young ladies declare that offers are getting every day more scarce; so are old English gentlemen, prize-fights, and fair horse-races; and country cousins are now passing away as well.

When Mr. Straggles first recollected his old world friends the Tollits, things were differently constituted. They had always lived at Bramblesly, but then the journey was an undertaking. An anomalous gig, something between a private cab

and a dog-cart, had to start at some irregular hour, elaborate to remember, and meet the coach in the dim morning twilight, traversing a route that was along a track of ruts crossing a common, on either side of which the fog hung heavily upon the gossamers that sway in grey testoons from heath to furze bush. There were various motives, too, for this journey. It might be love, or law, or physic; it might be an ambition to talk of town and seize the fashions; sometimes it oscillated between politeness and dividends. But travelling was then a matter of toil and importance, and a real motive was always put forward by the Tollits as an excuse for their visit. They never came to town upon a mere whim.

It then happened that Mr. Straggles used to take beds for them at an hotel. Their common resort, with many others of the same class, was the Sussex Hotel, an establishment bounded on the west by Bouverie-street, Fleet-street, and on the east by the Bolt-in-Tun coach-office. There were inns much nearer to Mr. Straggles's chambers, but the Tollits always went there, because the coach that came from their part of the world went there too. The distance between them was that uncomfortable one which would have been an eighteenpenny fare if it could, but it couldn't; and so the journey was always enlivened by an argument with the coachman—cabs were not patronised then—who invariably got the best of it, until the Tollits bought a little Book of Fares, which they carried about with them in preference to their watches, and which was distinguished in always having the fares between all places but those which they wanted.

The Bolt-in-Tun is much changed now; quiet country gentlemen, who knew it when they were obliged to sleep in town, but never do so now in consequence of the quick transit, would hardly recognise it. Then there were galleries running round it which made strangers imagine they were going to bed out of doors; and at certain hours of the day the visitors would appear from the sleeping-rooms that looked down into the yard, awaiting the arrival of the stage-coach to learn the local news. And there were plenty of coaches then in the yard of the Bolt-in-Tun—heavy, florid vehicles, like so many apoplectic elephants, snoozing under the sheds until the ostlers dragged them forth to be washed and dressed. All night long they rattled in and out, teaching country folks by the noise that

they were in London; and in the intervals of their clatter, restless horses stamped and snorted, and shook their harness in adjacent stables, at which they arrived by going up and down inclined planes, like the approaches to the steam-boat piers, or the platform of Astley's, along which the "Untamed Horse of the Tartar horde of Circassia" bears the rightful prince from his enemies, or brings him to succour female innocence, just in the nick of time. But now the coaches have all gone—no one can tell for a certainty where to—the rickety, fore-shortened railway omnibus that shuffles up to the door of the booking-office, and is generally off again before any one knows that it has arrived, but ill makes up for the deficiency.

In those old times Mr. Straggles was proud to go about town with the Tollits, since, whatever was the exciting cause of the visit, it always had the same results—seeing sights and spending money—and he used to feel that he was, as it were, their Mentor. They began to buy things immediately on their arrival. The Jews who haunted the front of the Elephant and Castle found amongst them the readiest customers for their wares, from the Annual with the worn-out plates, to the pewter pencil-case with the flawed glass seal at the top. And there appeared to be resorts especially appropriated to them, which Mr. Straggles seemed to know little about, although he would not confess it. Exeter-change and Miss Linwood's were in high favour. Cranbourne-alley was alone thought trustworthy with respect to bonnets, and the corner of St. Paul's as regarded books. Alack! Exeter-change is changed altogether; its cutlery has cut itself, and its beasts have become denizens of another district; they have avoided the desert of the modern Exeter Arcadia. Miss Linwood is no more, and her cause has yielded to that of more distressed needlewomen; the fast, shuffling quietude of Cranbourne-alley no longer exists, and the female touters at the doors of the shops appear to shrink from the bustle of the new thoroughfare. The "Scenes in Europe" have retired from St. Paul's Churchyard before Mr. Grant's work of high-pressure, forty-Peter Parley power; and the spirit of philosophy has been diluted into negus to suit juvenile palates.

We laugh at a yokel in London, but a Cockney in the country is a far more contemptible person, and this Mr. Straggles began to feel. For the changes pervading everything did not allow

him to assume that mental superiority over the Tollits which he once did. Formerly they were delighted to go everywhere, and see anything: all the singers at the Opera were equally unknown to them, and sometimes they proffered a quiet petition for a playbill. But what the newspapers called "facility of communication" had made them almost as sharp as Mr. Straggles conceived himself to be. Illustrated newspapers, rapidly brought down to their home, gave them an idea of the theatres, exhibitions, fashions, and lions, as soon as himself—nay, sooner—for it is proverbial that those living in town are the last to see anything in it. Periodicals of every kind—funny ones with cuts, and sober ones without—put them up to that horological knowledge popularly known as "the time of day;" and London lecturers, whisked down to their literary institutions, left no fresh points of scientific discovery a novelty. In fact, a visit to town had almost become a "little go," to which the Tollits came up as knowing as Mr. Straggles himself: in fact, more so, being as perfectly crammed in one way as collegians in another. So he was much puzzled how to keep up his character. He found they knew everything, from Jenny Lind to gutta-percha; but he was innately deficient in sporting and agricultural matters, and therefore he determined to assume a knowledge of everything as far as he was able.

"Straggs," observed Mr. Tollit, junior, as they sat in the kitchen before the huge fire, at which two fowls were roasting before the wood embers, to the great astonishment of the gentleman addressed—"Straggs, what are you like outside a horse?"

It was a home question. With less uneasiness the member of a respectable pious country family might have been asked, "what was his opinion of Carlotta Grisi compared with Ellsler." So Mr. Straggles, after a moment's incertitude, replied:

"Oh—all right!"

"I'm glad of that," said Joe, "because Jack Rasper's harriers are coming over here to-morrow, and we are going to mount you, just by way of a change. The governor said he was sure you'd take a fence."

"Take offence!" observed Mr. Straggles; "what at?"

"At?" replied Joe; "anything: a double ditch, with a quickset in the middle—an ox-rail—a row of hurdles—or a light

park paling. We'll put you on something that will take you over them if you can stick on."

Stick on! It had a terrible sound. It spoke of that impressive sort of horsemanship, that clinging ride of terror and incertitude which characterised the equestrianism of a monkey. And yet Mr. Straggles did not like to confess his feeble-mindedness on this point to his "country cousins." He found that they could criticise Alboni and speak of the Nassau balloon as readily as he could himself, and therefore, determined not to appear behind them, he accepted the proffered steed.

Not without many misgivings, though; for his practice in riding had hitherto been very limited. He had, it is true, gone on donkeys to Pegwell Bay, and the place near Gravesend where the watercresses grow; and he had once ventured into the Park upon a hack horse, where he had contrived to keep his seat, albeit the many salutations he received from ill-conditioned boys, on his journey thither, had well-nigh abashed him. But he would not confess his fears; and he thanked Mr. Tollit as coolly as though he had been accustomed to take stone walls and five-barred gates every day of his life.

"Old Jack will be just the thing for you," said Joe, "because he knows the country. He's rather high actioned, but that's a fault on the right side; because he won't come down like your daisy-clippers that shuffle a penny-piece from a turnpike road. I don't think you have any top-boots, have you?"

Mr. Straggles had not—in fact, he might just as well have been asked for a pair of epaulettes or a turban from his wardrobe.

"Ah, never mind," said Joe; "we'll fit you out in proper style. You can have those, if you like."

Mr. Tollit pointed to a pair that were lying up in a corner, and were of that kind which John Bull is always accustomed to wear, according to popular pictorial authority. They were heavy and large, with brown tops and round toes; and looked as if they could have done duty upon emergency for the celebrated seven-league boots of the legend.

"Why, I could get into them altogether," said Mr. Straggles, as he looked, first at them, and then at his own ten-and-six-penny Alberts. "If I wore them I could never lift my legs."

"Oh yes you could," said Joe. "Besides, if they are so

heavy, what of that?—they'll steady you, you know, when you're once up, with their weight on each side."

And to prove the truth of this assertion by a model, Mr. Tollit stuck two forks in a cork, which he afterwards elevated on a pin, and then made the entire apparatus revolve and oscillate on the foot of an inverted wine-glass.

"There, don't you see?" he went on, "you can't knock it over; you're the cork, you know, and the forks are your legs and boots. They'll be regular ballast to you; you'll never get lopsided if you wear them."

The night that Mr. Straggles passed, after the hour of bedtime arrived, was indeed a fearful one. Half dozing, he was haunted by vivid pictures of all the equestrian mischances that had ever occurred. John Gilpin kept flying round his bed, as he had seen him pictured, wigless and scared, with the two broken bottles hanging against his hips. The unfortunate Mr. Button, whose fearful ride to Brentford was only equalled by that of Bürger's Leonora in horror, appeared going through all those rapid acts of horsemanship that have become matters of history, riding now on the neck, and now on the extreme verge of the crupper, with his face to the tail, or across the horse like a sack, with all the other remarkable positions which that devoted tailor was made to assume. Then he called to mind the story of the nobleman, who, staying at a friend's house, after a day with the hounds, upon being called to go to cover the next morning, cried, with an air of haggard mistrust, "What! do people go hunting twice?" And, lastly, he recollected an uncomfortable book upon the Epping Hunt, with pictures of dilemmas more perilous than any one man could have been supposed to have survived; as well as a set of coloured prints of some great steeple-chase, where, from the start to the come in, the view had always been taken just as a gentleman rider had been pitched upon his head, or been left behind a "double," or plumped into a brook, or gone over altogether with his horse, as if upon an invisible centrifugal railway. And these desperate scenes merging into his sleeping visions, kept him starting from his slumbers all night, with the impression that he was falling from the roof of a house, fashioned like a saddle on a mighty horse.

Bright Chanticleer proclaimed the day at last, according to his custom on hunting mornings. And Mr. Straggles awoke

from his unrefreshing sleep. Nothing, however, is ever in reality so terrible as we fancy it in the dead of night, and the sunlight reassured him; so much so, indeed, that as he was dressing, he began to sing "The Standard-Bearer," and from this he went into various appropriate melodies connected with southerly winds and cloudy skies; and "harked forward" more than once as he was shaving, and said "Tantivy!" But he used this latter word in a reckless manner, not exactly knowing what it meant, or at what especial time it ought to be spoken—whether it applied to particular positions in the chase, or whether it was an expression of joy which might be indulged in at any period, as Scotch gentlemen are wont to shout "Hoo!" in a reel.

Still Mr. Straggles was not perfectly at ease; his gaiety was of that forced, reflection-drowning kind which Mr. Punch indulges in when he sings on the very eve of his execution. He did not make a good breakfast, in spite of Mr. Tollit's urgent recommendation to him "to lay in a good foundation," in which country folks imagine the whole secret of health and longevity is comprised. However, he contrived to get into the boots, rather than put them on; and as they were large enough for him to tuck his trousers' legs into, he did not require knee-breeches. His terror now increased: he heard the sound of gathering men and horses in the homestall, and, as the clock struck ten, Mr. Tollit told him all the preparations were completed, put a whip in his hand, and then the melancholy procession—so to speak—started.

There were a great many people in the farm-yard, and the owner of the pack, to whom Mr. Tollit had given his permission to come, was carrying on an animated conversation with the dogs.

"Law!" observed Mr. Straggles, as he saw them; "I thought they would be greyhounds. Don't greyhounds hunt hares? I've got a picture of some doing it."

"That's coursing," said Mr. Tollit; "all very well, but slow fun to what we are going at. No, these are the right sort—crosses between the heavy old harriers and the little fox beagles—all bone and nose; too good almost for thistle-whippers."

"Slow fun to what we are going at!" repeated Mr. Straggles to himself. Why, in the picture he alluded to, the horses

were going at a splitting gallop as it was; what could he be expected to do more. He was so struck by this idea, that he lost Mr. Tollit's remarks, and was only recalled by that gentleman's observing,

"Now, here comes Old Jack. Come, Straggs; now's your time."

The horse was brought—a tall, bony, Irish animal, that looked as if it could have taken a barn on an emergency.

"Stop a minute," said Joe; "you can't reach the stirrup. Here, Oakes, give Mr. Straggles a leg up."

To show his alacrity, Mr. Straggles gave a lively spring, and the man hoisted him up at the same time, but with such power, that he shot him clean over, and he came down on the other side.

"Never mind, Straggs," cried Joe, laughing; "you'll soon be used to it. Now—up!—that's it. How are the stirrups?"

"Oh, they're all right," replied Straggles, who was sitting with the leathers so short that his knees almost met over the pommel.

"No, that won't do; you must let them out five holes at least," continued Joe. "There, that's better, isn't it? Now you are——"

"Quite jolly," replied Mr. Straggles; but the air of comfort was but put on. He spoke it, as the boy who first gets into cold water, when bathing, gasps out, "B-b-b-beautiful!" to his fellows on the bank, in reply to their questions concerning temperature.

"That's all right," said Mr. Tollit. "Now keep by me, and I promise you we shall be well up with the dogs. My gal-loway has beaten many a thorough-bred, but then I know all the fences."

"I don't care particularly to be up with the dogs," suggested Mr. Straggles, mildly.

"Oh, but I do. Keep your knees firm to the saddle, and your toes straight forward, or you'll be nicely caught by a gate-post, if two or three go through at once."

Mr. Straggles did immediately as he was directed. In fact, if he could have tied his legs in a double knot under the horse's girths he would have done it.

They rode about the fields for a little time, opening gates and shifting hurdles all very pleasantly, and Mr. Straggles said he

liked it very much. But before long a hare was found, the dogs gave tongue, and off they started.

Away they went—through the copse and over the turnip-field, down the lane and across the water—splash—like a whirl of leaves blown along by the autumn wind, and at last they came to a large meadow which the dogs crossed diagonally.

“I—say—Joe!” exclaimed Mr. Straggles, convulsively, as he wanted four hands to hold the reins, his hat, his whip, and the pommel of the saddle all at once—“I—say—Joe—how—are—we—to—get—out—of—here?”

“Over the ditch,” replied his friend; “see there, where those fellows are taking it.”

Mr. Straggles with difficulty looked ahead, and saw various mounted forms rising up on the horizon of the field, and then coming off and away again. “Oh dear!” he said to himself, “here it comes!”

“Now hold fast, Straggs,” cried Joe; “I’ll go ahead.”

The dreaded spot seemed advancing towards him rather than he nearing it. As it approached, he pushed his hat on tight, clutched the reins, and shut his eyes. There was a violent jolt; he felt himself doing dreadful things in the air that the Bedouin Arabs would have failed in, and the next instant, with an intense shock, he was sitting on some ploughed ground on the other side of the fence, the horse remaining on the bank he had just quitted.

“Why, Straggs! man alive!” cried Mr. Tollit, who had gone over like a bird, “how the devil did you come there?”

“Ah! I wish I knew,” answered his friend, completely bewildered. “Which side am I?”

“Oh! all right; you shouldn’t have checked the rein just as you were going to leap. Look out! Old Jack’s a coming.”

And the horse, who knew his business well, cleared the ditch and Mr. Straggles too, as Joe caught him by the bridle.

“There, never mind,” cried Mr. Tollit; “jump up.”

“I can’t,” replied Mr. Straggles, who was not yet quite satisfied whether he was a mass of broken bones or not.

“Pshaw! wait a minute. Now then—up! There you are again.”

Mr. Tollit had got off his horse, and given a second “leg up” to Mr. Straggles, who acquitted himself this time rather better.

Once more they were off, Joe trying to make up for lost time as he flew on, over the furrows, like the wind. But now Mr. Straggles was not so ardent. He held back behind his friend, who, eager to join the others, did not see what he was about until he had got far ahead of him, and when they had all cleared away round a shaw, he pulled up to breathe and recover himself.

Whilst thus occupied, as he gazed into the next field he fancied he saw the hare running in an opposite direction to that in which she had just been going; in fact, puss had made a sharp double and followed it up, and Mr. Straggles's knowledge of sporting matters went just so far as to assure him that such had been the case.

"Ha! ha!" he said, "now I think I can astonish them a little." As he turned back, he saw the hounds scrambling over the bank at the top of the next field; and, determined to be even with them, he made a dash at the small ditch that separated them, and in an instant was amongst them. In vain the huntsman shouted; Mr. Straggles, elate with his position, kept tearing on, thinking that now or never was the time to retrieve his character, and soon beneath Old Jack's hoofs the dogs were being sent about in all directions. At last, seeing an uncomfortable row of hurdles ahead, he pulled up, and the next instant the owner of the pack was by his side.

"What the (something) are you about, you infernal scoundrel!" he cried; "take that, you (something else) tailoring snob!"

And as he spoke, he made the lash of his heavy hunting-whip wind round Mr. Straggles's shoulders each time, with stinging force.

"Leave me alone!" screamed our hapless friend; "I couldn't help it! Oh dear! Hi! Joe—Joe Tollit! Leave me alone!" Again was the arm raised for punishment, when Mr. Tollit fortunately came up; and poor Straggles, who had not that insensibility to the "horrors of the lash" which is only enjoyed by the clowns of the ring, appealed to him in writhing and piteous accents for an explanation. This was given, and all amends made immediately with the ready heartiness of an English sportsman.

* * * * *

Mr. Straggles hunted no more that day, nor, indeed, did he

ever again; the next morning he packed up his things and returned to town, still sore with his chastisement as regarded his shoulders, and not less uncomfortable generally from his unwonted horsemanship. He has returned to his profession, and made a holy vow never to plunge into sporting life again, but in future to confine his fishing to that for crabs from the end of the Chain Pier; his shooting to after dinner—eighteen-penny-worth at the gallery in Leicester-square, or for nuts with percussion-caps at Greenwich; and his riding to that tranquil domestic exercise which Gravesend and Thanet, or the more contiguous expanse of the mild Blackheath, can afford, without risk of neck-breaking or horsewhipping.

LENORA.

✓
(FROM BÜRGER.)



THERE have been so many excellent translations done of this powerful Ballad, that some little apology should be made for offering the present one to the reader. But the metre of the original has not been strictly preserved in any I have seen; and, in consequence, the Poem loses much of its impressiveness. In the following attempt, I have carefully kept to the metre; and in some lines the words are in the exact order of the original; indeed, I have sacrificed everything to make it as close and literal as possible. But for this intention many of the verses might have been considerably improved.

Lenore.

I.

Lenore fuhr ums Morgenroth
Empor aus schweren Träumen :
„Bist untreu, Wilhelm, oder todt?
Wie lange willst du säumen?“—
Er war mit König Friedrich's Macht
Gezogen in die Prager Schlacht,
Und hatte nicht geschrieben,
Ob er gesund geblieben.

II.

Der König und die Kaiserinn,
Des langen Haders müde,
Erweichten ihren harten Sinn,
Und machten endlich Friede ;
Und jedes Heer, mit Sing und Sang,
Mit Paukenschlag und Kling und Klang,
Geschmückt mit grünen Reifern,
Zog heim zu seinen Häusern.

LENORA.



I.

LENORA at the blush of day,
From heavy slumbers started,
“ Art dead, or faithless, Wilhelm ? say,
How long must we be parted ?”
He was with Frederick’s armed might,
At Prague, and there engaged in fight,
Had sent no word or token,
To prove his health unbroken.

II.

The Empress and the Prussian King,
Weary of constant striving,
Their stubborn natures softening,
Saw peace at last arriving.
And all the troops rejoiced and sang,
With kettle-drums and martial clang,
Their arms with green boughs twining,
Towards their homes inclining.

III.

Und überall, all überall,
 Auf Wegen und auf Stegen,
 Zog Alt und Jung dem Tubelschall
 Der Kommenden entgegen.
 „Gottlob!“ rief Kind und Gattinn laut,
 „Willkommen!“ manche frohe Braut.
 Ach! aber für Lenoren
 War Gruß und Kuß verloren.

IV.

Sie frug den Zug wohl auf und ab,
 Und frug nach allen Namen;
 Doch Keiner war, der Kundschaft gab,
 Von Allen, so da kamen.
 Als nun der Zug vorüber war,
 Zerraupte sie ihr Rabenhaar,
 Und warf sich hin zur Erde
 Mit wüthiger Geberde.

V.

Die Mutter lief wol hin zu ihr:—
 „Ach, daß sich Gott erbarme!
 Du trautes Kind, was ist mit dir?“—
 Und schloß sie in die Arme.—
 „„O Mutter, Mutter! hin ist hin!
 Run fahre Welt und Alles hin!
 Bei Gott ist kein Erbarmen.
 O weh, o weh mir Armen!““—

VI.

„Hilf, Gott, hilf! Sieh uns gnädig an!
 Kind, bet' ein Vaterunser!
 Was Gott thut, das ist wohlgethan.
 Gott, Gott erbarmt sich unser!“—
 „„O Mutter, Mutter! Eitler Wahn!
 Gott hat an mir nicht wohlgethan!
 Was half, was half mein Beten?
 Run ist's nicht mehr sonnödthen.““—

III.

And everywhere—all, all around,
 From roads and pathways meeting,
 Both old and young, with joyous sound,
 Went forth to give their greeting.
 “Thank God!” the child and wife outcried,
 And “Welcome!” many a happy bride:
 Lenora, only, misses
 The warm embrace and kisses.

IV.

And up and down, amidst the brave,
 She flew, each name repeating;
 But none the information gave
 Of all that warlike meeting.
 And when the train had passed elsewhere,
 She tore her locks of raven hair,
 To earth her fair form flinging,
 Her hands in frenzy wringing.

V.

Her mother ran to her, and cried,
 “With mercy, Heaven, invest her,
 What ill can my dear child betide?”
 And in her fond arms pressed her.
 “Oh, mother—gone is gone for aye,
 The world and all may pass away,
 God has no kindness done me.
 Oh woe! oh woe upon me!”

VI.

“Help, God! help! Leave us not unblest:
 Pray to Him to befriend us.
 What is His will, is for the best,
 God! God! some comfort send us!”
 “Oh, mother, mother! foolish plea!
 God has done nothing well for me!
 My prayers unhelped, unheeded,
 Shall never more be needed!”

VII.

„Hilf, Gott, hilf! Wer den Vater kennt,
 Der weiß, er hilft den Kindern.
 Das hochgelobte Sakrament
 Wird deinen Jammer lindern.“—
 „„O Mutter, Mutter! was mich brennt,
 Das lindert mir kein Sakrament!
 Kein Sakrament mag Leben
 Den Todten wieder geben.““

VIII.

„Hör' Kind! Wie wenn der falsche Mann
 Im fernen Ungerlande,
 Sich seines Glaubens abgethan
 Zum neuen Ehebande?
 Laß fahren, Kind, sein Herz dahin!
 Er hat es nimmermehr Gewinn!
 Wann Seel' und Leib sich trennen,
 Wird ihn sein Meineid brennen.“

IX.

„„O Mutter, Mutter! Hin ist hin!
 Verloren ist verloren!
 Der Tod, der Tod ist mein Gewinn!
 O wär' ich nie geboren!
 Lisch aus, mein Licht, auf ewig aus!
 Stirb hin, stirb hin in Nacht und Graus!
 Bei Gott ist kein Erbarmen!
 O weh, o weh mir Armen!““—

X.

„Hilf, Gott, hilf! Geh' nicht ins Gericht
 Mit deinem armen Kinde!
 Sie weiß nicht, was die Zunge spricht.
 Behalt' ihr nicht die Sünde!—
 Ach! Kind, vergiß dein irdisch Leid.
 Und denk an Gott und Seeligkeit!
 So wird doch deiner Seelen
 Der Bräutigam nicht fehlen.“

VII.

“ Help, God! the True Believers know
 Their gloom His aid can brighten :
 The hallowed sacramental vow,
 Thy misery shall lighten.”
 “ Oh, mother, this consuming rage,
 No sacrament can e'er assuage ;
 No sacrament e'er taken,
 Has power the dead to waken.”

VIII.

“ List, child. Perchance thy lover now,
 In distant lands united,
 In falsehood has renounced his vow,
 To some new marriage plighted.
 So let him go. His love thus o'er,
 His heart shall never profit more ;
 When soul and body sever,
 His pangs shall last for ever.”

IX.

“ Oh, mother—mother! Gone is gone!
 The past, the past is ended!
 Death—death is now my gain alone,
 Why was I born unfriended?
 Be quenched my light—be quenched for aye,
 In night and horror die away.
 God hath no kindness done me,
 Oh woe! oh woe upon me!”

X.

“ Help, God! nor into judgment go,
 On this poor child's expressions ;
 What her tongue says, she does not know :
 Record not her transgressions.
 Forget all earthly woe, like this,
 Think but on God and heavenly bliss ;
 Then to thy spirits panting,
 No bridegroom shall be wanting.”

XI.

„„O Mutter! Was ist Seligkeit?
 O Mutter! Was ist Hölle?
 Bei ihm, bei ihm ist Seligkeit,
 Und ohne Wilhelm Hölle!—
 Lisch aus, mein Licht, auf ewig aus!
 Stirb hin, stirb hin in Nacht und Graus!
 Ohn' ihn mag ich auf Erden,
 Mag dort nicht selig werden.““—

XII.

So wüthete Verzweiflung
 Ihr in Gehirn und Adern.
 Sie fuhr mit Gottes Vorsehung
 Vermessen fort zu hadern,
 Zerschlug den Busen und zerrang
 Die Hand bis Sonnenuntergang,
 Bis auf am Himmelsbogen
 Die goldnen Sterne zogen.

XIII.

Und außen, horch! ging's trap, trap, trap,
 Als wie von Rosses Hufen;
 Und klirrend stieg ein Reiter ab
 An des Geländers Stufen;
 Und horch!—und horch! der Pfortenring
 Ganz lose, leise, klinglingling:
 Dann kamen durch die Pforte
 Vernehmlich diese Worte:

XIV.

„Holla, holla! Thu' auf, mein Kind!
 Schläfst, Liebchen, oder wachst du?
 Wie bist noch gegen mich gesinnt?
 Und weinest oder lachst du?“—
 „„Ach, Wilhelm, du?—So spät bei Nacht?—
 Geweinet hab' ich und gewacht;
 Ach, großes Leid erlitten!—
 Wo kommst du her geritten?““—

XI.

“ Oh, mother! what is hell—or bliss—
 That thus you speak about it?
 I knew but heaven in Wilhelm’s kiss,
 And all is hell without it.
 Be quenched my light—be quenched for aye,
 In night and horror die away;
 On earth without my lover,
 All happiness is over.”

XII.

Thus her despair o’er every sense
 And through each vein was raging,
 And war against God’s Providence
 Most rashly she was waging.
 She wrung her hands and beat her breast,
 Until the sun went down to rest,
 And up in heaven’s arch beaming,
 The golden stars were gleaming.

XIII.

Hush! listen! listen! tramp—tramp—tramp!
 A courser’s steps she counted,
 The rider next, with clattering stamp,
 Before the porch dismounted.
 And listen! at the gate, a ring,
 Sounds faintly—softly—*kling-ling-ling!*
 And then came, through the portal,
 These words, distinctly mortal:

XIV.

“ Holla! open the door, my pet;
 Watchest thou, love? or sleepest?
 How art thou mooded towards me yet?
 And laughest thou, or weapest?”
 “ Ah, Wilhelm! thou! so late at night!
 I’ve watch’d for thee in sorrowing plight,
 And undergone much chiding.
 Whence com’st thou now, thus riding?”

XV.

„Wir satteln nur um Mitternacht;
 Weit ritt ich her von Böhmen.
 Ich habe spät mich aufgemacht,
 Und will dich mit mir nehmen.“—
 „„Ach, Wilhelm, erst herein geschwind!
 Den Hagedorn durchsauf't der Wind.
 Herein, in meinen Armen,
 Herzliebster, zu erwärmen!“—

XVI.

„Laß sausen durch den Hagedorn!
 Laß sausen, Kind, laß sausen!
 Der Rappe scharrt, es klirrt der Sporn;
 Ich darf allhier nicht hausen.
 Komm', schürze, spring' und schwinge dich
 Auf meinen Rappen hinter mich!
 Muß heut noch hundert Meilen
 Mit dir ins Brautbett eilen.“—

XVII.

„„Ach! wollest hundert Meilen noch
 Mich heut' ins Brautbett tragen?
 Und horch! es brummt die Glocke noch,
 Die elf schon angeschlagen.“—
 „Sieh hin, sieh her! Der Mond scheint hell.
 Wir und die Todten reiten schnell.
 Ich bringe dich, zur Wette,
 Noch heut' ins Hochzeitbette.“—

XVIII.

„„Sag' an, wo ist dein Kämmerlein?
 Wo? wie dein Hochzeitbettchen?“—
 „Weit, weit von hier!.. Still, kühl und klein!..
 Sechs Bretter und zwei Brettchen!“—
 „„Hat's Raum für mich?“—“—„Für dich und mich!
 Komm', schürze, spring' und schwinge dich!
 Die Hochzeitgäste hoffen;
 Die Kammer steht uns offen.“—

XV.

“ We only saddle at midnight ;
 From far Bohemia, hither,
 I rous'd myself late for the flight,
 And now will bear thee thither.”
 “ Stay, Wilhelm, stay ! The wind doth rush
 Loud whistling through the hawthorn-bush.
 Here—heart's love—let me hold thee,
 My warm arms shall enfold thee.”

XVI.

“ Let the wind whistle through the haws,
 Child—let it whistle stronger !
 Now clinks my spur ; the black-horse paws ;
 I dare not tarry longer.
 Come—come : truss up thy dress, and swing
 On my black horse—behind me spring—
 To reach our couch to-day, love,
 One hundred miles away, love.”

XVII.

“ And must I ride one hundred miles
 To our bride-bed to-day, love ?
 And hark ! the church clock tolls meanwhiles,
 Eleven ! doth it say, love ?”
 “ See here !—see there !—the moon is high ;
 We and the dead can swiftly fly.
 'Tis for a bet we're flying,
 To where the couch is lying.”

XVIII.

“ Yet say—where is thy bridal hall,
 Thy nuptial bed—where lies it ?”
 “ Far—far from hence !—still, cool, and small,
 Eight slender planks comprise it.”
 “ Hast room for me ?” “ For me and thee !
 Come, gird thy dress ; quick, mount with me,
 The guests are there to meet thee ;
 The doors wide open greet thee.”

XIX.

Schön Liebchen schürzte, sprang und schwang
 Sich auf das Roß behende;
 Wohl um den trauten Reiter schlang
 Sie ihre Lilienhände;
 Und hurre, hurre, hop, hop, hop!
 Ging's fort in tausendem Galopp,
 Daß Roß und Reiter schnoben,
 Und Ries und Funken stoben.

XX.

Zur rechten und zur linken Hand
 Vorbei vor ihren Blicken,
 Wie flogen Anger, Haid' und Land!
 Wie donnerten die Brücken!
 „Graut Liebchen auch?....Der Mond scheint hell!
 Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!
 Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten?“—
 „„Ach nein!—Doch laß die Todten!““

XXI.

Was klang dort für Gesang und Klang?
 Was flatterten die Raben?..
 Horch Glockenklang! horch Todtensang:
 „Laßt uns den Leib begraben!“
 Und näher zog ein Leichenzug,
 Der Sarg und Todtenbahre trug.
 Das Lied war zu vergleichen
 Dem Untenruf in Leichen.

XXII.

„Nach Mitternacht begrabt den Leib
 Mit Klang und Sang und Klage!
 Jetzt führ' ich heim mein junges Weib,
 Mit mir zum Brautgelage!
 Komm', Küster, hier! Komm' mit dem Chor,
 Und gurgle mir das Brautlied vor!
 Komm', Pfaff, und sprich den Segen,
 Eh' wir zu Bett uns legen!“

XIX.

The fair girl quickly dressed, and sprung
 Upon the horse behind him ;
 And, round the trusty rider flung,
 Her lily arms entwined him.
 And hurra ! off ! away ! the steed
 Flies like the wind, with whistling speed ;
 The horse and rider quivering,
 And sparks and pebbles shivering !

XX.

And right and left—on either hand,
 Before their eyes quick sunder'd,
 How flew the lawns, and heaths, and land !
 And how the bridges thunder'd !
 “ Dearest, dost fear ? The moon is high !
 Hurra ! the dead can swiftly fly !
 Dost fear the dead, my own love ? ”
 “ Nay—leave the dead alone, love.”

XXI.

What sound is that of clang and knell ?
 Why do the ravens flutter ?
 Hark ! the death-song : and tolls the bell !
 “ Bury the corpse,” they utter !
 A funeral train was coming near ;
 They bore the coffin and the bier :
 The hymn, the croak resembled
 Of frogs, in ponds assembled.

XXII.

“ After midnight inter the dead,
 With knell and lamentation :
 Now, my young wife I homeward lead,
 With bridal celebration.
 Come, sexton, with thy choral throng,
 And drawl us out thy bridal song !
 Come, gabble, priest, thy blessing,
 Ere towards the couch we're pressing ! ”

XXIII.

Still Klang und Sang . . . Die Bahre schwand . . .
 Gehorsam seinem Rufen
 Kam's hurre, hurre! nach gerannt,
 Hart hinter's Rappen Hufen.
 Und immer weiter, hop, hop, hop!
 Ging's fort in sausendem Galopp,
 Daß Roß und Reiter schnoben,
 Und Kies und Funken stoben.

XXIV.

Wie flogen rechts, wie flogen links
 Gebirge, Baum' und Hecken!
 Wie flogen links und rechts und links
 Die Dörfer, Stadt' und Flecken!—
 „Graut Liebchen auch? . . . Der Mond scheint hell!
 Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!
 Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten?“
 „„Ach! Laß sie ruhn die Todten!““

XXV.

Sieh da! sieh da! Um Hochgericht
 Tanz' um des Rades Spindel,
 Halb sichtbarlich bei Mondenlicht
 Ein lustiges Gesindel.—
 „Gasa! Gesindel, hier, komm' hier!
 Gesindel, komm' und folge mir!
 Tanz' uns den Hochzeitreigen,
 Wann wir zu Bette steigen!“

XXVI.

Und das Gesindel, husch, husch, husch!
 Kam hinten nach geprasselt,
 Wie Wirbelwind am Haselbusch
 Durch dürre Blätter rasselt;
 Und weiter, weiter, hop, hop, hop!
 Ging's fort in sausendem Galopp,
 Daß Roß und Reiter schnoben,
 Und Kies und Funken stoben.

XXIII.

The clang was still'd ; vanish'd the bier,
 Obedient to his calling :
 And all beside—less and less near
 Behind his horse was falling.
 And further—faster still—the steed
 Flies like the wind with whistling speed ;
 The horse and rider quivering,
 And sparks and pebbles shivering !

XXIV.

And left, and right, how swift in flight
 Pass'd hedges, trees, and mountains !
 How flew on right, and left, and right,
 Towns, villages, and fountains !
 “ Dearest ! dost fear ? The moon is high !
 Hurra ! the dead can swiftly fly !
 Dost fear the dead, my own love ? ”
 “ Ah, leave the dead alone, love ! ”

XXV.

See there ! about the gallows' height
 Round the wheel's axle prancing,
 Seen dimly in the pale moonlight,
 A shadowy mob is dancing.
 “ Halloo—there ! Rabble ! Ho ! come here !
 Come, mob, with me—and follow near !
 Our wedding-dance be skipping,
 When we to bed are tripping ! ”

XXVI.

And quickly on the mob did rush
 Behind them, noisy-clattering,
 As whirlwinds through the hazel-bush,
 Send down the dry leaves pattering :
 And further—faster still—the steed
 Flies like the wind, with whistling speed ;
 The horse and rider quivering,
 And sparks and pebbles shivering !

XXVII.

Wie flog, was rund der Mond beschien,
 Wie flog es in die Ferne!
 Wie flogen oben über hin
 Der Himmel und die Sterne!
 „Graut Liebchen auch? ... Der Mond scheint hell!
 Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!
 Graut Liebchen auch vor Todten?“
 „„O weh! Laß ruhn die Todten!““

XXVIII.

„Rapp'! Rapp'! Mich dünkt, der Hahn schon ruft:.
 Bald wird der Sand verrinnen.
 Rapp'! Rapp'! Ich wittre Morgenluft—
 Rapp'! tummle dich von hinnen!
 Vollbracht, vollbracht ist unser Lauf!
 Das Hochzeitbette thut sich auf!
 Die Todten reiten schnelle!
 Wir sind, wir sind zur Stelle!“

XXIX.

Rasch auf ein eisern Gitterthor
 Ging's mit verhängtem Zügel.
 Mit schwanker Gert' ein Schlag davor
 Zersprengte Schloß und Riegel.
 Die Flügel flogen klirrend auf,
 Und über Gräber ging der Lauf.
 Es blinkten Leichensteine
 Rund um im Mondenscheine.

XXX.

Hah sieh! Hah sieh! im Augenblick,
 Huhu, ein gräßlich Wunder!
 Des Reiters Koller, Stück für Stück,
 Fiel ab, wie mürber Zunder.
 Zum Schädel, un ohne Zopf und Schopf,
 Zum nackten Schädel ward sein Kopf,
 Sein Körper zum Gerippe,
 Mit Stundenglas und Hippe.

XXVII.

How flew they in the moon's wide light,
 Soon into distance speeding!
 And overhead, how quick in flight
 Were heavens and stars receding!
 "Dearest! dost fear? The moon is high!
 Hurra! the dead can swiftly fly!
 Dost fear the dead, my own love?"
 "Oh, leave the dead alone, love!"

XXVIII.

"My steed! methinks the cock doth crow;
 The sand is just expended;
 My steed! the morning air I know,
 Quick, hence! our course is ended!
 Achiev'd, achiev'd now is our ride!
 The nuptial chamber opens wide!
 The dead ride swiftly striving!
 The goal, the goal's arriving!"

XXIX.

And swiftly tow'rds an iron grate
 With tearing speed they thunder'd:
 With a slight switch he strikes the gate,
 And lock and bolt is sunder'd.
 The doors unfolded, creaking wide,
 And over graves still on they ride
 With tombstones round them gleaming,
 On which the moon is beaming.

XXX.

Look! in the twinkling of an eye,
 Ho! ho!—a ghastly wonder!
 Piecemeal the rider's garments lie,
 Like tinder shred asunder.
 A skull—of tuft and queue bereft,
 A naked skull alone is left!
 A skeleton, before her,
 Holds scythe and sand-glass o'er her!

XXXI.

Hoch bäumte sich, wild schnob der Rapp',
 Und sprühte Feuerfunken ;
 Und hui! war's unter ihr hinab
 Verschwunden und versunken.
 Geheul! Geheul aus hoher Luft,
 Gewinsel kam aus tiefer Gruft.
 Lenorens Herz, mit Beben,
 Rang zwischen Tod und Leben.

XXXII.

Run tanzten wohl bei Mondenglanz,
 Rund um herum im Kreise,
 Die Geister einen Kettentanz,
 Und heulten diese Weise :
 „Geduld! Geduld! wenn's Herz auch bricht!
 Mit Gott im Himmel hadre nicht!
 Des Leibes bist du ledig ;
 Gott sei der Seele gnädig!“

XXXI.

The black horse wildly snorts and rears,
And breathes forth sparks; and shrinking
From underneath them, disappears,
Quick vanishing and sinking.
Wild howling fills the welkin round,
And groans from the deep grave resound.
Lenora's heart, just shivering,
'Twixt life and death is quivering.

XXXII.

And now beneath the moon's pale glance,
Round in a circle scowling,
Link'd hand in hand, the spectres dance,
And to this tune are howling:
"Forbear! forbear! though breaks the heart,
'Gainst God in Heaven take no part!
Now from thy body sever,—
God save thy soul for ever!"

THE END.

C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2009

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