

A  
0  
0  
0  
0  
8  
8  
4  
5  
0  
2



US SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

NEW  
PERSONAL  
COL-  
LEC-  
TIONS  
  
BY  
AN OLD  
PRINTER







old Printer

1805  
1805  
1805



*PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS.*









"THE COCK AND MAGPIE," DRURY LANE, 1840.



A FEW  
PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

BY  
An Old Printer.

"I count myself in nothing else so happy  
As in a soul remembering my good friends"  
SHAKESPEARE (*Richard II.*)

London  
PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION  
1896

\* \* \* *If such a trifle were worthy of a "Dedication," I would dedicate it to my old and valued friend, ISAAC THURGOOD PERRING, who has been my companion during nearly the whole of my business life, and who will remember many of the incidents herein related.*



*A PORTION of the contents of this little volume formed the subject-matter of a "gossip-lecture" delivered in 1895 to an Association of Printers' Managers. The fact that the editors of several technical journals applied at the time for the manuscript in order to print it in extenso led the writer to conclude that it might be of some interest to a larger audience. It has therefore been "printed for private circulation" among his friends as a keepsake.*









## Personal Recollections.

—  
*"Say all you have to say in the fewest possible words."*—JOHN RUSKIN.  
—

### LONG AGO.

THE life of a printer may as a general rule be described as a monotonous round of drudgery, affording but little scope for adventure or interesting experience. But probably there is no one who has followed the occupation for more than half a century who has not at various times come in contact with men around whose memory some interest still lingers, or who does not retain some recollections of past events that are worth recalling.

Looking back to a period distant about sixty years one cannot but realise the progressive change that has since taken place in all the phases of every-day life. This, perhaps, can be here most appropriately and most effectively illustrated by referring to the fiscal impositions upon the press. Previous to the year 1833 the duty upon every advertisement was 3s. 6d. ; an advertisement can now be inserted in a widely circulated paper for sixpence. Until 1836 a

duty of threepence was levied upon every pound of paper manufactured ; paper can now be purchased for about three-halfpence per pound. Until the same year the stamp duty upon every copy of a newspaper was fourpence ; many newspapers are now issued "price one halfpenny." At that time the conditions of labour and the surroundings of the average working printer were by no means conducive to his physical or moral welfare.\* The occupation of compositor, pressman, or machine-minder was then considered as necessarily involving a certain, or rather uncertain, amount of intemperance, and it must be confessed that my early experience did not tend to disprove the justice of the popular impression. This no doubt arose out of long hours of employment and the absence of the means of rational recreation. Established holidays there were actually none, in illustration of which fact it may be mentioned that during my seven years' apprenticeship I had no one hour's holiday that was not previously paid for by working overtime—this at a period when the ordinary hours of labour were sixty-three per week ; yet there is no reason for supposing that others were more liberally treated.

Picture to yourself London as it was, say, in the year 1839, the period at which the schoolmaster and I bade each other farewell. The daily newspaper,

\* At this time a compositor on the "stab" in a bookwork house could be called upon to work from six in the morning till ten at night, without any extra for overtime. His wages for this long day was 7s. 6d. ; whereas he would now receive about 11s.

without which we almost feel that we could not now exist, was rather an expensive luxury, the price being fivepence for four small pages, so that if a person of humble means desired to become acquainted with what was going on around him, he would have to go to a public-house and borrow *The Morning Advertiser* for five minutes. A placard was generally hung up in the bar requesting gentlemen not to monopolise the current day's paper for more than that time. *The Weekly Dispatch* (price 6d.) was also a publican's newspaper, and this used to be borrowed by regular outside customers.

Communicating by letter to friends at a distance was seldom indulged in, owing to its expense, for the uniform penny rate had not come into operation. I remember that when we received a letter from Scotland the postman demanded one shilling and fourpence before handing it over. It has been stated that Rowland Hill, when courting the lady who became his wife, limited his communications to one in a fortnight, for pecuniary reasons. This would scarcely satisfy modern sweethearts. It was not uncommon, however, to send short messages in an illegal way at a trifling cost. By mutual arrangement this used to be accomplished by purchasing a newspaper several days old for about three halfpence, then making a mark under certain letters, which formed words, and posting it, the compulsory stamp rendering it unnecessary to pay any postage. The accompanying extract will explain this method of economically communicating an interesting family

event. The perpendicular line indicates the end of a word :—

---



---

**THE MORNING CHRONICLE.**

L O N D O N :

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1823.

---

The disclosures made in the Chamber of Deputies on Saturday will not soon be forgotten in this country. It is now openly avowed by VILLELE that the disturbances in Spain have all been fomented by France, and that his own manifestation of a wish for peace was altogether assumed, with a view to make the requisite preparations with greater facility.

We confess we are not a little embarrassed by the non-chalance with which the French Ministers make these avowals. They must either calculate greatly on the favour or the fears of our Ministers. A secret understanding would go a good way to explain the matter, but we cannot bring ourselves to think so meanly of Lord LIVERPOOL and Mr. CANNING, as to suppose them guilty of such baseness. But it is not pleasing to think that even these fanatics should presume so much on our supposed inability to oppose them, as to hold so insolent a language.

One thing must result from the disclosure, that from henceforth no public writer in this country will dare to insult his countrymen by a word in favour of BOURBON Royalists. The situation of the country may dictate

There were, of course, no local trains to convey Londoners into the suburbs, or to carry them short distances into the country. The Greenwich Railway



had certainly been opened for about two years, but the third-class carriages, or trucks, were neither fitted with seats nor covered with a roof, so that travellers were conveyed the five miles under conditions less comfortable than those now afforded to cattle. I well remember to have travelled on this line shortly after it had been opened, during a fall of snow, and experiencing the inconvenience which caused *Punch* to make this protest :—

“Pity the sorrows of a third-class man,  
Whose trembling limbs with snow are whitened o'er,  
Who for his fare has paid you all he can ;  
Cover him in, and let him freeze no more.  
This dripping hat my roofless pen bespeaks,  
So does the puddle reaching to my knees ;  
Behold my pinched red nose, my shrivelled cheeks ;  
You should not have such carriages as these.”

Shillibeer, the undertaker, had commenced running his omnibuses some years previously, the route being from Paddington to the Bank, but the number on the road was limited and the fares were high. The means at the command of the artisan for giving his family a holiday were certainly not encouraging. The sacrifice of a day's pay when wages were low and all the necessaries of life, with the single exception of meat, were much higher than they are now, was a matter of more importance than it is at the present time. The holiday, however, having been resolved upon, let us see how the family proceeded to enjoy themselves. They would probably possess or borrow a child's chaise, constructed to carry two,

having a box at the back to contain food—a vehicle very common at that time, but now obsolete—and the man and his wife would drag it to the Red House at Battersea, Copenhagen Fields, Highbury Barn, the Rosemary Branch, or some other of the suburban taverns, and regale themselves with beer or tea. There were generally skittle-alleys or bowling-greens for the amusement of the men, while the women gossiped and watched the children playing upon the lawn. Although the means of entertainment were thus limited, some amount of pleasure was no doubt derived from the change of scene and the fresh air—that is, if the weather proved favourable, but if otherwise, the holiday ended in disappointment and discomfort. At sundown there came the weary journey back, the children crying from fatigue, and on reaching home the man would have to obtain a light by a lengthy operation with a tinder-box and sulphur-match. If any reader can remember those articles of domestic use, he will admit that there could be nothing more irritating to the temper than these primitive means of lighting a candle before the introduction of the friction match. It can scarcely, therefore, be a matter for surprise that such holiday excursions were few and far between, or that working men resorted to the public-house for recreation more frequently than they do now.

Nor was this the case with the printer only. At that period the reporters, the critics, and the general utility men connected with the journals of the day,

instead of resorting to well-appointed clubs, as they do at the present time, frequented smoking-saloons and the parlours and tap-rooms of the taverns that were situated in the district that lay between St. Paul's and Charing Cross. I well remember several of these that have passed away, others that have changed their character, and a few that still remain to remind us of the old days. There was Rees's Grand Cigar Divan, in the Strand, the haunt of the well-to-do, where, on payment of one shilling, the visitor was presented with a cigar and an ivory ticket, the latter entitling him to liquid refreshment in the coffee-room above. In Russell Street, Covent Garden, close to Evans's Supper and Concert Rooms, was a favourite meeting-place, called "Tom Kilpack's," where prosperous actors and others used to while away their leisure time, Douglas Jerrold being a frequent visitor. There was the "Old Dog" in Holywell Street, said to have been built upon or near the site of the holy well of St. Clement that gave name to the street; and "Dormer's," known also as "The Coach and Horses," near St. Mary's Church. Hard by was (and is) the "Edinburgh Castle," where, it was said, the best mutton-chop and glass of ale could be obtained, served by a most interesting and very independent waiter, who kept a note-book in which was recorded the indebtedness of many of his customers, for he would trust them on his own responsibility. When in funds they would "tip" him liberally, and when Fortune proved unkind they knew where they

could get a chop and a glass on credit. The last time I had a chat with that waiter was on a Christmas morning many years ago. Jonas Levy, who was with me, encouraged him to talk, and he told us that most of his best customers had died, or were becoming too prosperous to frequent the tavern, and that he was about to retire upon his savings. Then there was the "Shakespeare's Head," in Wych Street, once kept by Mark Lemon, the first editor of *Punch*, on behalf of his mother; and the "Sheridan Knowles," in Brydges Street. A well-frequented tavern at that time was Peele's Coffee House in Fleet Street, for here files of *The Times* and other papers were kept for reference. The "Green Dragon," nearly opposite, whose Discussion Forum was once referred to by Napoleon III., was frequented by barristers and journalists. One of the most respectable taverns was "The Cock," near Temple Bar, patronised by Tennyson, when he had chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields, who has sung in praise of the head waiter—"Oh, plump head waiter at 'The Cock,' to which I most resort." "The Cheshire Cheese," where Johnson and Goldsmith were (erroneously) said to meet, is still, as it was then, the favourite haunt of many newspaper men.



#### AN OLD PRINTER.

Besides the long regular hours and unlimited habitual overtime, the conditions under which the printer produced his work were anything but favourable. Fifty years ago there existed in London but

few, if any, buildings that had been constructed as printing-offices. They were, in fact, converted dwelling-houses, with small windows and very scanty sanitary accommodation. The first office which I remember to have entered was one of this kind. It was situated in Crown Court, a narrow, unsavoury thoroughfare that led from the north side of St. Clement Danes churchyard to Little Shire Lane—a portion of a disreputable district that was demolished to provide the site for the new Law Courts. The proprietor was one Richard Watts, generally referred to by his employees as “Dicky.” It was here that books and papers in the Oriental languages were printed for the East India Company, also Bibles in various languages and dialects for the British and Foreign Bible and other Societies, most, if not all, of which were “worked” at hand-press. Now “Dicky” was certainly what might be termed a character. My only interview with him was the occasion of my delivering to him from my father, who was a bookseller, some Oriental work which he had purchased, and I remember his calling me a “shrimp” (for I was very diminutive) and giving me a tip as a set-off against the insult. Although an educated man conversant with several languages, and engaged in the production of Bibles and other religious publications, he used, when irritated, to indulge in language of a profane character towards his workpeople, who would reply in equally unparliamentary terms without any fear of consequences. I worked at press in after years with an old Irish-



man named Donegan (who, by the way, had printed *The Times* newspaper at hand-press), and he told me that he liked to work for Dicky Watts better than for anybody else, because there was no nonsense about him. The first time he saw him he was sitting upon a high stool in his little closet, with the door open. "I went up," said he, "and asked him if he wanted a hand at press." Watts turned round, frowned at the man, and made such an ornately unsympathetic reply, that instantly the Irishman's blood was up. He told Dicky in the plainest possible terms that if he would come down from his perch he (Donegan) would subject him to a physical indignity. Watts evidently thought that here was a man after his own heart. He inquired his name, told him he thought there was something in him, and gave him employment. "Since then," said Donegan, "we have been the best of friends." Watts died just over fifty years ago at the age of seventy-seven. When the site of the Law Courts was cleared, Watts's successor removed to Gray's Inn Lane, where in 1870 his office was destroyed by fire. Shortly afterwards, what remained of his Oriental type was purchased by Gilbert and Rivington, who still continue that class of business.



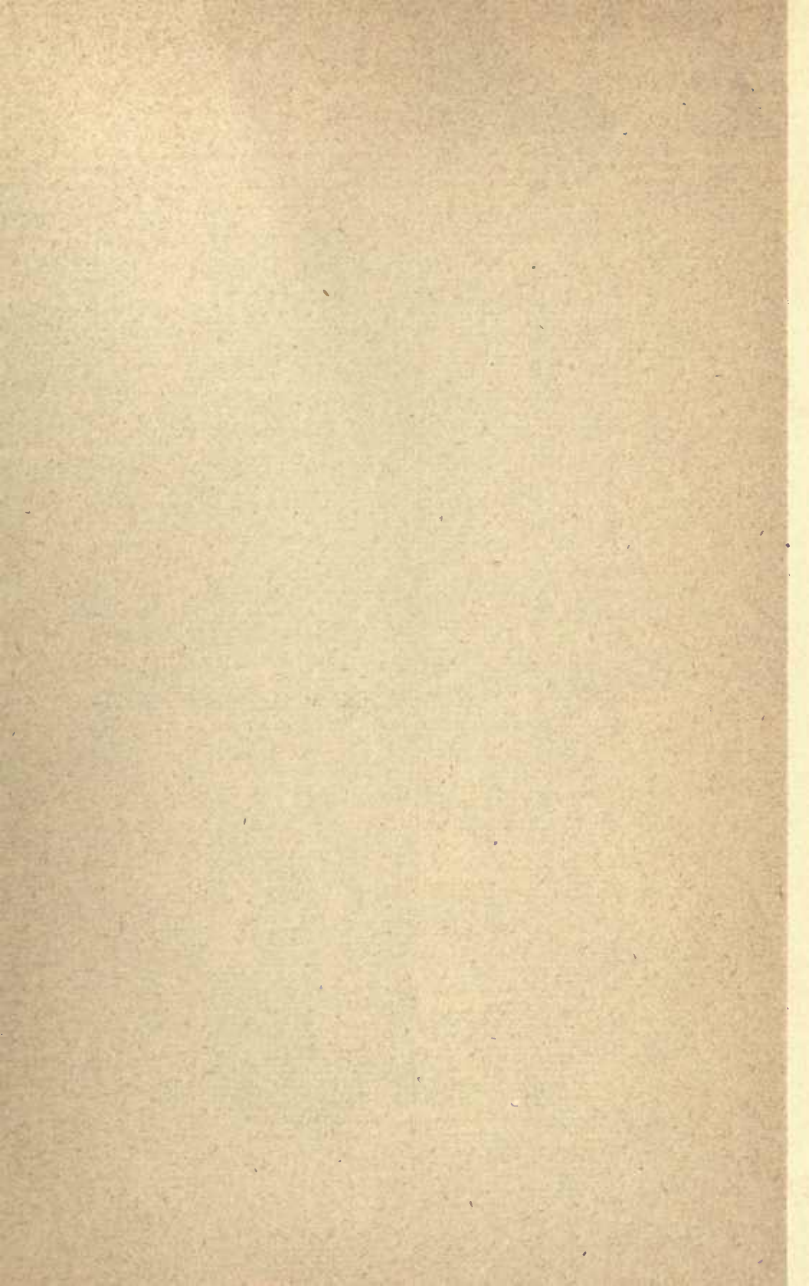
**"THE FAMILY HERALD."**

Very early in the 'forties I had occasion to visit another printing-office. It consisted of a small shop and parlour in Chandos Street, Covent Garden, where some half-dozen hands were employed, and a kitchen

below, which contained an old wooden press, differing in construction but slightly from that used by William Caxton. The working printer who owned this office was one Samuel Taylor. Previous to embarking in business on his own account he had been employed by Henry Hetherington, who with his *Poor Man's Guardian* fought so valiantly and suffered so much for the freedom of the newspaper press. Taylor was of course his own reader, and with a view to economy he had the habit of enlisting the services of any lad who happened to call by getting him to play the part of reading-boy for half an hour. This I did on several occasions, which resulted in his inviting me to become his apprentice—his first apprentice. On mentioning this to a schoolfellow whose father was a printer, he informed me that there was a machine at work in his father's office that would detrimentally affect the compositor's occupation, and invited me to go and see it before I bound myself to learn a trade that might soon be superseded by the use of machinery. I accordingly went to a small office in One Bell Yard (where the office of John Dicks is now situated) and there I saw the machine referred to. It had the appearance of an upright piano, and was being operated upon by a young woman, a man, and a boy. Being invited to try my hand at it, I set up two or three lines without difficulty, and began to doubt the wisdom of binding myself to learn the art of hand-composition. I thereupon told my would-be employer what I had seen and done. He smiled,

and advised me to note how many lines could be produced in an hour by the machine and the three hands attending upon it. He had heard of the machine, and said he would undertake to teach me in three months to do nearly as much work without the machine as each one of the three persons could do with it. I took his advice and worked diligently under his personal tuition for the period agreed upon, with the result that I was bound apprentice for seven years to the trade of a "compositor and printer."

I mention this incident because it has an historical interest. The composing machine referred to was Young and Delcambre's, the first completed instrument of the kind, and *The Family Herald* was started for the purpose of giving it employment. It may not be generally known that this weekly publication was originally issued as a double-demy broadsheet of four pages, like a newspaper, and remained in that form for twenty-three numbers, when it was changed to its present quarto size. The composing machine, which cost a fortune, proved a failure, and its use was soon abandoned, but *The Family Herald*, which it brought into existence, has been the making of two or three fortunes, and, notwithstanding the competition which it has had to contend with, is still prosperous, although its proprietors have never resorted to giving prizes, or illustrations, or enlargements, or offering exceptional attractions, and in these respects it is perhaps unique. In the spring of 1895 several letters appeared in one of the daily



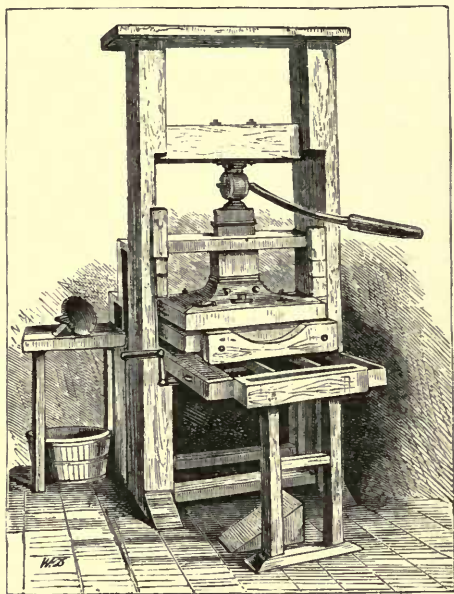




papers respecting the foundation of *The Family Herald*. One was from Mr. Tinsley and another from Mr. Stevens, but neither was altogether correct. The former gentleman said that "it was started by a man of the name of Biggs, Bigs, or Briggs, and was at first a kind of advertising sheet for, I think, a patent medicine." The latter stated that it was started "as a purely literary venture." The fact is, the paper was founded, as I have shown, by Mr. George Biggs, to give employment to Young's composing machine, in which he had some pecuniary interest, and he will ever be gratefully remembered by printers in connection with the pensions which bear his name, and which are annually administered by the Printers' Pension Corporation. The first number appeared on the 17th of December, 1842, about nine months after I had seen the machine at work at which it was subsequently composed. It was printed at machine by Cox of Great Queen Street (afterwards Cox and Wyman), and Spalding and Hodge supplied the paper. I possess copies of all the numbers in the original size, and it is doubtful if another perfect set exists. The front page of the first number is here given in reduced *fac-simile*, which contains a description and woodcut of the composing machine. It will be noted that the words which should have been *italicised* are "hair-spaced," German fashion, owing to the machine not having been supplied with *italic* types.

**THE SKILL OF THE OLD PRESSMAN.**

Allusion has been made to an old wooden press, which was exactly similar to that now exhibited in the Passmore Edwards Library at the St. Bride



Foundation Institute, Bride Lane, Fleet Street. I remember having many a time worked at that press. In fact, it was my duty on Saturday night to lift off the stone, mix up and damp the sawdust in which it was embedded, replace the stone evenly in



the coffin, test the level by pouring water upon it, and then, having driven the carriage under the platen, to pull over and tie the bar to the cheeks of the press, thus leaving it in working condition for the Monday following. Luckombe (1771) describes this, with some trifling improvements, as the "new-fashioned press." If any reader has had a like experience to mine he will be able to appreciate the skill of the old pressman, who produced excellent work with no better appliances than this wooden machine and a couple of leather balls with which to apply the colour.



#### A PRINTER'S PRACTICAL JOKE.

Business matters were not, of course, conducted fifty years ago in the precise way in which they are now. If a magazine could not be put to press conveniently on its appointed day, it might be deferred for a day or two without the delay involving any serious consequences. One of the first magazines upon which I was employed was a monthly medical journal, edited by an Irishman of some professional repute. He had a strong brogue, and, like many other educated clever men of that day, was sadly addicted to drink. On one occasion the doctor had omitted to forward the copy for the usual leading article, and I was despatched late one evening to Henrietta Street, Cavendish Square, with the message that if the MS. were not sent by return the journal could not be published in time. When



admitted into the hall I heard sounds of uproarious merriment, and presently the doctor came out in, let me say, a very unprofessional condition. "What's this, boy?" said he. I repeated my message. "Tell Taylor to put in a blank and be d—— to him!" he exclaimed, at the same time pushing me out. The reply was duly brought back and delivered literally. Next morning I carried to the doctor a perfect copy of the journal, but with a column and a half blank in the centre. The gentleman had not risen. Presently, however, I was told to go up to his bedroom, and when he opened the paper and discovered the hiatus, he leapt out of bed and used language that in these more refined days does not bear repeating. He dressed himself as speedily as possible, uttering threats all the while against the poor printer, and we drove back in a cab. When, however, he was told that he was labouring under a misapprehension, that the journal had not been put to press, and that the copy he had was in fact a proof, he treated the matter as a good joke, sent me out for some spirituous inspiration, and sat down at a compositor's frame to write the article which was to fill the blank space.



"MILES'S BOY."

Another man with whom I came in contact during the first year of my apprenticeship was Henry Downes Miles. At that time a literary speculator would start a new journal on a capital of a £10 note. Miles attempted—nay, accomplished—this,

and brought out a penny paper devoted to sport, the first page of which contained a woodcut outline portrait of some champion pugilist in fighting attitude. After several numbers had been issued the woodcut heading warped and split—there was no electrotyping in those days. When the proprietor-editor brought his copy for the next number and was told that the heading was broken in halves, he exclaimed, "Thank the gods! I've been cogitating as to whether I should go on, but I can't bring out a pugilistic paper with a broken head, so let us say its end was pieces." Miles was a most indefatigable journalist, essayist, and novel-writer. He became associated with *Bell's Life*, then the chief, if not the only, sporting paper, and under the signature of "Miles's Boy" wrote probably the first rhymed prophecies of racing events that were ever published. He was well educated, being familiar with Greek, Latin, and also modern languages, which he frequently quoted in his sporting articles, thus lifting them above the ordinary reporting level. After a career of upwards of half a century he retired upon a modest competence, but unfortunately his investments in foreign and other securities became valueless, and he had to depend upon charity for some years before he died, which was not till 1889, at the advanced age of eighty-two. One of the Messrs. Rothschild and Mr. G. R. Sims are said to have taken upon themselves the responsibility of relieving the necessities of the old journalist, who had in his time been editorially associated with

Henry Brougham, Thomas Babington Macaulay, and other celebrated men.



#### DRURY LANE.

In reminiscences of this kind it is almost impossible to avoid what may be termed autobiographical allusions which connect the incidents. The reader will therefore no doubt pardon a reference to the unimportant fact that the requirements of the business with which I was connected having outgrown the circumscribed limits of the Chandos Street premises, the plant was removed to a large floor up a stable-yard in Drury Lane. Passing down this thoroughfare the other day, I noticed that many of the houses that stood there fifty years ago had been pulled down, and much-improved structures had taken their place. Once upon a time Drury Lane was a fashionable thoroughfare, where dwelt Sir William Drury, the Earls of Craven and Clare, the Marquis of Argyle, the Earl of Anglesey, and other persons of distinction, including the Queen of Bohemia, daughter of James I., who resided at Drury House—in fact, it was a kind of Park Lane. When I first became acquainted with the locality, in the 'thirties, its glories had long since departed, its mansions had given place to much less pretentious buildings, and these were growing old and dilapidated. Yet there is no spot that brings to my mind more interesting reminiscences, for it was in the printing-office up George Yard that I first saw Douglas Jerrold, E. L. Blanchard, Thomas Lyttleton

Holt, Albert Smith, Frederick Guest Tomlins, George Augustus Sala, G. W. M. Reynolds, and other literary men and journalists of fifty years ago. Nor is this the sole reason why the unsavoury thoroughfare dwells interestingly upon my memory. The Lane was full of character. A novelist could have selected from it a sufficient number of living personages for an exciting plot. Let me recall just a few specimens.



**“GRAVEYARD WALKER.”**

At the north corner of Blackmore Street (being 101, Drury Lane) lived George Alfred Walker, a very popular medical practitioner. He was a tall, handsome man, always dressed well, and was a great favourite in the neighbourhood, partly on account of his kindness to the poor. It may be passing out of remembrance that it was chiefly owing to an agitation inaugurated by him, and sustained by his exertions, that interments in London graveyards were made illegal. In fact he was for years known by the name of “Graveyard Walker.” There can be no doubt that at that time London was drifting towards another plague, but the visitation of the cholera in 1849, which destroyed 13,000 people in London in about four months, hastened the reform so much needed. Dr. Walker was a frequent visitor to the printing-office, for he published several works and numerous tracts upon the subject of intramural burial. Being an enthusiast, he would from time to time describe to us the horrible discoveries he had

made as to the condition of the burial-grounds and vaults in the neighbourhood. I was, of course, a youth at that time, and was taken one night by a fellow-apprentice to a show, or "penny gaff," in Clement's Lane, Clare Market. The building had been a place of worship, called Enon Chapel, but had gradually degenerated, and was finally occupied by a low-class Crummies family, to whom I was introduced, and with whom, for the sake of the attendant fun, I trod the stage before a penny audience. The scenery, wardrobe, and properties of this travelling company were of the most primitive description. The plays (if such a term be applicable) were all highly-spiced melodramas, in which villainy came to grief and virtue was rewarded. The proprietor had a manuscript book of each, which detailed the plot and gave certain passages which were to be committed to memory and emphasised as "points," with the view of exciting applause, but the chief portion of the dialogue appeared to be improvised. The entertainment was certainly harmless, and seemed to satisfy the patrons of the establishment. One night, as I was leaving the stage-door at the back of the premises, I saw two men throwing bones into a cart, together with pieces of coffins, which appeared to be taken out of a cellar beneath the chapel—or theatre. This incident I related next day to Dr. Walker, who visited the place, and succeeded in having the show immediately closed, for he discovered that beneath the building and its adjacent yard some thousands of bodies had been



buried. London has never properly recognised the debt of gratitude it owes to George Alfred Walker, the Drury Lane doctor, who afterwards lived for many years in retirement at Barmouth, and died there a few years ago at the age of seventy-five.

**BLIND COX.**

Nearly opposite to Dr. Walker's dispensary was a newspaper shop, then kept by a blind man named Cox, whose sense of touch was so acute that he could pick out the newspapers and periodicals required by his customers, and take money and give change with perfect accuracy. At that time there were, of course, no penny dailies. It was customary for newsvendors to lend the morning papers for an hour each day for from sixpence to a shilling per week, and to solicit orders from provincial customers to whom these same papers would be despatched by the evening post, the usual charge being 24s. per quarter. The postage cost nothing, as the compulsory stamp franked them; in fact, a newspaper could be sent post free from place to place within a certain number of days from the date of publication—a considerable advantage when the cost of a paper was fivepence. At times, when the news was important, there would be an extra demand for the papers, and they would become scarce; when otherwise, the vendors would probably have some left on hand. As most of the newsagents were bound to despatch copies to their

provincial customers by the same night's post, those who had sold out were compelled to buy, and those who had papers left were desirous of selling. This created an institution which was called the exchange. Boys and men congregated each afternoon about four o'clock in Catherine Street, Strand, in the middle of the road, and shouted what they had to sell, wanted to buy, or desired to exchange. For an hour or so the street resounded with such cries as "Two-and-a-half for *Times!*" "*Post* for *Herald!*" "Who wants *Herald?*" "Two for *Chron.*!" and so on. Mingled with these exclamations and inquiries were the noisy invitations of several piemen to toss for their wares. "Here ye are, boys, pie or nothing—all hot! all hot!" If the boys sold their papers for more than their employers expected, or had a copper of their own to spend, they would toss a halfpenny with a pieman; if they won, they obtained a hot mutton pie for half price; if they lost, the pieman pocketed the copper. Sometimes when papers were scarce they would command a high price. I have known *The Times* (the circulation of which, by the way, was at this time about 10,000 copies) to be sold for as much as a shilling, and other papers to realise nearly as high a figure. On such occasions it is needless to say the piemen drove a roaring trade. This unique institution came to an end upon the abolition of the newspaper stamp-duty, but at the time referred to it was in full swing, and sightless Cox was always among the noisy throng. I knew the old man

well, and bought at his shop many a set of "Skelt's Theatrical Characters." E. L. Blanchard in a magazine article thus refers to Cox's unpretentious establishment: "Here would gather 'utility' gentlemen, the ladies of the ballet, columbines, harlequins, pantaloons and clowns, while occasionally a tragedian would stalk in, or the representative of second low comedy would condescend to make a hurried call and crack his latest joke. Newspapers being dear commodities in those days, it was a privilege to have the use of this place as a reading-room, and scan the criticisms of last night's performances without being expected to buy anything." The house was pulled down in 1894, after having been in the Cox family for about eighty years.



#### **BARTLETT THE BARBER.**

To the south, at the corner of White Hart Street, now the site of a handsome parochial building, stood a barber's shop, as much frequented by journalists and actors in the afternoon as was Cox's in the morning. The walls were covered with the current play-bills, and Bartlett, the proprietor, was the recipient and retailer of all the green-room and other gossip of the day. He was a little man, with a cheerful expression always upon his face, and was credited not only with telling a good story himself, but with improving upon the stories told by his patrons. "Tom," said an actor in Cox's shop one morning, "have you heard Bartlett's version of

Oxberry's story about the mutton pie? No? then come and get a shave and I'll ask him to tell it." And thus it was that his sanded floor was trodden day by day by a goodly company of jovial fellows, who loitered in as much for the sake of a gossip as for the luxury of a clean shave, and to be shaved by light-handed Bartlett himself was esteemed a luxury.



#### THE CURSE OF DRINK.

A little farther to the south, on the same side of the Lane, stood the well-known "Cock and Magpie" tavern, said to have been the residence of Nell Gwynne. It was a gabled house, and probably the oldest building in Drury Lane. Half a century ago its reputation as a tavern had departed, and it subsequently became a second-hand bookstall, then an old furniture shop, and finally, a few years ago, it was pulled down. I once visited a man named Patrick Riordan who lodged there in the 'forties, and well remember the hewn wooden beams that stretched from wall to wall, and the large open fireplace in the tap-room behind the bar. I have in my time met with several men whose craving for stimulants appeared to be unconquerable. They would, when sober, condemn the habit of intemperance in unmeasured terms, and make evidently sincere resolves to abstain from the insidious glass, but in most cases they lacked the power to resist the slightest temptation. Patrick Riordan's was a

notable case. He was the son of a master printer in Ireland, and a compositor by trade ; he had, however, received in Dublin an education of a much higher kind than usually fell to the lot of a journeyman printer. He was certainly a scholar, could translate Greek and Latin, and he sometimes was employed to review books for *The Morning Post*. He would work industriously for a few days "at case," and then remain idle till he had parted with his last shilling and exhausted his credit at the public-house. Sometimes he would write an article for one of the papers, or do a little reporting, but he inevitably gravitated back to the "space-box" in a bankrupt condition. It may be remarked that at this period intemperance was viewed more charitably and treated more leniently than it would or could be at the present day. I used to enjoy Riordan's society when he was sober, for he possessed the ready wit of his countrymen, and was an interesting and instructive talker. On one occasion he received payment for writing a pamphlet in the interest of the Duke of Brunswick, and asked me to take charge of the money—ten pounds, if I rightly remember. I advised him to pay a visit to one of the Jews in Holywell Street and obtain a decent suit of second-hand clothes, which he much needed, and agreed to take any portion of the balance which he might think fit to entrust to my care. With this intention he set out, and we saw him no more that day. Some time after midnight I was awakened by a loud knocking at the door—



a policeman had called to inform me that poor Riordan had been locked up at Bow Street and wanted to be bailed out. He had, in fact, gone but a few yards, turned into a tavern, and remained drinking and treating others up to the time of closing, when he was turned out, drunk and quarrelsome, without a shilling, having no doubt been robbed. The last time I saw him he was shuffling along Fleet Street with some papers in his hand—probably “copy”—too disreputable in appearance to warrant recognition.



#### STILL IN DRURY LANE.

A short distance farther down the Lane stands the “Duke of Wellington” tavern, which was then kept by a buxom widow named Trimby, who was affectionately called “Mother” by many of her customers. She had the reputation of dispensing liquors of the best quality, and of not being indisposed to recognise the necessities of her often impecunious patrons. There were many small printing and publishing offices in the neighbourhood, from which emanated story-books issued in penny numbers of eight crown octavo pages. The writers, printers, and publishers of these were, with few exceptions, living more or less from hand to mouth. Edward Lloyd had a small shop in the adjoining Wych Street in 1836, where he sold comic valentines, theatrical portraits, and penny story-books. Many of these people had a score

at Mother Trimby's. It was said that she could neither read nor write, and certainly the big slate which hung up behind the bar and recorded the indebtedness of her customers never contained anything more elaborate than a series of perpendicular strokes, each representing a penny, with a hieroglyphic or symbol for the name.

At the west end of Wych Street, which is a continuation of Drury Lane, stood for many years an old curiosity shop, kept by a Jew named Valentine, who was not merely a tradesman but an antiquary. In a snug parlour at the back of his shop Albert Smith, E. L. Blanchard, and others spent many an agreeable half-hour. It is doubtful if they ever purchased anything, for at that period they were scarcely able to indulge in expensive luxuries, yet they were always welcome. Valentine's trade was what would now be considered very slow. His armour, old china, antique clocks and other bric-à-brac were costly articles, and probably such of his well-to-do patrons as could afford to possess them did not monopolise much of his time; thus it was that he was glad to entertain, or to be entertained by, men who could talk learnedly about his curiosities, and supplement his own knowledge as to their genuineness or value. I knew Valentine well, as he took an active part in the management of what was then the London Mechanics' Institution in Chancery Lane, of which I was a member, where Edward Lloyd had obtained a very useful part of his education.

Next door to Valentine's was a very melancholy-looking shop, owned by one William West, who

WEST'S *Theatrical* PORTRAITS. N<sup>o</sup> 105.



*Mr. Diddear, as Valentine — In the Merchants Wedding.* —

was one of the earliest publishers of "scenes and characters" for toy theatrical stages, at that period the most popular winter amusement of the London youth. He also published portraits of celebrated actors, known as the "penny plain and twopence coloured" variety. Early in the century he had established a prosperous business at Exeter House,



London, W. & JOHNSON 60 St. Martins Lane  
**HADAM CELESTE AS THE DUNE ARAB BOY.**  
*in the Siege of Conrt.*

Exeter Street, Strand—in fact, his wares became so exceedingly popular that (as would be the case at the present time) many imitators speedily arose, who issued similar but inferior productions at a cheaper rate. I can recall Skelt, of the Minories, who ended his days in the workhouse; Park, of Tabernacle Walk; Dyer, of Aldersgate Street; Fairburn, of the Minories; De Burson, in Gray's Inn Road; Hodgson, of Holywell Street; Johnson, of St. Martin's Lane; Webb, of Old Street, and many others; so that some idea can be formed of the extent of an industry which is now obsolete. These pictures were originally portraits, more or less recognisable, but they subsequently became mere figures intended to be decorated with silk, tinsel, &c. Webb used to manufacture these decorations, the steel dies for which cost nearly four thousand pounds. Some time before his death he showed me with no little pride his book of patterns, which his son has since sold as a curiosity to Mr. Harry Furniss. At the time I knew West he had removed to Wych Street, his business had declined, partly owing to competition, but chiefly to the fact that old age had deprived him of energy. He and his wife were a couple of shrivelled-up creatures, having the appearance of octogenarian misers. They were always shabbily clad, although reputed to be well off, and seldom indulged in the luxury of a clean face. Their counter and the shelves in the shop were crowded with old stock, covered with dust, and their only pleasure seemed to consist in



petting a tame fox, which was always with them, and drinking of Mother Trimby's best.



“THE ASTROLOGER.”

By the side of Mother Trimby's tavern, which had originally been named “The George,” but was changed to the “Duke of Wellington” after the Battle of Waterloo, was an old inn yard, surrounded by buildings, the older portions of which still retained the galleries so characteristic of the coaching inns which were fast passing away. It was in a printing-office up George Yard that I first saw E. L. Blanchard, one of the most loveable men it has ever been my lot to meet. During the greater portion of his life he was an underpaid, struggling journalist, dramatist, and song-writer, familiar with domestic sorrows, and sometimes privation, but he always wore the expression of a happy and contented man. Mr. Clement Scott, who was one of his most intimate friends, says that “he could not bear giving pain to any one. His love and care for children and dumb animals were pathetic. I don't think,” he adds, “he would have tolerated the destruction of a black-beetle, and if he were bothered by a wasp he would coax it out of the window.” Fifty years ago he brought out a penny paper entitled *The Astrologer*, upon which I was engaged. In those days printing-offices were not extensive establishments, with separate apartments for the accommodation of



EDWARD LAMAN BLANCHARD.

authors and editors. Compositors then had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with the men whose copy they put into type. It happened to

be my duty to set up some of the articles for *The Astrologer*, and Blanchard would come up to my frame with his manuscript. The “Answers to Correspondents” professed to be advice founded upon astronomical calculations and astrological knowledge combined, but were of a very ambiguous character, as the following examples will show :—

“LIBRA.—Yes ; an event not now expected will occur on your return.”

“T. P. Q.—Avoid the water. There is no danger on land.”

“BETSY.—You will soon encounter a change in your destiny. Avoid the associations of law.”

“W. R.—Do not marry for another year. There is a surprise in store for you.”

Young as I was, I had no faith whatever in fortune-telling of this kind, and desired to ascertain if the writer, who was evidently a clear-headed, matter-of-fact man, had any belief himself in the so-called science. One day, therefore, when he handed to me his copy, as usual, I looked into his cheery face and asked seriously, “Mr. Blanchard, do you *really* believe in astrology ?” He smiled, patted me on the head, and replied, “John, my boy, astrologers never reveal their greatest secrets.”

The story of the origin of *The Astrologer* is very curious. The idea of the paper was Blanchard’s own, and it arose out of a strange circumstance that happened in the green-room of Drury Lane Theatre. There was a melancholy fellow who was in some way connected with the theatre, and who spent most of his time in silence, as if something

weighed heavily upon his mind, making neither friends nor acquaintances with those around him. One night, when a certain actor was upon the stage playing his part, a messenger brought the news that a son had been born to him. In order to communicate the intelligence in a novel way, one of the actors in the green-room wrote on the wall with chalk—

*“Youngest child of James Blank  
born Dec. 16, A.D. 1844.”*

When this had been done the melancholy man rose up, took the chalk, and, without saying a word, wrote underneath—

*“And died Jan. 21, 1845.”*

All who were present were shocked at this piece of brutality, and insisted upon its being obliterated. Blanchard thereupon obtained a strip of paper, and hastily, so as to get it finished before the actor came in, pasted the ends of the paper so that it covered the objectionable line, but leaving the inscription as originally written. The actor was heartily congratulated when he came from the stage, and fortunately remained ignorant of the unpleasant incident. The subject was forgotten, and so was Blanchard's strip of paper. Some time afterwards, one winter's night, a messenger came for this same actor, who was again taking part in the play. Blanchard, who happened again to be present, inquired what he was wanted for. “His child has just died,” replied the messenger. Blanchard at once turned to the wall, tore down the strip of paper, and found that

the date there written by the melancholy man, who was not present, was the exact date on which the child had died. This remarkable coincidence struck him as something very extraordinary and set him

LEGENDS  
ROMANCES  
POETRY  
TALES  
PROPHECIES

ASTROLOGER  
AND WEEKLY ORACLE OF DESTINY

DIVINATION  
MESMERISM  
ASTROLOGY  
PREDICTION  
PARANORMAL LOVE

No. 1.—Vol. I. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1848. [PRICE ONE PENNY.]

THE ASTROLOGER TO HIS READERS.

In sacrificing private considerations of ease and retirement for the anxiety and labours of a periodical conductor, THE ASTROLOGER feels that more is demanded from him, in explanation of his objects and motives, than the mere ordinary preface usually accorded to the public by the Editor could possibly show. The chief distinguishing feature of the present age is *utilitarianism*—a reduction of all the finest feelings of humanity into a cold, mechanical combination of recognized laws, which are presumed to be the natural result of our organization. To every new—and to many an old doctrine—is the gauge, "*est bene*"—unwisely applied, until the more sublime ethereal is lost in the contemplation of things corporeal—a doctrine which is fast leading to the heartless creed of materialism. It is to combat this selfish and most dangerous philosophy that the present publication has been instituted; and, to those avengers who would resentments against the restoration of what, in the vanity of their hearts, they may presume to style "*obsolete superstition*," we would oppose the high authorities who have advocated and supported with such success the belief in planetary influence through a period of no less than six thousand years. In the emphatic words of the Athenian we would say, "*Strike—but hear!*" Let us have impartial judges, divested of all animosity, and we ask no more; our own merits we hope will achieve the rest. We will know that an unwarrantable prejudice exists in the minds of many against astrology, though only, perhaps, it would be difficult for them to define. The bias of early education, the fear of thoughtless ridicule, and, above all, the absence of facilities or motive to give the study that calm and dispassionate investigation it requires, are all causes that lead to produce this feeling of indifference to a science which has more truth for its basis than many of the pseudo "*sciences*" of the present day. It is to these, amongst others, that we now appeal, soliciting an examination into our principles; and, conscious that works of this kind have been hitherto treated at so high a price as to place them beyond the reach of all excepting the score wealthy, we have come to the determination of affixing to this a charge, in itself so small as to make the weekly outlay a mere trifle in comparison with the stores of real knowledge that we shall from week to week present unto the reader.

thinking. He found that the queer individual seemed to possess something akin to the gift of prediction, and he proposed that they should together start a paper, to be called *The Astrologer*. The man agreed, and the paper duly appeared.



They naturally expected that the publication would circulate among the uneducated class, and that their correspondence and inquiries would come mostly from servant-girls, but they were surprised to find that lords and ladies, and others in a high rank of life, solicited predictions and advice, and desired to have their nativities cast. One day the melancholy man (whose name was Haddock—and might be termed a queer fish—and who, although a partner, had never become a particular friend of Blanchard's) proposed that they should take a holiday together. "Very well," said Blanchard; "where shall we go?" "What does it matter?" said the other. "Let us go to the nearest railway, take the first train, and go to the end of the journey." So they went to Dover. On the following day, Sunday, the two climbed up Shakespeare's Cliff, and sat there in silence for some time looking over the Channel. Suddenly Haddock rose up and exclaimed, "What a sensation it would make if I were to grasp you round the waist and jump with you off the cliff!" Blanchard looked at the man and thought he saw the light of insanity in his eyes. He quickly sprang back from the edge of the cliff and replied, "I don't think I care just at present to be the central figure in such a sensation. We will go down to the town, if you don't mind." The astrologer gave a hollow laugh and followed Blanchard back. On the Monday morning Blanchard found that his queer companion had left Dover for London by the first train. He, however, stayed till the following day, and then returned to

the office, which was No. 11, Wellington Street North, Strand. Here he found Haddock's door locked from the inside. Being unable to make any one hear, he became alarmed, obtained assistance, and then burst open the door. The hat, coat, and walking-stick of the mysterious one were on the table, but he was not there, nor, according to Blanchard, whom I heard tell the story, was he ever known to have been seen afterwards. In reply to inquiries, Blanchard always confessed that he did not like to say where he thought Haddock had gone, although he had a shrewd suspicion. Not long after this event *The Astrologer* ceased to appear.



#### THOMAS LYTTLETON HOLT.

The name of Thomas Lyttleton Holt sometimes occurs in the memoirs of old journalists when reference is made to the period between 1830 and 1860. Probably no man at that time was better known than he in the journalistic world of London, especially that part which, either from choice or necessity, affected Bohemianism. He had obtained the credit of starting more newspapers and publications than any other man, and generally with little or no capital. If he happened to be hard-up — no unusual condition — he would write some pamphlet, get it nominally published by Berger or Vickers (both well-known newsagents in Holywell Street), but would take copies round to the wholesale dealers and sell them himself. He was a fine,

tall, handsome man, with a military appearance—that is to say, he wore moustachios, a fashion almost exclusively confined to the army previous to the invasion of London by the foreigners who came to visit the Great Exhibition of 1851. He came of a good family, being a descendant of the Lord Chief Justice of that name, and had received a liberal education, having been at Cambridge University. G. A. Sala, who knew him well, says in his "Life and Adventures" that "he was a devoted husband and the most affectionate of fathers. He was neither a gambler, nor a profligate, nor a spendthrift, and always did his best to pay his way." It was this character, and his wonderfully persuasive manner, that probably induced printers and others to help him bring out his numerous ventures without much capital. The first trace I can find of his literary career dates back to 1832, when he was part proprietor with Gilbert Abbott à Becket of *Figaro in London*, which was the first publication of the size and character of the yet unborn *Punch*. Another of his ventures, *Holt's Journal*, is dated 1836. After issuing twelve numbers at a penny, he tells his troubles to his readers in an address, a few lines of which are worth quoting. He says: "I am not ashamed to say that my circumstances are and have been embarrassed, owing partly to the vicissitudes of a literary life and partly to the carelessness of a literary man." He goes on: "The appendage of my name to this publication has brought upon me

a host of troubles : beset by bailiffs, hunted by vindictive creditors, harassed by the harpies of the law, who will have their bond, or else no small number of pounds of flesh in the shape of my body, I am compelled to throw myself upon the good feeling of my readers, and to raise the price of the magazine one halfpenny as the readiest means of relieving myself." As may be readily surmised, relief did not lie in that direction.

On one occasion Holt came up to the printing-office with a manuscript, the title of which was, "How to tell Fortunes by Cards." This he desired to have printed. The printer reminded him that his account for the last similar job had not been liquidated. "Exactly," replied Holt ; "that is precisely the reason why I want you to do this. Do you really think that I would be so ungrateful as to take my work to a rival house while I was indebted to you ? No ; perish the thought ! You've got to do it." And it so fell out, for further negotiations resulted in an arrangement to the effect that, when the pamphlets were ready for sale, he was to hire a cart, and he and one of the printer's apprentices were to drive round to the newsagents and dispose of them, and bring back the money wherewith to pay the printer's bill. I happened to be the apprentice appointed to accompany Holt on this expedition. During the journey he related rather alarming stories of what befel wicked boys who did not obey their elders. We were fortunate in disposing of the pamphlets, and I think the last we sold were purchased by

Purkiss of Soho, whose name I saw over the door of an empty and dilapidated house only the other day. On returning, we drove up to a coffee-house in Catherine Street, Strand. "John," said Holt, "we have done a good morning's work, and have earned our dinner. You go in and order what you please—at my expense, mind—and when I have found a boy to hold the horse I will join you." He had lectured me so effectually upon the virtue of obedience that I went in without hesitation, ordered my dinner, and proceeded to satisfy a good appetite. My host, however, seemed a long while coming, and I began to feel rather uneasy. Presently, when the meal was about half consumed, I went to the window and found that the cart had disappeared. I then began to realise the fact that I had betrayed my trust, for I knew instinctively that I had been sent to see that Holt duly returned with the money as agreed. I had fortunately sufficient funds to defray the cost of my half-consumed dinner, and so returned to the office in anything but a comfortable frame of mind. On ascending the stairs, however, I was greatly relieved by hearing Holt laughing boisterously, and when I opened the door he exclaimed, "Here comes the wretched delinquent!" and gave me half-a-crown, which he could ill afford. He had obviously played this trick to prove that he could be trusted to fulfil his promise without being looked after by a boy. The pamphlet referred to contained a four-line rhymed prediction for each of the fifty-two cards. My friend Perring, who put part of it into type, dis-



covered that Holt had omitted the eight of hearts, and he supplied the only element of truth it contained :—

“ In the eight of hearts we see  
No augury of destiny ;  
The man or maid who draws this card  
From Fate’s foreknowledge is debarred.”

Holt was the editor of a halfpenny paper called *Chat*, upon which I was employed. It was the property of a man named Frederick Marriott, who tried his hand at many speculations in London, but failed in all. He ultimately emigrated to the United States and started *The San Francisco News Letter*, out of which he made a fortune. That paper is still in existence, and although Marriott must by this time have joined the majority, its imprint bore his name when I happened to see it a year or two ago in a Continental hotel. To return to *Chat*, however, of which there is no copy of any number in the British Museum. Holt, as I have said, was editor, and wrote most of the matter in a style slovenly and difficult enough to test the capacity of the most experienced compositor. One day he handed in as usual a bunch of copy—and the term “bunch” as applied to his copy was strictly appropriate. On being examined, a piece of MS. was discovered so beautifully written that it was passed round for inspection as a curiosity. It was a rhymed contribution—a parody—beginning “The manager Jullien sat in his chair.” By and by the author came up to the office to read his proof. He was a tall, slim,

dark-complexioned young man, who went by the name of George Augustus Sala. He was then, I think, a scene-painter's assistant at the Princess's Theatre, where his mother was acting. As Mr. Sala has himself told the story of *Chat* in his "Life and Adventures," I will merely add that Holt resigned the editorship, which Sala accepted, and that was his maiden attempt at editing. The paper, however, failed to obtain a paying circulation, and Marriott, becoming tired of losing money, handed it over to Sala, who, having no capital to carry it on, dropped it in a very short time. Sitting by Sala's bedside but a few weeks before he died, I recalled to his memory several incidents connected with his efforts to keep his first editorial venture afloat, and possibly they evoked his last smile.

At the time *Chat* was in existence Sala was drawing the illustrations for Edward Lloyd's *Penny Sunday Times*, and also for some of the weekly story-books that have been termed "penny dreadfuls," although they contained nothing of an immoral tendency. He has left it on record that he was told to put more vigour into his drawings, for Lloyd wrote, "The eyes must be larger, and there must be more blood—much more blood!" The effect of this instruction may probably be traced in the accompanying woodcut which appeared in one of Lloyd's story-books about that period.

A slight sketch has been given of Thomas Lyttleton Holt as an editor, proprietor, pamphleteer—almost always in pecuniary difficulties, continually

starting papers and coming to grief, yet spoken well of by the printers and others whom he had unintentionally victimised. He may now, however, for once, be referred to as a prosperous gentleman. In



1845, during the railway mania, he managed to raise sufficient capital to start a morning paper called *The Iron Times*, which was published at the west corner of Poppins Court in Fleet Street. This speculation proved an immediate success, chiefly owing to the

insertion of advertisements of projected railways. There has since been no such excitement as was created by the railway mania. The country was in a high fever of speculation. Money was plentiful, the few railway lines which were opened were paying dividends of ten per cent., and the public were eager to invest in something that seemed to offer good security. Everybody, from the nobleman to the junior clerk, bought and sold railway scrip. It was stated in the House of Lords by Lord Clanricarde in 1845 that a charwoman's son, named Charles Guernsey, engaged as a clerk in a broker's office at 12s. per week, had his name down as a subscriber for shares in the London and York line for £52,000. It was estimated that the money spent at that time in advertisements of new railway companies amounted to £100,000 per week.\* Holt thought that at last his chance of making a fortune had arrived. He started his paper on the 1st of July, 1845, and in but a few weeks he was driving down Fleet Street in his carriage with a servant in livery hanging on behind. During this period of prosperity he is said to have taken home a bag containing a thousand sovereigns, which he scattered over his bed, and then, having thrown himself upon them, sent for his family that they might afterwards be able to say that they knew their father once "rolled in money." A large proportion of the payment for the railway advertisements in *The Iron Times* was made in paid-up shares

\* "Our Railways : their Development, Enterprise, Incident, and Romance," by J. Pendleton.

of the various companies, and had Holt realised these, as he might have done, he would have made a fortune in a few months. He, however, sold only sufficient to enable him to meet the current expenses of his paper, retaining the remainder under the impression that they would increase in value. One day *The Times* published an article which tended to prove that the country did not contain money enough to construct one-half of the projected railways, and this produced a financial panic. During the parliamentary sessions of 1844-5-6 no less than 440 railway bills were *passed*, authorising the construction of 8,470 miles of line, and involving the raising of capital amounting to 180 millions of money. The revelation published in *The Times* resulted in rendering Holt's securities practically valueless, and seriously affected the income of his paper. It ran a fairly prosperous course, however, till the end of the year, when an endeavour was made to convert the proprietorship into a company. This did not succeed, but its publication was continued till the following May, when it died, leaving poor Holt not only penniless but in debt.

Many years afterwards, when with a partner I had commenced business at Drury House, St. Mary-le-Strand, Holt called upon me. He wanted to bring out a paper to be called *The Scientific Englishman*, which was “bound to succeed,” as all his speculations were. He imparted to me the fact that a prosperous furniture dealer in the Strand had arranged to advance the capital necessary. I listened to his seductive



and optimistic proposals, and duly produced his publication. But when he discovered, after some weeks, that I was disinclined to lose more than the £50 that stood against him in our books, he declared that I lacked the enterprise necessary to make a good commercial man, which was no doubt true, and stopped the paper. He lived some years afterwards (an octogenarian), but I never saw him again. Pleasant memories of Thomas Lyttleton Holt, however, linger with me still.



#### DOUGLAS JERROLD.

In the same office was printed, or rather composed, *Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper*, which began its career in 1846. Jerrold, of course, was a constant visitor, and I had frequent opportunities of seeing the splenetic little man, and of listening to his smart sayings. Although he had naturally a large circle of acquaintances, I do not think he had many intimate friends. People were afraid of him, for his satirical and sometimes cruel jokes were not unfrequently levelled at his friends; in fact, if he saw an opportunity of saying something smart, he had little consideration for the feelings of his victim. Hepworth Dixon aptly remarked that "his wit was all steel points." His jokes are of course now "chestnuts," but reference to one or two may be allowable as illustrations. "Remember, Jerrold," said one of his acquaintances, referring to some business transaction, "we all row in the same boat."

“Yes,” said Jerrold, “but not with the same skulls.” A very prosy individual, having just concluded a story, said, “Do you know, Jerrold, when he told me that, I thought I should have died with laughter.” “I wish to heaven you had,” was the reply. Jerrold was once present at a sheep’s-head supper, when one of the guests exclaimed, “I have no stomach for expensive dainties; sheep’s-head for ever, say I!” Jerrold put up his hands and ejaculated, “What egotism!” On one occasion I had to take a parcel of proofs to his office, and was instructed to wait for them and to bring them back. I knocked at his door, but there was no response from the inside. The operation was repeated, with no better result. I then opened the door and saw Jerrold sitting at his desk, with his head inclined over it. He turned slightly but took no further notice. I placed the proofs by his side, delivered my message, went over against the wall and sat down to await his pleasure. Jerrold looked at me with his twinkling eyes, rose up, and said, “Why don’t you take a chair, my little man?” Instead of replying that I had anticipated his wishes, as I might have done, I sprang off the chair, and gave him his expected opportunity of enjoying my confusion. As a public speaker Jerrold was not a success, and he knew it. He was pressed on two or three occasions to preside over public gatherings, for his trenchant writings in the interest of the advanced Liberals had rendered his name popular, but his efforts were not encouraging. I once endeavoured to persuade him to take the chair

at an entertainment at the London Mechanics' Institution, but he wisely declined. I had previously tried Charles Dickens, who replied, "I very much regret that I cannot preside on the occasion to which you call my attention, but the engagements I have before me will not admit of my having that honour."



ALBERT SMITH.

The entertainment referred to was for the benefit of the Irish Famine Fund, and the committee desired, if possible, to get a popular literary man to preside, and as secretary I had to find him. While thinking gloomily over my want of success, Albert Smith came into the office. He differed totally in character from Jerrold, being a kindly, genial man, full of harmless fun, and a general favourite. He was then writing "The Adventures of a London Latch-Key" for *The London Magazine*, which, by the way, was never completed owing to the sudden demise of the magazine. I laid my case before him and begged that he would help me out of my difficulty by presiding. After thinking the matter over he consented, but conditionally that he should be permitted to select all the pieces to be recited. This being conceded, I had breakfast with him the following day at his lodgings in the Albany, near Regent Street, and the first piece he selected was "Box and Cox," in which he condemned me to play *Box* the journeyman printer. There was one piece, however, that we could not get any one to take, "Mariana in the Moated Grange," and that he

undertook to recite himself. He made an excellent and humorous chairman, and assisted us to hand over a good contribution to the Famine Fund nearly fifty years ago. His wonderful success as an entertainer at the Egyptian Hall is a matter of history. He married one of the daughters of Mrs. Keeley, and died about thirty-five years ago, but two days after giving his entertainment. When his effects were sold a friend of mine bought his reading-lamp and gave it to me as a souvenir.



#### FREDERICK GUEST TOMLINS.

Another remarkable man of whom I saw much at that time was Frederick Guest Tomlins. He was secretary of the Shakespeare Society, had written a "History of England," a "History of the Jews," and other works, none of which had been very successful. For four years he was the literary and dramatic critic of *Ferrol's Newspaper* and also acted in the same capacity for *The Morning Advertiser*. He used very often to chat with me, and one day he gave me a box order to see the production of a play he had written, which Phelps had undertaken to bring out at Sadler's Wells Theatre. He said to me, as he had no doubt said to others, "I have so often criticised plays written by other men that it is but fair I should give the critics an opportunity of cutting me up." This was in 1849. The play, entitled "Garcia, or the Noble Error," was successful from a literary point of view, and was received very cordially by the first-night audience.

After Tomlins, at the close of the performance, had bowed his acknowledgments from the stage, he went round to the adjacent "Hugh Myddleton" tavern, where had assembled a jovial company of



FREDERICK GUEST TOMLINS.

friends, amongst whom were Jonas Levy, E. L. Blanchard, and William Romer, who had determined to criticise the play adversely as soon as Tomlins made his appearance. Consequently when he entered the room, pardonably elated with his success, and said, "Well, boys, what's *your* verdict?"



the fun began. One criticised the language as being unpoetical, another thought the scenes might be rearranged with advantage, a third suggested the omission of an important character, and so on, until Tomlins' cheery countenance began to assume a threatening aspect. Turning to Romer, who had been silent, he said, "Well, Bill, what have you to say?" "To tell you the plain truth, Tomlins, I do not agree with *all* that has been said. What I should object to—if I may be permitted to object at all—is the title. The word 'Garcia' is unobjectionable—that may pass—but I should recommend you to alter the second title, 'The Noble Error,' to the 'Sanguinary Blunder!'" (the adjective used, however, being alliterative). Jonas Levy, who afterwards told me the story, said that then they ordered a bowl of punch and made a night of it.

When Tomlins was engaged upon *Ferrol's Newspaper* he had an office hard by. A boy was employed to come every morning at eight o'clock to do the necessary sweeping and dusting. One Monday morning Tomlins arrived about nine o'clock and found the door locked, and, not having the key, walked about for some time waiting for the boy to turn up. When he arrived he was duly admonished by his employer for oversleeping himself. The lad began to cry, and declared that he had not overslept himself—in fact, he had been up all night. "What's the matter, then? Are you ill?" said Tomlins. "Well, sir," replied the boy, "it's this way: My uncle was hung at the Old Bailey this

morning, and although we were not on speaking terms with him, I thought, as one of the family, I ought to go to his funeral—at least as near as I could." "Quite right," said Tomlins, "never neglect your family duties; but when another of your relations is to be hanged please to leave the key of the office under the doormat."

One of the most successful of Cassell's publications is the *Popular Educator*, which was commenced in 1852, and is "still running." A well-known journalist, George Frederick Pardon, used to claim the credit of having given Cassell the idea, which, however, was not original, for Tomlins in 1850 issued a penny weekly publication entitled *Tomlins's Help to Self-Educators*, but it was completed in a single volume, a copy of which the author sent me. The last time I heard of him was in 1865 (two years before his death), when, attending the Princess's Theatre as dramatic critic on the occasion of the production of Charles Reade's "Never too Late to Mend," he became so agitated that he rose up in the stalls and made a public protest against what he called the "brutal realism" in one of the scenes—an incident that created considerable sensation at the time.



#### "THE ECHO" OFFICE.

As a schoolboy I happened to be thrown into the company of many who were associated with the theatre. I used to be occasionally sent to deliver

small parcels of books for my father at the stage-doors of Drury Lane, Covent Garden, the Adelphi, and the Olympic. Actors would come into our shop in the Strand, which stood upon the site of old Exeter 'Change, and loiter and gossip, as I think they do now at certain places in the same neighbourhood. Then several of my schoolfellows were the sons of actors, and I used to spend most of my holidays behind the scenes of a private theatre in Catherine Street. Early in the 'forties what was termed the "legitimate drama" could be performed only at Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket Theatres, which were therefore termed the patent houses. The other or minor theatres might play Fitzball's blood-and-thunder three-act melodramas, but Shakespeare and other poetic plays were prohibited. It was the principle of Protection applied to the drama. I remember seeing a burlesque at the Strand Theatre the title of which was intended to be a protest against the patent system, being called "Othello according to Act of Parliament." If a London actor desired to play *Hamlet*—a part that often makes or mars a reputation—he would have either to go into the provinces or to make the experiment in a private theatre. I remember several of these, where money was not allowed to be taken at the doors. One was situated in Gough Street, Gray's Inn Road, another at King's Cross; there was also Miss Kelley's Theatre in Soho, now the Royalty, and the Pantheon in Catherine Street. The last-named was kept by a man of the

name of Smythson, whose son was my favourite playmate. When about ten years of age I was induced to take part in a performance of "Macbeth," but this appearance in public was limited to my head, which had to rise up out of a cauldron and prophesy about Birnam Wood coming to Dunsinane. This Pantheon has some little interest for us, inasmuch as the front elevation, unaltered in appearance, is now the office of *The Echo* newspaper. Very early in the century it was called "Mr. Phillipstall's Exhibition Room," in which occasionally a kind of Polytechnic entertainment was held. In 1823 it was turned into a Theatre of Variety, gas was introduced, and the sort of amusement provided was very similar to that now offered at the music-halls. About the year 1836 it became a private theatre. A reduced reproduction of the programmes (or play-bills) illustrating the three periods is here given. When the patents were abolished the private theatres declined, and the Pantheon was converted into a disreputable night-house, known by the name of "Jessups," where congregated the dissolute of both sexes, who frequented the nest of disorderly houses situated in the adjacent courts. When *The Echo* was started in 1868 by Messrs. Cassell, Pether, and Galpin, the glass chandeliers that had lighted the gambling and dancing saloons, and the looking-glasses against the walls that had for a long period reflected scenes of outrageous dissipation, were removed to render the place suitable for the editors, composers, and others, whose duty it would be to

**For Passion Week only.**

**Mr. BOLOGNA, Jun.**

Respectfully informs his Friends and the Public that he has opened his

**Evening Mechanical Museum**

For the Three following Evenings only:

Wednesday, April 14th, 1813, Thursday 15th, and Saturday 17th,

At Mr. Phillipstall's Exhibition Room,

**CATHERINE STREET, STRAND,**

When various Pieces of New Mechanism will be brought forward in addition to his usual Exhibition. In Particular, the Mechanical Powers of

**The Panharmonicon Cloek,**

Which Plays a Variety of

**Also,**

Who Plays a Variety of

Will swim round a Ball  
may be pointed out  
perform a Variety of

**The T**

See Figure representing  
and cannot be

Will go through a small  
the Astonishment of

Pieces of

**O**

**The**

With the

**Th**

**Th**

Upon an Imp  
Performance  
performed

Performing

Places and  
Boxes &c.

**THEATRE OF VARIETY,**

CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain.

It is most respectfully announced to the Public, that this Elegant Little Theatre having undergone a Complete Repair, and being newly Embellished, with New Scenery, and entirely

**Illuminated with Gas,**

WILL OPEN, sanctioned by the above High Authority,

This Present **THURSDAY, September 25, 1823,**  
**AND EVERY EVENING.**

**PANTHEON AMATEUR THEATRE**

AND

**DRAMATIC ACADEMY.**



**CATHERINE ST. STRAND.**

**MISS CLEMENTS'S NIGHT.**

**On MONDAY, APRIL 11, 1842.**

Will be presented the splendid Melodram of the

**TOWER OF NESLE.**

Captain Buridan	Mr. E. WILSON.
Louis of France	Mr. GIBSON.
Phillip D'Aulnay	Mr. TERRY
Countess D'Aulnay	Savoury
Marquis	Mr. J. MORTON
Countess	Miss Rose
Richard	Mr. E. J. BENSON
	Laundry
	Mr. H. JOHNSON
	Mr. W. WATSON.
	Miss CLEMENTS



wage war against such immorality as had characterised the previous occupation of the building. It may be added that Mr. Horace Voules, now the acting editor of *Truth*, who received his practical education in "the Yard," was the first manager of *The Echo*, in the starting of which I had the pleasure of assisting him, and that its first editor was Mr. (afterwards Sir) Arthur Arnold, now chairman of the London County Council.



"STAGE STRUCK."

As before intimated, I had acquired from my early surroundings a liking for play-acting, which is an insidious and dangerous *penchant*. I was cured of this weakness, however; by a humorous incident. A dramatic club, of which I was a member, elected to play "Henry IV." at the City of London Theatre. The very subordinate part of *Bardolph* fell to my lot. I considered tragedy was rather in my line, but our manager always cast me in small comic parts, owing, let us say, to professional jealousy. If we played "Hamlet," I was *First Gravedigger*; if "The Merchant of Venice," then I had to interpret *Launcelot Gobbo*, and so on. Now the part of *Bardolph* depends more upon "make-up" and by-play than upon elocutionary effort. For the latter I was indebted to Mrs. R. Honner, the lessee, who kindly gave me many valuable hints; for "make-up" I was dependent upon the barber. In those days there were two small tradesmen who usually supplied us and most other amateurs with costumes

and wigs, Samuel May and W. Clarkson. Although the principals have long since passed away, the firms still exist, but they would now decline with contempt such orders as were gladly accepted nearly fifty years ago. Clarkson was proud of his profession. The task of converting an elderly subject into a youthful lover, or a lad of eighteen into an old man, gave him, I believe, more pleasure than the receipt of his fee. On the occasion to which I refer, after disposing of *Falstaff*, he inquired for *Bardolph*, and was much amused when a very youthful aspirant placed himself under his hands. "Now," said he, "if there is one make-up more than another upon which I pride myself, it's *Bardolph*," and with that he arranged his pigments, various-coloured wafers, and other matters, and proceeded to build up his conception of what the portrait should be. It was an elaborate piece of work. Every now and again, after using his brushes and wafers, he would take a few steps backward with the air of an artist to test their effect. Finally, he declared the result perfection, but lamented that he could not have it copied as a picture. On rising from the chair I felt as if I wore a plaster mask, but was content to suffer in the cause of art. The play went well, and the actors were honoured with a complimentary call. Having nothing to do in the last act, I removed with some difficulty Clarkson's masterpiece, and hurried to the front in order to escort a young lady whom I had taken to see the play. "Well," said I, "what did you think of the performance?" "Very well, for

*amateurs.*" There was a coolness about the tone I did not like. "Don't you think *Falstaff* quite a success?" "Pretty well." I intended to lead up to some reference to the part in which I had the greatest interest, feeling certain that I should receive a compliment which I would highly value. My intention, however, was frustrated. My fair companion closed the conversation by saying that if ever I made such a guy of myself again, she would have nothing more to say to me. And I have not, for that was my last appearance on the stage.



#### JOHN CASSELL.

Shortly after my term of apprenticeship had expired I was offered, and gladly accepted, a situation in the office of John Cassell, who had recently started in business as a printer and publisher at 335, Strand, which had some years previously been the office of *The Morning Post*. This, however, was not my first introduction to Mr. Cassell. My maternal grandfather, John Williams, was a native of the same town as Cassell, and followed the same trade. He had served as chief carpenter in His Majesty's navy, had retired from the service, and had set up in business as a carpenter and undertaker in Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. It was in this street (now renamed Sardinia Street) that Benjamin Franklin lodged when working as a journeyman printer at Watts's office in the neighbouring Wild Court. Williams was a devout Methodist, and a

constant attendant at the services held in Great Queen Street Chapel, where he was a Bible-class teacher. Being a sincere and energetic man, although somewhat advanced in years, he took an active interest in local missionary work in the neighbourhood of the now disappearing Clare Market. He soon realised that one of the chief impediments to "the spread of the Gospel," to use his own words, was the almost universal habit of intemperate drinking, and became a member of the limited band of enthusiasts who started one of the earliest temperance societies established in London. I remember that his "pledge" ticket, which was framed and hung up in his workshop, was "No. 4." When John Cassell first came to London in 1837 he brought a letter of introduction to my grandfather from a fellow-tradesman in Manchester, and began to assist him in the crusade against the prevailing evil. Their plan of operations was this: some half-dozen temperance advocates would assemble near to a public-house, my uncle Alexander (the youngest of my grandfather's children, about the age of Cassell) would play a tune or two on his flageolet, and when this had attracted a group of listeners the real proceedings would commence with a brief prayer by my grandfather, this being followed by an energetic address from John Cassell. Those were rough times, and that was a rough neighbourhood, and it not unfrequently happened that the speaker and his associates would be

assaulted and driven away with such missiles as the street afforded. They were, however, not the men to be daunted; they persevered, obtained the sympathy of the women, who were the greatest sufferers, and ultimately established a society numbering some hundreds of total abstainers. I well remember to have been taken by John Williams and John Cassell to a meeting held in a hall in Milton Street, Finsbury, at which they both delivered addresses, and while returning we met a drunken man staggering from side to side along the footpath. Cassell, as was his wont, improved the occasion by expressing the hope that when I became a man I would never be a slave to "the cursed drink." Some years afterwards, when visiting my grandfather, who had retired from business, I told him where I was employed. "And how is my friend, John Cassell?" he inquired. I replied that he was prospering. Some one who was present injudiciously remarked, "Cassell was only a carpenter, I think." The old man exclaimed, "Only a carpenter! Tell me, lad, who is there that need be ashamed of being a carpenter, *or a carpenter's son?*" The exclamation was rendered additionally impressive by his laying his hands upon a Bible which lay before him. This occurred in 1850. John Williams lived to be upwards of eighty, and died in his armchair with an open Bible before him.

John Cassell had, in July, 1848, commenced his publishing career by starting a weekly newspaper,



*The Standard of Freedom*, which was printed at 335, Strand, by William Cathrall, whose plant Cassell ultimately purchased. The price of the paper was 4½d., but was increased to 5d. Some years previously, however, he had commenced trading as a wholesale tea and coffee merchant in Abchurch Lane, City. This venture prospered exceedingly. He had appointed agents in all the large towns, and John Cassell's name in connection with coffee and tea (the latter being 5s. per lb.) was well known throughout the country. It was not until he had thus established a flourishing and lucrative business, then removed to 80, Fenchurch Street, that he turned his attention to the more speculative one of publishing. *The Standard of Freedom*, though an excellent paper, was at no period of its existence a financial success. One of its chief features was the promotion of emigration to Australia and Canada. Cassell formulated a co-operative scheme to assist farmers and others with limited capital to try their fortune in the colonies, and sought the help of the Colonial Office; but after a protracted and unsatisfactory correspondence with the officials, he became disheartened, and reluctantly abandoned the idea. *The Standard of Freedom* came to an end on October 4, 1851, by being incorporated with *The Weekly News and Chronicle*, and Cassell turned his attention to more popular educational works. In January, 1850, he started *The Working Man's Friend*, a penny weekly octavo journal, which

obtained a considerable circulation; and in the following May began to issue *Cassell's Library* in sevenpenny monthly volumes of 144 pages, which ran to 26 volumes.

It may be here mentioned, parenthetically, that another gentleman, who has since prospered, and conferred inestimable benefits upon the public, commenced his publishing career at this time, for it was in June, 1850, that Mr. Passmore Edwards issued a twopenny monthly magazine, entitled, *The Public Good*, which contained contributions from Prof. Graham, Dr. Massie, Thomas Beggs, Paxton Hood, Edward Miall, W. J. Fox, Elihu Burritt, and Westland Marston—a goodly array of well-known names.

Cassell had not only a strong desire to encourage working people to educate themselves, but he entertained a belief that they could assist each other if opportunity were afforded them; he accordingly offered prizes for papers to be written by persons who gained their living by working at some trade. These contributions were printed and issued as monthly supplements to *The Working Man's Friend*, but entitled *The Literature of Working Men*. It is worth recording that the first number contained an article "By J. A. Langford, chair-maker, Birmingham." This gentleman, who is still living, is John Alfred Langford, LL.D., F.R.H.S., the author of "A Century of Birmingham Life," and other works. The second number contained the first literary effort of a very remarkable old

woman, “Janet Hamilton, shoemaker’s wife, Langloan, Lanarkshire.” Although uneducated, never having attended a school, she composed many essays and poems which were subsequently published, and which entitled her, according to a writer in *Punch*, “to a niche in the temple of fame.” John Bright once paid a visit to her humble home, and declared her to be the most remarkable old lady that he ever heard of. In the third number a contribution appeared “By Robert Whelan Boyle, printer, Camden Town,” whom I afterwards knew as a printer’s reader, and who became the first editor of *The Daily Chronicle*.

The success which had attended several of Mr. Cassell’s publications, although but moderate, was sufficient to induce him to project a more ambitious undertaking. The Great Exhibition building was fast approaching completion, the papers were filled with matters relating to the impending World’s Fair, and, taking advantage of the popular excitement, he made arrangements for producing a record of the event, to be fully illustrated with what were then deemed high-class engravings. About a fortnight before the date of publication of the first number he ordered advertisements to be inserted in the newspapers to the extent of £100, which his manager said he considered somewhat extravagant. Cassell struck the table with his fist and said, “This exhibition time everybody is going to stand on tip-toe, and if I don’t do the same I sha’n’t be seen, so spend the money.” The result more than realised

his expectations. When the first number was published (June 7, 1851), the whole of the copies printed were sold the same day, and more were required. The machines rolled on day after day to meet the demand, and when the formes were released (it may again be remarked that electrotyping, although described by Savage in 1841, had not come into use) the "matter" had to be boiled in ley before the types could be separated. This was the turning-point in that part of his career. He believed the success of *The Illustrated Exhibitor* was mainly owing to the pictures, and from that time illustrations formed a chief attraction of Cassell's publications.

At the end of the year 1851 there was a change of management in Mr. Cassell's establishment, previous to its removal to La Belle Sauvage Yard. As was then the custom of the trade, the whole of the staff received notice. Being desirous of widening my experience, I did not seek a re-engagement, but went to an old-fashioned bookwork house in Aldersgate Street, Messrs. Joseph Masters & Son, where a friend of mine was employed. It was so old-fashioned that they had not yet availed themselves of the use of stereotype, but recomposed their books for every edition. The principal was a quaint old gentleman, who had a natural objection to see types lying upon the floor, as sometimes happens even at the present day, notwithstanding the advance of technical education. On one occasion, as he was

passing through the composing-room, he exclaimed, “Dear me! dear me! If compositors were cocks and hens, and types were barleycorns, the floor would indeed be cleaner”—a hint that had a salutary effect. Having in a few months acquired a knowledge of the method of working adopted in an exclusively bookwork office, where everything was done “on the piece,” I sought employment on a daily paper, *The Politician*, upon which work commenced at six o’clock in the morning, and terminated about eleven. It did not live long, but I was thus enabled to complete my technical education, having been engaged upon every kind of compositor’s work incidental to the trade.

Samuel Taylor had by this time removed from Drury Lane to Graystoke Place, Fetter Lane, extended his plant, and laid down machinery. He had also taken as a partner the former printing manager of Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, named Greening, and to Taylor & Greening’s I went in a managerial capacity.

One day two gentlemen came to the office and inquired if we could produce a morning paper. Here was an opportunity of showing my employers what I could do, and of making good use of my very limited experience in that direction. I at once replied that we should be prepared to undertake it, especially as they intimated that they did not expect it to attain a large circulation at first, although they believed it would gradually increase. Arrangements were subsequently made with the printers of *The*



*Weekly Dispatch* to machine the paper on their Middleton “four-feeders” if the circulation exceeded our means of production. An estimate of cost was accordingly submitted to Col. Arthur Burroughes Sleigh, which was declared to be satisfactory. My employers had wisely inserted as a condition that the sum of fifty pounds should be paid down as a deposit, which was to be forfeited if the paper were suddenly stopped, as in that case a fortnight’s wages in lieu of notice would have to be paid to the men employed. This condition, however, appeared to be a difficulty, for after some correspondence the matter dropped. We heard shortly afterwards that David Aird, a printer in Exeter Street, Strand, had undertaken the contract without a deposit, and thus I missed being present at the birth of *The Daily Telegraph and Courier*. Many years after (1867) I undertook to produce another morning paper, *The Day*. In this case a deposit of £500 was lodged in a bank under similar conditions, and its forfeiture just prevented the transaction from being a loss, for the paper stopped suddenly after an issue of forty-one numbers.



“THE FIELD.”

*The Field* newspaper was started by Messrs. Bradbury & Evans on the 1st of January, 1853, several of the literary and artistic contributors to *Punch* being engaged upon it. After vainly endeavouring to obtain a paying circulation, the proprietors disposed of it to Benjamin Webster, the lessee of the

Adelphi Theatre, who, I understood, purchased it in the hope that it might be made a property for the benefit of his son. With a view to reduce the cost of production, Webster removed the printing from Bradbury's, and placed it in the hands of a young and enterprising firm of printers, Messrs. Petter & Galpin, who occupied a portion of *The Times* premises in Playhouse Yard, Blackfriars, and whose steam power was derived from *The Times* engine, a shaft being passed through a hole in the wall. Here it remained till May, 1854, when Greening, who was acquainted with the proprietor and editorial staff, obtained the contract to print it, and its production was entrusted to me. At this time a gentleman named William Knight was the general editor, whose services were rewarded with a weekly honorarium of four pounds, which he generally drew in advance. Mr. Robert Soutar, the actor, and husband of Miss Nellie Farren, was the racing editor and general utility man, and Shirley Brooks, who became the editor of *Punch* on the death of Mark Lemon, wrote the leading articles, for which, I presume (from the terms of a letter in my possession written by him to Webster), he was paid ten guineas per month. There were, of course, several other contributors whose names I forget, but I well remember that each would supply more copy than his allotted share, and when the time came for “making up” the paper, there was always a quarrel arising out of the question as to what should be omitted, the printer having sometimes to settle the

point for himself, in order to put the paper to press in time for the morning mails. Webster used naturally to complain bitterly at having to pay for 'overmatter' which never appeared except in slip. After losing between eight and nine thousand pounds, and obtaining a circulation but little exceeding 4,000 copies, Webster sold the paper to Serjeant Cox for a small sum in December, 1854, glad enough to get rid of so expensive an encumbrance. It is needless to add that, under the energetic management of its new proprietor, it became, and is now, one of the most successful and most lucrative weekly papers in existence. Of the original contributors to *The Field* all have passed away except Mr. Harrison Weir—who showed me over his beautiful garden at Sevenoaks but the other day—and Mr. Robert Soutar.



• RALPH HARRISON.

Two very efficient members of our printing staff who had been employed on *The Field*, Joseph Ellis and Ralph Harrison, came to me one day and stated that *The Daily Telegraph* was about to start a printing-office of its own, and that they had been offered a tempting engagement—one as printer and the other as sub-editor—and I parted with them regretfully. Ellis's name as printer appeared in *The Telegraph* from that date till the time of his death, many years afterwards, and Harrison remained as chief sub-editor till he became editor of *The Birmingham Daily Gazette*, in which he acquired a proprietary

share. I heard from both of these gentlemen, who were charged with the business management of the paper in its early days, that they often had to borrow money to pay the men, and knew not, from week to week, how long it could hold out. In an article on "*The Newspaper Press*," which appeared in *The Quarterly Review* of October, 1880, the writer says that "but for the boldness and self-sacrifice of the then manager (Mr. Harrison), *The Daily Telegraph* could at one time hardly have surmounted its difficulties." In a speech which Mr. Harrison delivered at a Press dinner, he alluded to his experience as sub-editor, and thus described the nature of his duties: "My staff, for economical reasons, was a very small one, and we toiled late and early to make the paper as good as possible, the pecuniary circumstances considered. My duties were something like these: Get out of bed at ten in the morning, write a leading article, bring it down with me for the printer, and then go on with the sub-editing till the early hours of the next morning. A few hours' sleep, and then at it again." For fifteen years he held the position of sub-editor, at the end of which period he had the satisfaction of being able to boast of having "the largest circulation in the world."

Harrison had on his staff a colleague who, although thoroughly competent and an excellent fellow, was addicted to occasionally introducing into his articles ingenious references to business firms. He had been told off on one occasion to describe some such function as a Cattle or Horse

Show, and during the week a hat-box found its way into Harrison's room, addressed to the said reporter, with Messrs. the Manufacturers' Compliments. This aroused suspicion, but Harrison wondered how a "puff" of a hatter could possibly be introduced into such a most unlikely subject as that for which the clever writer was entered, and was so curious that he kept a special eye on the proof. When it reached him he was much amused on discovering the adroit manner in which an evidently imaginary incident had been introduced—a restive animal had nearly caused an alarming accident, "which fortunately resulted in nothing more serious than the total destruction of one of Messrs. So-and-So's hats." Harrison allowed the passage to stand, no doubt smiled pleasantly, but altered the name to that of the maker of the hat he himself wore, to the horror of the writer and the disappointment of the hatter who had made a complimentary presentation.

On leaving *The Daily Telegraph* to occupy the editorial chair of *The Birmingham Gazette*, Harrison was entertained by his brother journalists at a dinner at the Crystal Palace, and was the recipient of a costly testimonial. His editorial career in Birmingham was exceedingly successful, but it was prematurely and suddenly terminated by an almost fatal occurrence. One night—or rather morning—he left his office, after seeing his paper to press, and was proceeding as usual to his home in the suburbs, when he was waylaid by a band of ruffians, who garroted and robbed him, and left him lying in the

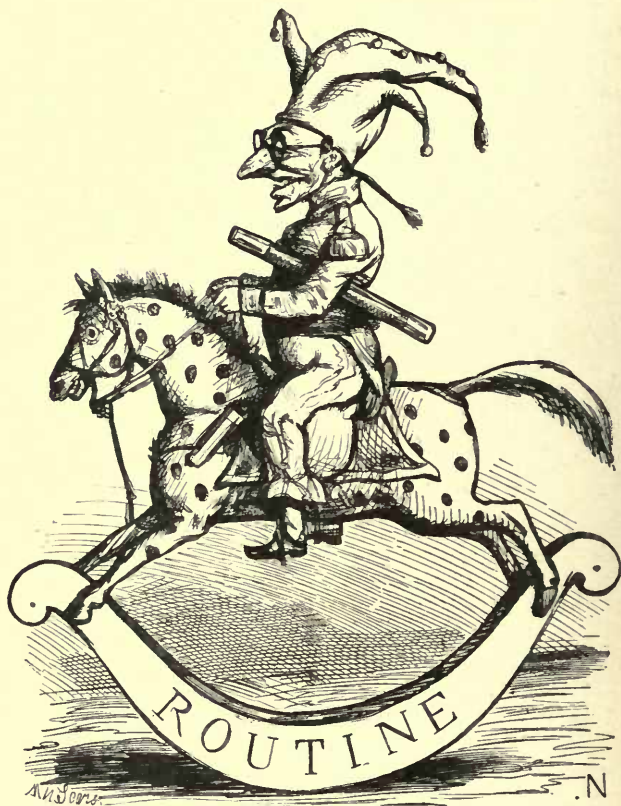


road insensible. So serious were the injuries he received that he was unable to resume his duties, and therefore was compelled to tender his resignation. For upwards of a year he was under medical treatment. After travelling in search of health for some time, he returned to London, and called upon me with reference to a proposed purchase of a London local paper. This resulted in his becoming the proprietor of *The Marylebone Mercury*, which he edited and managed till his death in 1894. Sir Edwin Arnold, in a letter of condolence addressed to his family, wrote: “He will always live in my friendly memory as a brave, capable, and indefatigable colleague.”



“**DIOGENES.**”

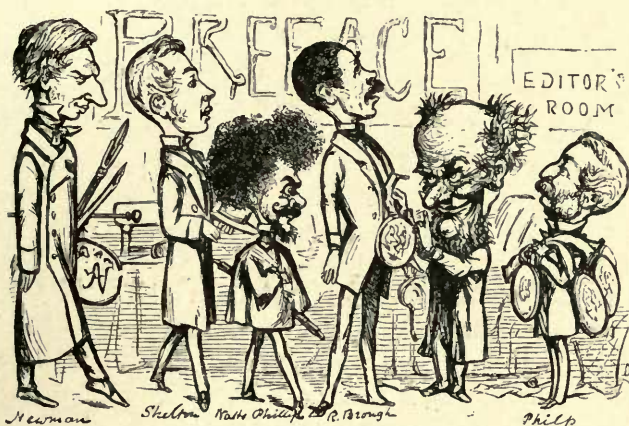
When the proprietor of a newspaper or publication discovers that he has made a mistake, and that he is offering something to the public which they will not buy, he has but little difficulty in deciding upon his course of action. When it happens, however, that a moderate measure of success is attained, which seems to require but perseverance to ensure prosperity, the case presents a totally different problem for solution, and its attempted solution may prove ruinous. The history of a comic weekly publication called *Diogenes* was an instance of this kind. It commenced its career with the year 1853, the nominal proprietor and editor being Robert Kemp Philp. The necessary capital was, however, provided by an unseen hand, and the editing was



CARTOON BY W. NEWMAN.

ultimately undertaken by Watts Phillips, who also furnished many of the designs for the "cartoons." The other artists engaged upon it were W. Newman and C. H. Bennett, while Robert Brough, E. Shelton,

and Watts Phillips supplied most of the "copy." I was responsible for the mechanical production of *Diogenes*, and was of course in constant communication with the gentlemen named, and had the further privilege of frequently contributing to its columns. With the exception of *The Puppet Show* (1848),



CHIEF CONTRIBUTORS TO "DIOGENES."

*Punch* had never had a more promising rival. The mismanagement of the Crimean War afforded excellent subjects for the cartoonist, who made the most of his opportunity, and these full-page designs will bear favourable comparison with those of any of the comic papers that have since appeared, always excepting the work of Sir John Tenniel. Watts Phillips contributed a series of trenchant essays, entitled, "Thoughts in Tatters, by the Ragged Philosopher," and Robert Brough wrote for it his "Songs of the

Peerage," both strongly imbued with extreme Radical sentiments. At the head of the "Preface" to the last volume of *Diogenes* appeared portraits of the chief contributors, which are reproduced on p. 81. The paper struggled on for nearly three years. Sometimes a particularly happy cartoon would send up the circulation within a short distance of the paying point, but it never "turned the corner."

One evening, when the paper had to be put to press, I informed Watts Phillips, who with Robert Brough was in the office, that we required a column of matter to complete the number. They told me that they were going to the "Edinburgh Castle" for a chop, and if I would send a boy there in an hour it would be forthcoming. The boy went, and returned with the message that they had both left. The paper was made up with a blank column, which could not be filled up "tit-bits" fashion, for the matter had to be original. After waiting anxiously for some time, in the hope that the editor or his MS. would turn up, I sent for a copy of *The Times*, hit upon a current topic, and proceeded to fill up the blank space with doggerel.\* As this enforced impromptu contribution may in some measure be responsible for the sudden demise of *Diogenes*, for it lived but another week, it may perhaps be quoted as an additional example of what to avoid.

\* This incident—the want of a column of matter at the time of putting to press a comic weekly paper, reference to a newspaper for a subject, the writing of a rhymed parody, with the repetition of a four-line refrain—was introduced by Robert Brough into his story of "Marston Lynch," which appeared some time afterwards in *The Train* (vol. ii. p. 9), but the author attributed it to the editor, *not the printer*.

“WHAT TO EAT, DRINK, AND AVOID.

*New Edition.*

AS SUNG BY DR. NORMANDY WITH ALARMING EFFECT.

“ Unless a man's meat and his beverage  
Is fit for consumption, it's void,  
So the best thing to learn in this clever age  
Is what to eat, drink, and avoid.  
Of chemistry I'm a professor,  
Well versed in oxides, *et cetera*,  
And though by some deemed an aggressor,  
My aim's but to make your food betterer,\*  
For I've analysed everything sold you  
And found all with poison alloyed,  
So listen awhile to have told you  
What to eat, drink, and avoid.

“ To begin, then, with bread 'unfermented,  
To call which 'digestive' 's a trick,  
'Tis the vilest of compounds invented,  
Indigestible quite as a brick.  
What with acid carbonic for yeast  
And ground bones and alum for flour,  
You must own it's not fit for a beast,  
Much less for a man to devour.  
For I've analysed everything sold you, &c.  
(*Four lines to fill out.*)

“ Mere carrots and chick'ry 's your Mocha,  
For coffee you can't set your eye on,  
And choc'late 's half brick-dust and ochre  
With fat and peroxide of iron.  
If slim, and you cocoa nibs take,  
In the hope of becoming robusty,  
Depend on't you've made a mistake,  
For they're never disposed of till musty.  
For I've analysed, &c. (*four lines*).

\* “ When the exigence of rhyme compels  
Orthography forgets her spells.”

W. S. GILBERT, *The Grand Duke* (1896).



“ Regarding your favourite drink,  
 Which you purchase as some one’s ‘entire,’  
 You’re entirely wrong if you think  
 They will serve you with what you require.  
 It is merely a mixture of brine,  
 With sulphate of iron and gentian  
 And quassia, and really, in fine  
 With things far too nasty to mention.  
 For I’ve analysed, &c. (*four lines*).

“ If inclined to indulge in a glass  
 Of hot brandy or cold gin without,  
 You’ll not do so unless you’re an ass,  
 Unacquainted with what you’re about ;  
 For gin is but paradise grains,  
 With alum and potass bicarbonate,  
 Besides other stuff it contains,  
 With a similar quantum of harm in it.  
 For I’ve analysed, &c. (*four lines*).

“ Let not viands nor fluids entice,  
 In case you a victim may fall,  
 But act on this piece of advice  
 And eat and drink nothing at all.  
 For there’s nothing that grows or is made  
 But some poison or other contains,  
 So if starving, to eat yet afraid,  
 Get a pistol and blow out your brains.  
 For I’ve analysed, &c. (*four lines*).

When Philp determined to abandon *Diogenes*, after a loss of about £5,000, Watts Phillips and Shelton proposed to carry it on, but Philp declined to accede to their request ; “ I wish,” he said, “ to guard against our influence falling into unworthy hands.” The pictorial tailpiece to the last number was a figure of “ Diogenes surrendering his pen to Punch.” Philp was the compiler and proprietor of

a book, the sale of which has far exceeded a million copies, "Enquire Within upon Everything." This passed through my hands when first brought out.



"THE COMIC TIMES."

The same day that saw the demise of *Diogenes* (August 1, 1855), gave birth to another comic paper, which was produced at the same office. Some serious misunderstanding had arisen between Messrs. Bradbury & Evans, the proprietors of *Punch*, and Mr. Herbert Ingram, the proprietor of the *Illustrated London News*. This resulted in the latter gentleman projecting a worthy rival to the all-powerful *Punch*, which was to be called *The Comic Times*. Edmund Yates, a young man about twenty-five years of age, engaged at the Post Office, was appointed editor, and he gathered round him all the suitable talent then available. His staff included William Brough (who had been a printer) as sub-editor, John Oxenford (then the dramatic critic of *The Times*), E. L. Blanchard, Robert Brough, G. A. Sala, Albert Smith, Edward Draper, Godfrey Turner, and Frank Scudamore, all able and better-known men than their chief. The illustrations were supplied by C. H. Bennett, W. McConnell, W. Newman, A. Henning, and also by R. Brough. As may be supposed, there seemed every prospect of the publication becoming a success, especially as there was unlimited capital at command to support it during its initial stage. Nearly all the professional wits of that day who had

been, or desired to be, engaged upon *Punch*, viewed with hopeful satisfaction the probability of a prosperous rival, which would afford them an opportunity of showing that the outsiders were equal to



the favoured ones of Whitefriars. In the first number appeared the commencement of a series of articles entitled, "The Hermit in the Box, being the Experience of a Stage Doorkeeper," from the pen of G. A. Sala. For the second number Bennett contributed a drawing illustrating the subject which I had treated in *Diogenes* the week previous, and Robert Brough introduced a personality, "Billy Barlow," which became a favourite weekly feature. I have always suspected that "The Barlow Papers" suggested the idea of "Ally Sloper." Mr. Barlow is supposed to call upon the editor, and having sent up his card (a pawnticket) obtains an interview. "He



DEATH IN THE POT.

said he did not see how we could get on without him, and had put himself a little out of the way to call and offer his services. Thanking him for the overwhelming consideration, we respectfully inquired in what particular essential point our existence might be said to be defective in the event of his withholding his valuable countenance. He replied, 'Most things.' He had not yet considered the exact form his co-operation would take, but that if we would let him have something on account he would think it over and let us know. Anxious to concili-

liate an individual occupying so exalted a position in the public favour, and being very busy, we considered it extremely cheap to get rid of him for fourpence. Mr. Barlow accepted that sum with great condescension, and, informing us that we should hear from him, he took his leave."



WILLIAM BARLOW'S FIRST CONTRIBUTION.

Ladies and gentlemen, how do you do ?  
 My appearance in print, you will say, is quite new ;  
 But the fact is, I should have been there long ago—  
 The world wants a few writers like Billy Barlow.  
 Oh, dear ! raggedy, oh !  
 There was Dickens, Carlyle—now there's Billy Barlow.

The Emperor Napoleon remarked t'other day,  
 " My Great Exhibition here somehow don't pay ;  
 How the deuce shall I manage to make it ' a go ' ?"  
 Says the Empress, " Send over for Billy Barlow."  
 Oh, dear ! raggedy, oh !  
 " Here ! the telegraph, quick ! for young Billy Barlow."



So I packed my portmanteau, and off I soon set ;  
At the station a lot of low touters I met ;  
And they cried out, " Dieppe and Newhaven " ; but no,  
Says I, " Dover and Calais for Billy Barlow."

Oh, dear ! raggedy, oh !  
Time is money to statesmen like Billy Barlow.

\* \* \* \* \*

We landed at Calais. " Your passport ?" says they.  
" 'Aint got one," says I. They'd have walked me away,  
But a swell in big epaulettes cries out, " Hulloo !  
*Laissez passer, milord, Mounseer Guillaume Barlow !*

Oh, dear ! a nice sort of go,  
There'd ha' been if they'd meddled with Billy Barlow.

\* \* \* \* \*

To a café I went, on the quiet, to dine ;  
But I'd scarcely sat down to my oysters and wine,  
When I heard in the hall footsteps come to and fro,  
And some voices were asking for Mounseer Barlow.

Oh, dear ! raggedy, oh !  
Deputations were waiting on William Barlow.

\* \* \* \* \*

Off to Paris I went by the half-past eight train ;  
As the crowd cheered me onward folks asked, "*C'est la Reine ?*  
*La belle Reine Victoria ?*" The answer was " No ;  
'Tis the first of her subjects, Lord William Barlow."

Oh, dear, some respect please to show—  
This is not Lord John Russell, but Billy Barlow.

At the breaking of day we to Paris drew near ;  
All the luggage was looked at by critics severe ;  
When I offered my own, said the Douanier, " No !  
You're the Emperor's visitor, Mister Barlow."

Oh, dear ! raggedy, oh !  
" Pass the bundle and tooth-brush of William Barlow."

So I walked into town to find somewhere to sleep,  
 But the lodgings they offered were nasty and cheap ;  
 I could meet with none over ten guineas or so  
 For the night, which would never suit Billy Barlow.

Oh, dear ! anything low  
 Is distasteful extremely to Billy Barlow.

I preferred a short walk in the *Champs Elysées*—  
 All prepared for a grand 'lumination display—  
 There I noticed the names, for the firework show,  
 Of Victoria and Albert, and Billy Barlow.

Oh, dear ! may the French never know,  
 What it is to want England—and Billy Barlow.

Soon I dropped off to sleep 'neath a popular tree,  
 But was roused by the words, "*On ne dort pas ici.*"  
 'Twas a rough man in blue, who, 'twould seem, didn't know  
 What was due to the person of Billy Barlow.

Oh, dear ! raggedy, oh !  
 They've just called the case on of Billy Barlow !

For the seventh number Gustave Doré supplied four illustrations to an article entitled "Reminiscences of our Visit to Paris." Although the sale of the paper was not so great as might reasonably have been expected, chiefly owing to its being neither advertised nor "pushed," the press welcomed it heartily, and its circulation increased weekly. Probably remembering what effect an almanack had upon the fortunes of *Punch* in its early days, Yates prepared a *Comic Times Almanack*, which compared favourably with anything of the kind its rival had at that time produced.

For this Robert Brough and C. H. Bennett had jointly designed an elaborate title-page, which was very attractive. The edition printed of the *Almanack* was at once sold, and we were much disappointed at being informed that it was not to be reprinted. The fact was, that although the editor and his staff were joyous and hopeful, there was at work a detrimental influence of which they were totally ignorant. Mark Lemon was not only editor of *Punch*, but acted as private secretary to Herbert Ingram. Realising that *The Comic Times* was proving far too strong a rival, he used his best endeavours to bring about a reconciliation between his two employers, and this he ultimately effected, to the disgust of Edmund Yates and the disappointment of his staff.

After a brief but brilliant career of sixteen numbers, Ingram abandoned the child which in pique he had brought into existence, and although Robert Brough and some others of the contributors endeavoured to lengthen its life, it went the way of so many other rivals to *Punch*.



#### AN AWKWARD FIX.

In the following year I found myself again engaged upon the works of John Cassell, who had become associated with Messrs. Petter & Galpin, then in Playhouse Yard, Blackfriars. "Cassell's History of England" had just commenced publi-

cation in weekly numbers. J. F. Smith, a very popular writer of fiction, had been contributing to *The London Journal* the "Lives of the Queens of England," and probably for that reason he was engaged to write the "History." This was by no means a happy arrangement. Smith was not sufficiently industrious to make any subject a study; his eagerness to describe dramatic situations was likely to carry him away from dry historical fact into the realms of fancy; and—a matter of more importance from a printer's point of view—his delivery of "copy" was uncertain. After a brief period, therefore, the work was placed in more competent hands, William Howitt having undertaken at a short notice to continue it. It happened to be a part of my duty to superintend the "setting up" of this work, the MS. for which was in the early stage delivered "at the latest moment." One evening, when the compositors were engaged upon the current number, an accident happened, the serious nature of which printers will readily appreciate. It was a sultry summer's night, the heat from the gas increasing the natural temperature, and the men had opened the windows to let in a little fresh air. When in full swing, a compositor came to me with a melancholy countenance and apologetic air, and informed me that a leaf of his "copy" had been blown out of a window. It used to be a jocular instruction, by the way, when an author desired his punctuation to be observed: "Follow your copy, even if it goes out of the window." Scouts were

immediately sent out to search the neighbourhood around *The Times* office, in the hope that the truant paper might have escaped the roofs and fluttered down into one of the adjacent courts, but they returned without finding it. The only remedy was obvious. I travelled to West Hill Lodge, Highgate, fortunately found Mr. Howitt at home, explained the nature of the accident, and handed to him the preceding and following pages of MS. He naturally felt annoyed, but sat down and filled up the gap. The subject of supernaturalism, upon which he wrote a book, was then occupying his thoughts, and somehow our conversation drifted into that channel. He told me of a circumstance that had recently occurred to himself. There was a child, the daughter of a friend, of whom he was exceedingly fond, and the attachment seemed to be mutual. One evening, while sitting alone at his table, he received from her a mental communication, informing him that she was very ill and desired to see him. "Now," said Howitt (as nearly as I can remember), "when I had last seen her, about a fortnight previously, she was in perfect health, and there was nothing to lead me to suppose that any change had taken place, nor was I at the time thinking of her. I had never before experienced anything of so decided a character, and I resolved at once to test its actuality. On reaching the house of my friend I was greeted as if expected, and the little feverish patient told me she knew I would come, as she had in thought sent me a message. How can you



account for that?" I told in return a ghostly story that related to a member of my own family, and we talked on till past midnight, when, carefully pocketing the "copy," I walked back more cheerful than when I set out.



**"THE MEDICAL TIMES."**

The narration of the foregoing accident reminds me of another, even more serious, which occurred during my apprenticeship. One of the journals upon which we were engaged was *The Medical Times*, which had been started some years previously in opposition to *The Lancet*, the property of Mr. Wakley, the coroner. One night, when the paper was being made up for press, the compositors were, as usual, dismissed one by one as they completed their work, until, some time after midnight, but four remained—the printer, his deputy, and two apprentices, myself being one. All the formes had been locked up ready for the machine except the last—that containing pages 1-16, full of small type advertisements, and 8-9, devoted to leader matter. This having been completed and likewise locked up, my fellow-apprentice, who was a rather erratic youth, and disposed to display his strength, instead of obtaining the assistance of a second person in order carefully to remove the forme from the imposing stone, lifted it on end upon his shoulder, overbalanced himself, and put his head through it, scattering the many thousands of types of which it was composed upon the floor. By this time the

compositors who had gone home were most probably asleep in their beds, and the remaining four could do but little towards repairing the damage, yet the paper was bound by contract to appear in time for the early morning's post. As many men as lived near were summoned to return, and the pages were reset by very tired and sleepy workmen, but the paper did not come out in time for that morning's mail.

This incident is not perhaps very remarkable, but the history of the journal to which it relates is interesting, as told by a gentleman who was well acquainted with the facts. He says: “It is now [1868] about thirty years ago that a young gentleman called upon me and expressed an earnest desire to become a qualified medical practitioner; he had read, and ‘got up the bones,’ but had not the means wherewith to pay the hospital fees. He thought of starting a medical journal, and another young friend—one Albert Smith—offered to assist him by writing for it, and receiving such remuneration as could be afforded. Others, without money, but with pens of the ready writer, came forward, and *The Medical Times* made its appearance on the 28th of September, 1839, under the editorship of its proprietor, Frederick Knight Hunt, who was soon able to pay his ‘great gun,’ Albert Smith, half-a-crown per column for his very amusing ‘Confessions of Jasper Buddle, the Dissecting-room Porter.’ The journal succeeded, and Hunt was able to pay all hospital fees, and in due course wrote the much-desired

M.R.C.S. after his name. He started in practice, but, disliking the drudgery of it, relinquished physic for printer's ink, became editor and proprietor of *Hunt's London Journal*, editor of *The Pictorial Times*, and died at the early age of forty-two chief editor of *The Daily News*.\* *The Medical Times* changed hands several times, and ultimately John Churchill became the publisher.



#### A PROPOSED REVOLUTION IN PRINTING.

Some years ago, when the Polytechnic Institution in Regent Street was an educational exhibition, a teacher of mnemonics named Stokes held classes there for the practice of artificial memory. Some time in the 'forties, when I was a student at the London Mechanics' Institution, there was a Polish refugee, named Major Beniowski, who taught a system for the improvement of the memory very like Stokes's. The Major was a remarkable man. He was tall, had a distinguished presence, and spoke the English language grammatically and fluently, but of course with a foreign accent. He was known to have been connected with conspiracies in his own country, and to have endeavoured to enlist the sympathies of English Chartists and other agitators in the cause of "Universal Liberty." He applied his system to the learning of languages, and conducted a very successful French class at the Institution. He was certainly

\* "Some Account of the Parish of St. Clement Danes," by John Diprose.

clever and ingenious, and an enthusiast in all he undertook. He declared that he would revolutionise the art of printing, and began by casting logotypes—a system which John Walter of *The Times* had abandoned many years previously.\* These logotypes he placed in elaborate pigeon-hole cases, which he termed “authoritons,” and stated that a girl could compose matter under his proposed conditions equal to from five to ten thousand single types per hour. Not content with that, he invented a rotary printing machine, which, however, never advanced beyond the model stage. To complete his entire reform, he proposed that the inking rollers should be inflated with air. He at least induced several persons to supply him with funds to carry on his experiments and perfect his inventions, and I think there exists a Parliamentary Blue Book referring to the subject. For years he lived at 8, Bow Street, Covent Garden, where he exposed for sale the works he had printed with his logotypes, but, like many others who have tried to revolutionise printing, he disappeared into obscurity without having added anything practical to the requirements of the trade.

\* John Walter obtained a patent for his logotype system in 1784. He then purchased “the king’s late printing-house, near Apothecaries’ Hall, Blackfriars,” which he opened as a general printing-office in June of the same year. On January 1, 1785, he started *The Daily Universal Register*, which he termed a “logotype newspaper,” and altered its title to *The Times* on January 1, 1788.

**BARNARD GREGORY.**

I remember to have been present at Covent Garden Theatre when the notorious Barnard Gregory was hissed off the stage. This was in 1843, when Alfred Bunn (*Punch's* "Poet Bunn") was the lessee. The man Gregory was the editor of *The Satirist*, a sixpenny weekly paper that reeked of scandal, and invariably contained persistent libellous attacks upon individuals who, it was conjectured, would pay handsomely for their discontinuance. An especial victim of his venomous attacks was the Duke of Brunswick, whom in one article he accused of being in some way connected with the murder of Eliza Grimwood. The Duke entered several actions for libel against him, and while some of these were pending he was announced to make his first appearance as *Hamlet* at Covent Garden. I had previously seen him play the character of *Othello* very successfully at a private theatre, and no doubt he might have earned an honest livelihood as an actor. On the occasion referred to, the Duke whom he had libelled occupied a side box, and as soon as Gregory made his appearance upon the stage a disturbance commenced which had evidently been prearranged, for the rioters were distributed in groups over all parts of the house, and the Duke was by gestures inciting them to action. It was a scene of wild confusion, the deafening sounds preventing the actors from being heard. The first act was played in dumb show, but when the drop-scene came down there was a lull. During the first scene of



the second act the house was quiet, but upon the entrance of *Hamlet*, in the second, the noise was renewed with increased vigour, and it was said at the time that nothing like it had occurred since the historical "O.P." riots.\* The peaceful portion of the audience then gradually withdrew, and ultimately, after something had been thrown upon the stage, the green curtain slowly descended to the cheering of the rioters, and the proceedings came to an end. Gregory at once brought an action against the Duke for conspiracy, in which Serjeant Shee and Serjeant Talfourd were engaged. The trial created considerable interest, but although there could be no doubt about the conspiracy, the jury brought in a kind of "serve him right" verdict, and the Duke was acquitted. I remember that some difference of opinion was expressed, especially among actors, as to the justice of the decision. If, they said, the Duke had been libelled, he had his remedy by legal process, and certainly had no right to disturb peaceable playgoers to gratify a personal grievance. While admitting that the rascal got no more than his desert, it may be conceded that there was some reason in the objection. This trial was immediately followed by the Duke's libel actions against Gregory, who was condemned to pay heavy damages and ultimately to undergo imprisonment. He however absconded, and a reward was offered

\* These riots occurred on the opening of Covent Garden Theatre in 1809, and were caused by the raising of the charges for admission, the audience clamouring for a return to the Old Prices.

for his apprehension. The reward bill thus described his personal appearance and antecedents :—

“About five feet two inches high, sallow complexion, about fifty-five years of age ; generally without whiskers ; has natural grey hair, and scanty ; wears wigs of various colours ; has a projecting forehead, giving a louring expression to the face ; eyes darkish colour, nose short and ill-shaped, face round ; has an habitual satirical sneer, is high-shouldered, and slightly knock-kneed ; dresses shabbily in black ; voice powerful, with a fawning style of speech ; if not disguised, is in mourning ; manner pompous and vulgar ; walk embarrassed and uncertain. Is the son of a Mrs. Gregory, who kept a greengrocer's shop in Goswell Street. Was formerly a schoolmaster and a local itinerant preacher. In the town of Brighton he kept a drug-shop ; was afterwards head clerk in Wigney's bank at Brighton ; then went into partnership there with an auctioneer and brewer as bankers, and was unfortunate in business.”

Add to this the occupations of editor, professional blackmailer, and actor, and his career will present a record that “will take a little beating.” He was ultimately arrested at Southend, put into prison, and was, I believe, heard of no more.

An equally notable and exciting event at which I was also present occurred in 1848. This was an organised demonstration against the occupation of Drury Lane stage by the company of the Théâtre Historique, who had come over from Paris to play a dramatised version of Alexandre Dumas' “Monte Christo.” A number of subordinate actors and their friends had determined, if possible, to prevent the performance from taking place, and, led on by an actor named Sam Cowell, who sat near me in the pit, they succeeded in making such a terrible

noise—hissing, hooting, whistling, and shouting—that the actors on the stage, after making several attempts to be heard, confessed themselves beaten, and abandoned their project. Albert Smith at the time wrote a pamphlet denouncing the conduct of the rioters, which was replied to by another written in the interest of the English actors, but in the meantime Drury Lane Theatre was “to be let.”



#### G. V. BROOKE.

Gustavus Vaughan Brooke, the tragedian, was in 1848 fulfilling an engagement at the Olympic Theatre, and was announced to appear on a certain date as *Othello*. A lad from the printing-office had been sent across the road to a tavern situated in a court near the stage-door, and he brought back the news that Brooke was there, sitting on a barrel, drunk. The lads thought that consequently there would be some fun imported into the tragedy, and went over into the theatre that night, ready for a lark. The anticipated *contretemps*, however, did not happen. Brooke, who had a fine voice, began his first speech somewhat huskily, but there was otherwise no indication of his condition; in fact, he acted his part so well, and delivered his lines with such effect, that the audience repeatedly applauded him. His gestures, the play of his features, his rendering of the text, combined, as the piece proceeded, to evoke increased enthusiasm, which culminated in “the house rising at him” in the last

scene. Just before his final speech, *Othello* realises that he has been deceived, and exclaims, "O fool, fool, fool!" I cannot attempt to describe the manner in which the actor, by repeating this one word, putting his hands upon his head and tottering towards the footlights, revealed to his listeners the agony which he was supposed to be enduring, but the effect upon the audience was electrical, and some moments elapsed before the applause abated. It is said that Edmund Kean once created a similar demonstration by delivering a brief sentence, but such an occurrence must be exceedingly rare. I was afterwards told that the actors who played with him that night never saw him go upon the stage in a worse condition, or remembered him to have played so brilliantly. I have in my time seen most of the actors who have played *Othello* in London, but Brooke's impersonation on that occasion rests on my memory as by far the best. The old style of acting the legitimate drama may be described as consisting of a series of well-studied postures, the delivery of the principal speeches as if they were isolated recitations given as specimens of elocution, and the making of certain points, at which the applause was expected to come in. Brooke's method differed entirely. He seldom, if ever, played the same character twice in the same manner, and therefore his performances were unequal, and the actors who supported him, not knowing what he would do, found it difficult to "play up to him." He knew his lines, sank his personal individuality

in the character he represented, and let himself go whither his simulated passion, grief, or other feeling carried him. His other most successful impersonation was undoubtedly *Sir Giles Overreach*. Like Edmund Kean, with whom he was often compared, he was a victim to drink, and this infirmity prevented his attaining the position to which his talent would otherwise have entitled him. His end was a tragedy in which he played a noble part. Leaving his wife, Avonia Jones, who was then playing at the Surrey Theatre, he took a passage for Melbourne, accompanied by his sister, in the ill-fated ship *London*, which sailed from Plymouth on Saturday, January 6, 1866. On the Monday following, when in the Bay of Biscay, the vessel encountered a terrific storm, and for several days all hands laboured at the pumps to keep her afloat, Brooke taking more than his share of the work, and endeavouring to raise the spirits of his fellow-passengers. In the meantime his sister had died from fear. Their efforts, however, proved unavailing, and on Thursday—five days after their departure from Plymouth—the passengers and crew took to the boats, leaving but the captain and Brooke on board. The final scene is thus described by W. J. Lawrence in his biography of the actor, published in Belfast in 1892:—

“Just as they were pushing off, Gardiner, the assistant-steward, observed him leaning with stern composure against the half-door of the companion way. There he stood calmly surveying the scene, with his chin resting on his hands as they grasped the top of the door, which swayed slowly to and fro under the pressure. ‘Will you come with us, Mr. Brooke?’ shouted Gardiner, pity welling up

in his heart for the man who had toiled so bravely. 'No! no!' replied Brooke. 'Good-bye. Should you survive, give my last farewell to the people of Melbourne.' . . . As they rowed slowly away, many of the passengers, anxious that some one should survive to tell the tale, waved their handkerchiefs and cheered as best they could. Straining their eyes back eagerly as the distance grew greater, the men saw that the ill-fated vessel was sinking rapidly by the stern. In fact, the stem rose so high out of the water three minutes after their departure that the keel was visible for a moment as far as the foremast. Then the cutter went down into the trough of the sea, and when she had climbed a hill of water, Olympus high, no trace of the *London* or of the remnants of her living freight was to be seen: nothing but an awful gulf of dark whirling water."



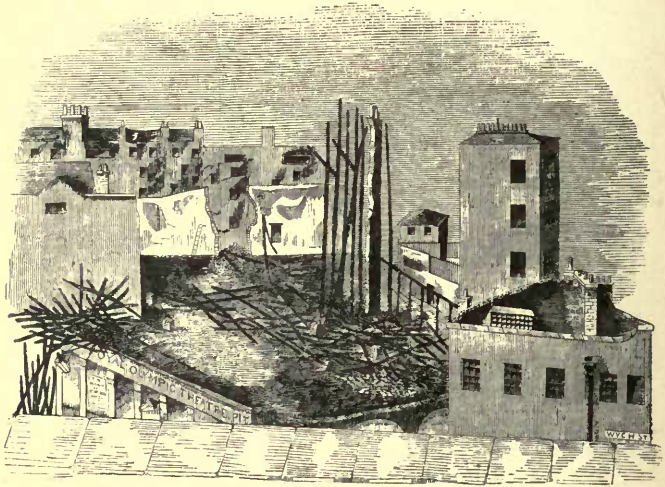
#### THE END OF THE OLD OLYMPIC.

I knew several persons connected with the old Olympic Theatre, especially a man named Charles Bender, who was an actor and, I think, stage-manager. It was then usual for certain theatrical officials to be allowed to take a "benefit" once a year—in fact, it was generally included in the terms of their engagement. Bender was about to avail himself of this privilege, and had arranged for the production, "for this night only," of three very popular plays, "The Rent Day," "Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady," and "Time Tries All." There was not much money expended upon advertising such events in those days, the *beneficiaire* depending for success chiefly upon the efforts of his friends to dispose of tickets. I had assisted him in this way, and in the middle of the day appointed (March 29, 1849) I went into the theatre to give him the result of my endeavours, and remained for some



time behind the scenes during the rehearsal of one of the plays. A heavy green velvet curtain, which parted in the centre, was drawn up at the sides of the proscenium. About five o'clock, when we were enjoying our usual cup of tea in the printing-office, a lad rushed in and shouted "The Olympic's a-fire!" We all scampered out into Drury Lane and joined the gathering crowd of people, which soon numbered some thousands, and witnessed the speedy and total destruction of the theatre. The building being constructed chiefly of wood, which the heat of the gas had rendered highly combustible, the whole was soon a huge mass of flame, threatening the surrounding property with a similar fate. There were no less than twenty engines playing upon the fire before it was got under, and the operations of the firemen were directed by James Braidwood, the then superintendent of the London Fire Brigade, who lost his life in 1861 at the great fire in Tooley Street. The fire was caused by one side of the velvet curtain becoming detached and falling against the prompter's gaslight. Poor Bender, who was at the time in a private room attending to financial matters, had a very narrow escape of his life, as he afterwards told me. It seems strange in these days to describe a London theatre as being constructed of wood, and perhaps the Olympic was unique in that respect. Its history, however, accounts for this. It was built in the reign of George III. by old Philip Astley, who had rendered some service to the State during the war with France, and was personally

known to the king. A circus in Lambeth which he owned was destroyed by fire, and he thereupon applied to the king to give him an old French man-of-war, named *La Ville de Paris*, with which to construct another. This he succeeded in obtaining, and



THE RUINS OF THE OLYMPIC, FROM A CONTEMPORARY ENGRAVING.

out of the timbers of the disused ship he built the Olympic. The masts of the old French vessel formed part of the flies, and these well-seasoned poles resisted the fire sufficiently to remain standing when all else had been consumed, as shown in the accompanying contemporary sketch. The tall building on the right is the tavern before referred to, where Brooke was discovered sitting on a barrel.

I also witnessed the destruction by fire of the Surrey Theatre, and wrote a descriptive report for *The South London Press*, which was just started under the editorship of Charles Gibbon, the novelist, whom I knew intimately.



#### HOW A STORY MAY BE SPOILED.

While on matters theatrical, I will relate an anecdote at second-hand. The circumstance was brought to my mind by reading, a year or two ago, in one of the weekly journals, the following paragraph :—

“AN ACTOR IN PAWN.—A one-time well-known actor was always head over heels in debt, despite an enormous salary, and was always busy devising schemes by which he could raise money. One evening, an hour before the curtain was to rise upon a new play, a pawnbroker entered the private office of the manager of the theatre. ‘Here is a pawnticket for you, sir.’ ‘For me?’ exclaimed the astonished manager. ‘Yes, sir. It is for £150, and I hold your leading man for security. He cannot leave my place until I have been paid.’ And the pawnbroker was telling the truth. The manager had to pay this amount before he could get his star. Subsequently the actor and the pawnbroker divided the spoils.”

Now, I had never before seen this in print, and am quite ignorant as to its source. More than fifty years ago, however, I heard my father tell a similar story, which is probably the true version. My parents lived in a house in Russell Street, exactly opposite the stage-door of Drury Lane Theatre, where, in fact, I first saw the light. Next door, on the east side, was the shop of a pawnbroker, named Townsend. On the west side, some half-dozen houses beyond,

was (and is) "The Harp" tavern, a favourite haunt of Edmund Kean. About 1829 Kean was playing *Henry V.* at Drury Lane Theatre. One night the actor, in entering the stage-door, struck his foot against something and stumbled. The manager, who happened to be in the doorkeeper's box, noticed this, and gave strict orders that no one was to be allowed to go out for drink, no doubt concluding that Kean, whose habits were notorious, had already imbibed more than he could safely carry. After a short time a boy came downstairs and was about to make his exit, when he was arrested by the doorkeeper. "Where are you going?" he inquired. "I'm going out for Mr. Kean," replied the boy, no doubt thinking that the magic name of the eminent actor would be a sufficient passport. "You must not go out for Mr. Kean, nor for anybody else—those are my orders." "But Mr. Kean wants his brandy, as usual," persisted the lad. "You must go back, my boy," replied the janitor. And back he went and told his story. "What!" exclaimed Kean, "did you tell him it was for me, *me*, ME?" tapping his breast and raising his voice. On receiving a reply, the enraged actor, who was already partially dressed for his part, took down from a peg the ample cloak he usually wore, threw it over his stage costume, and bolted out through the door, to the astonishment of the man in the box. Crossing the road, he entered Townsend's shop and inquired for the proprietor, whom he well knew as a frequenter of the actors' room at "The Harp." "Townsend,"

said he, "lend me a guinea on my clothes." "With pleasure, Mr. Kean, if you will take them off." Being informed of the circumstances, and the intended trick, it was arranged that Kean should sit in the parlour, with the usual pawnbroker's ticket pinned to his breast, that the duplicate should be sent across to the manager with his compliments, and that a bottle of brandy should be forthwith procured from "The Harp." The bottle had scarcely been opened when the manager rushed in and exclaimed, "Good heavens! Mr. Kean, what is the meaning of this? The overture has commenced and we shall have to ring up in five minutes." Kean replied that it was no fault of his if the stage were kept waiting. It was absolutely necessary that he should have the brandy before going on, and if he, the manager, would drink with him, he would return at once, which he did, and thus the incident ended. The delay, however, necessitated a repetition of the overture. I may add that my father knew Edmund Kean personally, owing to his occasionally strolling into the book-seller's shop in the Strand. He died in May, 1833, at the early age of forty-six, a victim of intemperate habits.



#### THE WORKING MAN'S GARDENER.

In the 'fifties I was introduced to a man who was chiefly instrumental in making the Botanical Gardens at Kew available for the general public, and who successfully laboured for many years to encourage a

taste for horticulture among the working classes of large towns—George Glenny. I used occasionally to visit him at Dungannon House, Fulham, to which a large garden was attached, and very much enjoyed his gossip, for he had had considerable journalistic experience. On one occasion I induced him to lend me certain papers and other materials, from which I wrote a sketch of his chequered career. This arose from his telling me that he had always been a working man, and that he had, in fact, been apprenticed to a mechanical trade before taking to gardening and journalism. His bent was discovered in this wise: he was taken by his father to see the tulips at a nursery in Walworth, a neighbourhood then considered out of town, where they were grown with remarkable success. At this time tulip-growing was a mania. He became so enamoured of the beauty of the flowers that he determined to try his hand at growing them himself. Although indulged by his parents and encouraged by friends, tulips were rather above his means, for in those days they commanded very high prices. I remember, when very young, to have visited an uncle of mine, who was an amateur tulip-grower, and he pointed out a by no means large bed that had cost him over a hundred pounds; I also remember that he kept composition matches, like long pencils, slowly burning in the garden, for the purpose of lighting the cigars of visitors who came to admire his tulips. Young Glenny, notwithstanding his very limited means, was determined to obtain possession of the



coveted bulbs, and entered into an arrangement with a nurseryman living in the City Road to purchase a whole bed of tulips for £20, unknown to his parents, the payment for which was to be made in instalments of 5s. per week out of his pocket-money. After having made some half-dozen payments, the youthful customer was astonished one day to find his purchase brought home without notice, and a demand made for the balance. This of course caused a dispute, which began in an undertone, on account of the secrecy of the transaction, but ended in an open quarrel, the noise of which soon brought his father to the door, and the facts had to be explained. A friend was called in to appraise the value of the tulips, when it was discovered that they were not worth a quarter of the price charged, so the matter ended by the dealer having to take back his bulbs and returning the money. His father then purchased for him a more valuable collection, and from that time he became an enthusiastic florist. In the course of a few years he won no less than three hundred prizes at flower shows, and on a subsequent occasion he told me that he invited fifty-seven guests to partake of his hospitality, and placed before each a silver prize cup which had been awarded to him for the exhibition of his flowers.

Being thus successful as a gardener, he was invited to contribute articles upon horticultural subjects to papers and magazines, and this brought him into communication with the journalists of the day. He

did not, however, confine his pen to the subjects in which he was a technical expert, for he became editor of *The British Luminary*, and subsequently of *The Royal Lady's Magazine*, which numbered amongst its contributors the Ettrick Shepherd, Miss Pardoe, Miss Porter, Miss Mitford, and the



GEORGE GLENNY.

Misses Strickland. About the year 1837 he was proprietor of *The Gardeners' Gazette*, and in a series of articles he drew public attention to the deplorable condition and the mismanagement of Kew Gardens, which caused him to be summoned before a Treasury committee. A commission was thereupon appointed, including Dr. Lindley and, at the sugges-

tion of Glenny, Mr. (afterwards Sir Joseph) Paxton, who investigated the matter and confirmed the statements made in the *Gazette*. Dr. Lindley described the then existing state of things as follows: "You rang a bell at the side of a wooden gate, which of itself was perfectly emblematic of the secrecy, the unnatural privacy, of the working principle within. You were let in as if by stealth, as if the gatekeeper were ashamed to see you come, or as if you yourself were ashamed to be seen there; and when you were there you were dodged by an official, as if you were likely to carry off the St. Helena willow-tree in your button-hole, or one of the smaller hothouses in your waistcoat pocket. You entered unwelcome, you rambled about suspected, and you were let out with manifest gladness at your departure." A reform in the management at once commenced, and we who can now enjoy a visit to the beautiful gardens at Kew are reaping the benefit of a change that was initiated by the pen of George Glenny.

Had he "stuck to his last," Glenny might have acquired a fortune, but unfortunately he was seized with the quixotic idea of converting certain advanced Radical and infidel papers into what he deemed might be made, under his editorship, organs of "respectable" and orthodox opinion. With this end in view he purchased of Henry Hetherington the copyrights of *The London Dispatch*, *The Loudon Mercury*, and other papers, changed their political opinions and anti-clerical tendencies, reduced their

already limited circulation, and ultimately lost above £2,000. In this speculative adventure he told me that he had been promised financial support by several noblemen, but that they failed to assist him as he expected, and he therefore had to pay the cost of his injudicious experiment.

Besides his literary work, Glenny associated himself with many public movements. On the death of the Duke of York, whom he knew as a patron, he called a meeting of noblemen and gentlemen which was held at his house, under the presidency of Earl Cathcart, and proposed the erection of a monument to his memory, which was ultimately carried out under the presidency of the Duke of Wellington.

"Thou pillar, longitudinally great,  
And also perpendicularly straight ;  
Thou art, I fear, but flattery's handiwork,  
Being a tribute unto Royal York."

To a similar effort Greenwich Hospital owes the monument to Charles Dibdin. The chief work, however, by which George Glenny ought to be remembered is his attack upon the mismanagement of Kew Gardens, which resulted in its reform ; his establishing a recognised standard by which to judge of the properties of cultivated flowers ; and his popular articles on gardening which appeared for many years in *Lloyd's Newspaper*, *Cassell's Family Paper*, and other publications. When I last saw him he gave me his photograph taken on his 72nd birthday, of which the accompanying portrait is an engraved copy.

**AN EXAMPLE OF PERSEVERANCE.**

About Christmas-time the post generally brings to me a seasonable and genial greeting from the Antipodes, signed by an old friend, named John Plummer, whose early career was certainly remarkable, and may be quoted as a striking instance of what may be accomplished by indomitable perseverance, even under the most unfavourable conditions. His parents were staymakers, in a very humble station, and occupied but two rooms in a house in Rosemary Lane, one of the poorest East-end localities of London. He received but little education, and while still a child was attacked with fever, which resulted in his becoming lame and deaf. His infirmities not only prevented his taking part in the usual amusements of childhood, but rendered him an object of ridicule among his schoolfellows. This preyed upon his mind, and drove him to seek amusement and consolation in reading, when he was not employed in assisting his parents in their work. Though still very young he applied himself to study, and devoted every spare moment to the acquirement of some kind of knowledge. When he became sufficiently strong he used to carry his parents' work to the warehouse, and on returning would linger at the bookstalls, and sometimes be tempted to spend a few coppers, which could ill be spared, in the purchase of an old book or current publication, although at that time unable to read with facility. His family and friends were by no means disposed to encourage him in thus spending his pocket-

money and "wasting his time." The benefit of education was then, in the 'forties, not realised by the labouring classes, a large proportion of whom



JOHN PLUMMER.

could do little more than read very imperfectly and sign their name. Having, in the course of his reading, seen some article which related how that



certain painters of humble means had raised themselves from poverty and obscurity to wealth and fame, young Plummer resolved to devote himself to art, and attended a School of Design in Spitalfields, where he made great progress and obtained several prizes. His studies in this direction were, however, brought to an abrupt termination. His father's employer became bankrupt and the family were compelled to remove to Kettering, where they had been promised work in a stay-factory. Here he had an offer of gratuitous tuition at the local School of Design ; but he had grown older, and was required to earn his living, and to do this he had to work long hours, which rendered him unfit for study.

John Plummer had now reached the age of twenty-two, and still worked at his trade, but he occupied such leisure as his circumstances afforded in writing letters and poems to the local papers, some of which, to his great gratification, found their way into print. In 1858 there occurred a strike among the shoemakers of Northampton. Certain employers had introduced machinery which the workmen considered was prejudicial to their interests. A kind of trades union was thereupon formed, and rules were formulated by which the conditions of work were to be governed. It happened at the time that Plummer had a younger brother, Japhet, aged nineteen, who desired to abandon staymaking and take to shoemaking, an occupation for which he had a liking. He therefore applied to a master shoemaker, who undertook for a consideration to teach

him the trade. In the meantime, however, the trades union had passed a bye-law by which no one was allowed to be taught the trade after the age of seventeen. The effect of this was that those who were willing to teach him were threatened with a strike if they persisted, and although he succeeded in acquiring sufficient knowledge and practice to enable him to obtain employment, he was so persecuted that he was eventually driven to enlist as a soldier. This tyranny so irritated his brother John that he wrote and published a pamphlet, "Freedom of Labour," in which he vindicated his brother's right to employment, but the author was burnt in effigy and threatened with personal violence. This pamphlet, however, which was dedicated to Lord Brougham, brought John Plummer into notice. He had been writing for papers and magazines for some time, although employed from half-past six in the morning till seven at night, and received but little remuneration. At this time (1858) Lord Brougham delivered an address in Liverpool on Popular Literature, in which he said: "There lies before me a short treatise by a working man, written with a view of removing the prevalent but dangerous delusions on the subject of capital and wages, by explaining the true principles of economic science on this head. No student of that philosophy at the English—nay, at any of the Scotch universities, where it is more cultivated—could have produced a better-reasoned tract, or one showing more entire acquaintance with its principles."

John Plummer happened next day to be in a news vendor's shop, and accidentally took up *The Times*, when the above passage caught his attention. "I was so astonished," he said, "that I could hardly believe my senses. Had I, the deaf, lame, neglected boy, the humble factory toiler, won the approbation of one of our greatest men?" Such, however, was the case, and shortly afterwards he succeeded in obtaining literary work that enabled him to leave the factory and devote himself to more congenial employment. On one occasion he won a prize offered for the best essay on Sanitary Reform; on another he contributed a paper "On Strikes," which was read before the Social Science Association, and declared to be the best that had dealt with the subject. He soon made up his mind to try his fortune again in the Metropolis, but under very different conditions to those under which he had left it. He therefore came to London, and when I became acquainted with him he was editor of *Cassell's Family Paper*. He had previously written a volume of poems entitled "Songs of Labour," and this induced me to ask him to write an "Ode to Labour," which was set to music by Dr. Spark, and sung upon an occasion hereafter referred to. He ultimately went to Sydney to edit some newspaper, and, to judge from a view of his house which he sent me, is no doubt now occupying a good position in the colony.

**AN OLD BOHEMIAN.**

Not long since there died, at a ripe old age, a gentleman who, had he felt disposed to write his recollections of Bohemian life in London, could have carried them back to a very early date. This was Mr. Jonas Levy, J.P., the vice-chairman of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway.



JONAS LEVY.

I had known him for more than five-and-twenty years, and had many a time listened to the stories he told of the Reunion, the Savage, the Urban, the Whitefriars, and other clubs to which he belonged, where his presence was ever welcome. He had ample means, and, being a barrister,

occupied chambers in Gray's Inn (where he had an extensive and valuable library), besides a house in Tavistock Square and a little castle at Kingsgate in the Isle of Thanet. His father was a well-known toll-gate contractor, who amassed a fortune by controlling the revenues of turnpike-roads, farming market tolls, coal dues, &c. When the railways drove the coaches from the roads, and the turnpikes became unprofitable, he invested his capital wisely in railway stock, which he left to his son, who told me that he had never parted with a single share that had been thus bequeathed to him. This fact, combined with his legal knowledge and business habits, led Lord Westbury to propose his joining the directorate of the London and Brighton Railway, of which he became deputy-chairman in 1869, an office he retained until his decease. He also took a great interest in the management of the Crystal Palace, of which likewise he was a director.

There was scarcely an individual of any standing who trod the London stage a quarter of a century



ago, or who was engaged in journalism at that period, who did not know Jonas Levy. His social position and independent means in no way affected his conduct towards those whom he met

as club chums, for he was thoroughly Bohemian when away from his official duties, and never felt more at home than when he was smoking his short

clay pipe and drinking his weak brandy and water, surrounded by agreeable companions.\* It may be added that the fact of his being a bachelor enabled him to indulge his gregarious inclinations without reproach.

On one of these occasions he told a story of a reporter on *The Morning Advertiser*, whom he knew, one of whose duties was to attend City banquets, charity dinners, and similar functions. He was an old toper, but, being well seasoned, he generally managed to get through his work satisfactorily. On one occasion he was commissioned to report the proceedings of the annual dinner of a Butchers' Benevolent Institution, at which the *menu* was always enticing and the wines were abundant. He enjoyed his dinner, declaring that it was equal to a Company's banquet, and washed it down with appropriate vintages, and it was said that he secreted a bottle of champagne under the table for his private use. By the time the speeches had somewhat advanced, he had conceived the idea that the orators required encouraging, and made a point of shouting "Hear, hear" whenever a benevolent butcher hesitated or came to a dead stop. The chairman at first solicited the favour of silence for the speaker in general terms, and then pointedly directed his admonitions to the reporter, who had uttered the words "Get on!" "Rubbish!" "Spit

\* The little sketch on page 121, which is an excellent likeness, was taken by Mr. Alfred Bryan at the annual dinner of the Royal General Theatrical Fund (1889) and appeared at the time in *Moonshine*.



it out!" &c., and was evidently not in his right mind. After a while he interrupted a speaker by exclaiming, "Give us a bit of Shakespeare!" which caused one of the stewards to suggest that, as he was *only a reporter*, he should be turned out. The meeting by their applause evidently approved of this course, and it would have been immediately carried into effect had he not risen, put his hand in his vest, assuming a theatrical attitude, and said, in a deep voice, "Only a reporter!—

"Oh pardon me . . .

That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!" \*

and then, with a wave of the hand, made an ignominious exit.

Stories of this kind, passing from one to another, and being retold, become considerably altered, and sometimes improved, but not always—as in the case of the Kean incident before related. I happened to be spending a few days with Jonas Levy at Kingsgate, and mentioned that in "The Life and Reminiscences of E. L. Blanchard," then recently published, there was a version of a story differing from the one I had heard him tell more than once. "I don't care about that," said the old man; "mine is the correct one, for I was in the parlour the same night, and heard all about it." And he repeated it, as nearly as I can remember, as follows: In the early days of *The Daily Telegraph* several convivial companions used to meet at the "Bedford Head," a public-house in Maiden Lane,

\* "Julius Cæsar," iii. 1.

Covent Garden. Here they told their troubles, smoked their pipes, and drank their modest half-and-half out of pewter pots. One day E. L. Blanchard told them that he had forwarded an article to the *Telegraph* which he thought would just suit, and promised, if it were accepted, that he would stand "drinks round." The pot-boy was sent for a copy of the paper, but it was found not to contain the article. "Just my luck," said Blanchard. "I had hoped that it might lead to something. I'll go and get it back." "Don't do that," remarked William Romer; "give them another day"—which suggestion was adopted. Next day the paper was again procured, and, to the delight of Blanchard, the article not only appeared, but was put into leader type. They then discussed what might be considered a fair remuneration for the author, and decided amongst themselves that it should bring a couple of guineas. Blanchard thereupon went to the office in the Strand, near Temple Bar (now the site of the new Law Courts), but was told to come the next day. They assembled as usual on the following afternoon, and it was chaffingly suggested that, as Blanchard had promised drinks round, Romer should accompany him, so that the funds should not be misapplied; and away they went accordingly. On Blanchard making his application to be paid, a paper was handed to him which, on being opened, was found to contain but a half-sovereign. This he declined to accept. "What!" said he, "a leader like that for ten bob!

It's a downright insult. Let me see the editor." "Can't see him, sir, except by appointment," replied the clerk. Much against Romer's inclination, they left the office, and while ascending a few steps that led to a court at the back of the building, he asked Blanchard if he would mind waiting a few minutes. He then went speedily back to the office, said that his friend had decided to accept the money, and brought it back. Blanchard was ill-pleased at this, but Romer had calculated how many pots of half-and-half ten shillings represented, and feared there was little chance of obtaining any more. In the endeavour to force Blanchard to accept the money, the half-sovereign fell upon the ground, and rolled down the area-grating of one of the houses in the court. They peered down through the iron bars, but failed to discover it, the coin having disappeared among the rubbish that lay below. They next knocked at the door and asked to be permitted to descend and look for it, but they were met with uncomplimentary remarks and gibes from the loose women who occupied the house, and presently the inhabitants came out of the adjacent houses and joined in the chaff, while several pretended to search for the missing coin. It was ultimately declared to be a "plant," and the two friends were glad enough to escape without achieving their object. When they returned to the tavern they were at first received with cheers, but, after relating their adventures, the cheerful greeting was voted premature, and they experienced some diffi-

culty in making their companions believe their story. "Now, that's true," concluded Jonas Levy, "for I was there the same evening, and, what is more, stood the drinks round."

It is almost impossible for any one who knew Jonas Levy intimately, to speak of him without referring to his readiness to assist any charitable object. Sala, in a kindly notice of his death, called him "the most generous and the most charitable of mankind, but one who never let his left hand know what his right hand did in the way of writing cheques for the necessitous." In confirmation of this I may refer to a conversation I had with the late Henry Lee, the naturalist. Levy at the time was in a weakly condition, and I made the remark that many would miss him when he was called away. "Yes," said Lee, "I always knew he was generous, but I did not know till the other day the extent of his generosity. I met him in the Strand, and he told me he thought he could not last much longer, and that he would like me to go with him to his chambers in Verulam Buildings. When we got there he lit his pipe, and, opening a drawer, said that it contained a lot of papers, some of which he would not like to leave behind him, and he therefore intended to look through them and destroy those which I could help him to select. These proved to be promissory notes, I.O.U.'s, and receipts for loans, many of them bearing names not unfamiliar to the *habitués* of Clubland. Without an unkind remark,

he tore up and threw into the fire documents that represented an amount which must have exceeded a thousand pounds. He said he thought it as well to do it in the presence of a witness upon whose secrecy he could rely, and of course I now mention this in confidence." I spent some days with him at Kingsgate a few weeks before his death, and the ladies who were attending upon him told me that he was constantly forwarding cheques to people who were not tradesmen, from whom he required no acknowledgment. When I parted from him he put a packet into my hand, saying, "I may never see you again; take this; it used to be my favourite." The packet contained a silver-mounted meerschaum pipe, with a slip of paper, on which was written, under my name, "From his old friend Jonas Levy."

I have used the word "Bohemianism" in connection with several of the men herein referred to. Forty or fifty years ago the term had a definite meaning. Its votaries were clever, irregular, impecunious, and often intemperate, but they were generous and fraternal. They met in public-houses, because they could not afford better accommodation, and their lack of means evoked a feeling of mutual sympathy that created a bond of good-fellowship. They not only condoled with each other over their failures, but forgave each other their little successes. There was no interviewing—no process-block portraiture—no log-rolling. The

Charles Dickens

W. C. Copley

Jun 1844

Wm. A. Beecher  
Albany N.Y.

Shiley Brock  
Ralph Morrison

John D. Smith

Levy

John Plummer  
L. Langford

Harison Wein  
Charles Gibson

AUTOGRAPHS OF A FEW PERSONS HEREIN REFERRED TO,  
from letters, etc., in possession of the writer.



“Literary Gossip” of the day mentioned only the very few who had achieved fame. In fact, they had to fight their way unaided, and many of them died before their talents were recognised. All this is now, in some respects happily, changed. Lights, however dim, are no longer hid under a bushel. There is a fair market for literary and journalistic work, and therefore the old Bohemianism has passed away, only leaving its fraternal spirit as an inheritance to a few old clubs that still exist in the neighbourhood of the “highway of letters.”



#### DOG STORIES.

But not of the usual kind. For many years I have been accustomed to take half an hour's walking exercise before breakfast, accompanied by a dog—in fact the daily excursion is taken for the dog's especial benefit. He calls for me regularly at the appointed time, takes me out, and brings me back, and should I feel indisposed to fulfil what he evidently deems my duty towards him, he expostulates in unmistakable canine language. Some few years since I used to pass the corner of a road at which stood an old woman who sold matches. She was always neatly, though poorly, clad, and her acknowledgment of the penny I occasionally gave her—“I thank you very much,” or “Sir, you are very kind”—indicated rather the tone of a lady in very reduced circumstances than that of an ordinary street hawker. One morning the dog greeted her

more effusively than usual, and scattered her matches into the muddy road. She smiled and apologised for the offender, whilst I gathered up her stock-in-trade, which I could not do otherwise than purchase as a solatium. Every day after that occurrence the dog used to stop and receive a smile and a pat on the head from the old lady. Being a collie, he was a good judge of character, and evidently shared my conviction that she was not an ordinary mendicant. One morning, however, she was missing from her accustomed station. The next day she was also absent, and I inquired after her of a crossing-sweeper who stood nearly opposite. This man was as much a character as the old woman herself. He stood near a school, and whenever the boys were puzzled about a sum in algebra or a Latin termination, he would help them over their difficulty; but drink had condemned him to sweep a crossing, and although several efforts had been made to improve his position, he was found to be irreclaimable. "She is dead, poor body," was his reply to my inquiry. Upon subsequently making further investigation, I discovered that, owing to the suddenness of her decease, a coroner's inquest had been held, at which evidence was given by a witness who had known her for thirty-eight years that she was the daughter of Theodore Hook. She had for many years maintained herself by teaching in private schools about the neighbourhood of Brixton, but age and infirmity had deprived her of the means of support, and she was at last driven

to expose her poverty at the street corner. She was the eldest of the five children whose mother was betrayed and deserted by the clever, unscrupulous, dissipated man who started the *John Bull* newspaper in the Tory interest to vilify Queen Caroline.

On other occasions, while perambulating a different neighbourhood with my dog, I had frequently noticed an aged woman, who, like the rag-pickers of Paris, carried a pointed stick, with which she conveyed any selected refuse from the gutters into a bag she held in her hand. Although her occupation was necessarily uncleanly and degrading, she was always in herself clean and tidy. A black straw bonnet confined her neatly-brushed grey hair; her body was wrapped in a bright-coloured handkerchief; and she wore a short dark skirt and a pair of good boots. I had often watched her from a distance and wondered how she could manage to pick up a decent living in such a way, for she never begged nor even looked up at a passer-by. On one occasion I put a penny into her hand, at which she seemed surprised, but thanked me in a most pronounced Irish brogue. I again saw her shortly afterwards in the middle of the road engaged in her usual pursuit. Having nothing less, I placed a shilling on a lamp-post, beckoned her to the spot, and walked on. Turning round to assure myself that she had found it, I saw her running after me. "God bless you, sir," she said; "but sure you've made a mistake. I can't take this—it's too much."

She, however, accepted it, though somewhat reluctantly, and when I again turned to look after her she was kneeling in a devout attitude before the lamp-post, probably thanking some saint for having induced me to purchase so much pleasure for so little money. It was perhaps just as well she did not know I gave her the smallest coin I had. I could not help feeling an interest in the poor old woman, who doubtless had a blameless life-story to tell that might be worth hearing, and I intended to interview her on a subsequent occasion. Had I done so there would probably have been more point in this anecdote, but I saw her never again.

"Do you want a dog?" This inquiry was addressed to me some years ago by a friend who will doubtless read these lines. "What kind of a dog?" I replied, availing myself of the privilege of a man with Scottish blood in his veins, who may be expected to reply to one question by asking another. "A pure-bred fox terrier that was once in the possession of Mrs. B——, a lady who, you will remember, underwent a criminal trial that created some sensation." Although I had always admired the fox terrier, I had never owned one, and I thankfully accepted the gift. On taking him home I was pleased to find that instead of snapping at my collie, which the fox terrier generally does, he assumed a very friendly attitude towards him, and they went frisking along together when I took them out for their usual exercise. I had possessed

him but a few days when I was informed that he spent his leisure time in extracting the pebbles from the lawn, in which I took some pride, and this tended to increase my regard for him. After a few weeks, however, having exhausted the supply of surface pebbles, he proceeded to excavate for others that may have been beneath, and scratched up the grass in all directions. Expostulation, accentuated physically, proved of no avail to break him of his objectionable habit, and I consulted my friend the donor, who assured me that that was his only vice, which he had forgotten to mention. I therefore determined to part with him as soon as a favourable opportunity occurred. One day I took him for an outing down Camberwell way, and saw him far ahead frisking around the skirts of an old lady who was evidently taking notice of him, but before I reached the spot she had entered her house. Mounting some steps I could see into her garden, and, there being no lawn, I said some farewell words to the little fellow, and carefully dropped him over the wall, thinking that I had secured for him a good home and a kind mistress. When I returned home—a distance of about a mile and a half—I found the dog sitting on the steps. He wagged his tail, looked at me with his head cocked on one side, as if to say that he was not to be got rid of by so mean a trick, and made at once for the field of his previous exploits, evidently intending to take his revenge. “I really do not know what to do with that little dog you

gave me," I said to my friend. He smiled blandly and replied, "I think you had better do as I did—*give him to a friend.*"



#### WORKMEN'S EXHIBITIONS.

Some time prior to the year 1864 I had taken an active interest in Ragged Schools, and occasionally visited the Lamb and Flag School, Clerkenwell, to which institution a friend of mine was treasurer. I thus became acquainted with the secretary, who one day invited me to accompany him to the Lambeth Baths, where a small exhibition of amateur productions, contributed by the poor of the locality, was being held. He thought that possibly something of the kind could be done in connection with his school, and thus increase the interest of the parents in the institution. We accordingly went and inspected a very curious collection. The contents of the exhibition consisted of articles contributed by 173 persons of all ages, most of the objects being the result of the occupation of their leisure hours. The exhibitors being unskilled and mostly uneducated, the merit of the exhibits was confined to the amount of ingenuity or perseverance displayed in their production, but the undertaking answered the purpose of its originator, the Rev. G. M. Murphy, which was purely philanthropic.

On comparing notes with my friend, I found that we viewed the matter from different standpoints. He thought it was an excellent plan to encourage

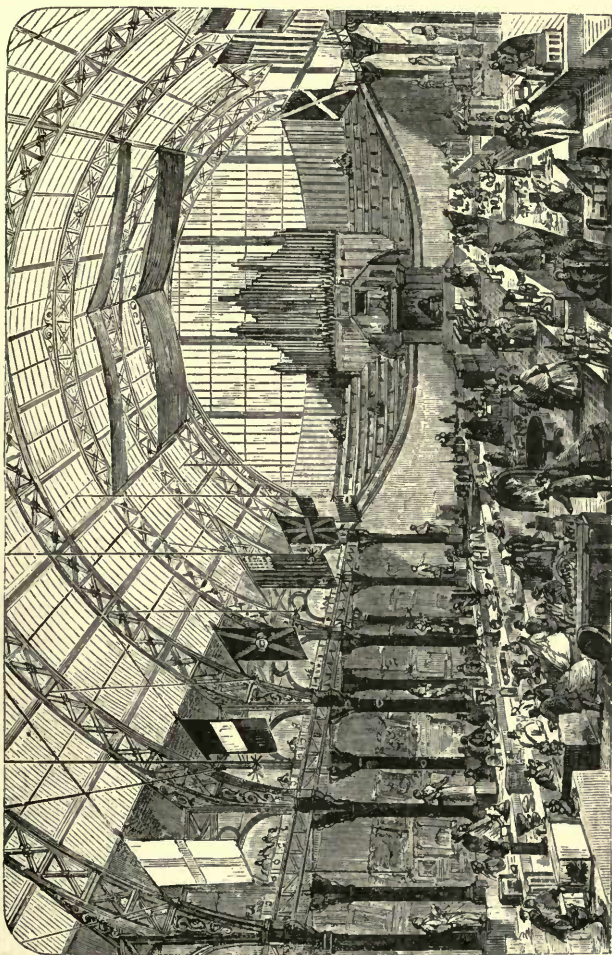


the poor to spend their leisure time in doing anything that would tend to amuse them, no matter how useless, inartistic, or trivial the product might be. I argued that, although it might be impolitic to discourage such efforts, it would be more useful and more profitable to induce workmen to display specimens of skill in their own craft. The matter was talked over by a few mutual friends, the result being that it was agreed to combine both ideas. I was thereupon invited to formulate a complete scheme, which I did, and thus originated the first of a long series of workmen's exhibitions which were held throughout the country. Probably no undertaking, commenced under such humble conditions, ever achieved a success so remarkable. The exhibition, originally intended to be held in a schoolroom, ultimately occupied the largest available building in London, the Agricultural Hall, Islington, and was open for three weeks, during which time it was visited by nearly 200,000 persons. Lord John Russell presided at the opening ceremony, Mr. Gladstone closed the exhibition, and Lord Shaftesbury distributed the awards. *The Times* in a leading article thus referred to it: "The North London Industrial Exhibition originated in a meeting of some half-dozen persons, all belonging to the working classes, and from first to last it has been practically independent of external aid. Its formation and management are useful exercises of the principle of association, and it is not easy to overrate its influence upon the career of a workman brought

within its sphere." All the daily papers published complimentary notices, and even the critical *Athenæum* honoured it with an appreciative article. The publicity given to the exhibition by the press caused me to receive scores of letters from all parts of the kingdom, asking for information, the replies to which often involved an amount of gratuitous "nightwork" quite incompatible with the present idea of the rights of labour. The undertaking was very economically managed, the services of all the officers being given without remuneration, and the financial result was therefore satisfactory, and a surplus was handed over to the Society of Arts to be devoted to some object in harmony with the aims of the exhibition.

Within two years of the closing of this exhibition similar undertakings had been carried out in the Guildhall (London), West London (Floral Hall, Covent Garden), East London (Beaumont Institute), Wandsworth, Whitechapel, Greenwich, Wakefield, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bristol, Preston, Hulme, Liverpool, Manchester, Reading, Plymouth, Glasgow, and other places, all more or less following our plans.

The first exhibition had been so successful, and therefore profitable to the Agricultural Hall Company, whose building had never previously been used for a similar purpose, that the directors offered to place the Hall at the disposal of the former executive for a second and more comprehensive undertaking. A conference was accordingly held



THE NORTH LONDON EXHIBITION AT THE AGRICULTURAL HALL.

in the board-room of the Agricultural Hall shortly afterwards, when by request I laid the chief features of the proposed new undertaking before the meeting, which resulted in the unanimous adoption of the following resolution: "That this meeting has heard with satisfaction the proposal to hold a Metropolitan and Provincial Working Classes' Industrial Exhibition at the Agricultural Hall in the autumn of 1866, having for its objects the practical benefit of skilled workmen, the encouragement of amateurs, and the rational recreation of the working classes, and cordially agrees with the Agricultural Hall Company in placing its management in the hands of the Secretary, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Space Committee of the late North London Exhibition, assisted by any others whom they may invite to co-operate with them." At that meeting £500 was voluntarily subscribed towards a guarantee fund, which was afterwards increased to £1,500, among the subscribers being the Duke of Rutland, the Bishop of Chichester, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Brougham, Lord Denman, Professor Fawcett, Mr. Samuel Morley, and many other noblemen and gentlemen. The three men who thus undertook the task of managing the proposed exhibition were already fully employed. One was an employee of the London and North Western Railway, another was in business as the proprietor of a small saw-mill in Clerkenwell, and the third party, a printer, added the duties involved in the appointment to those of assistant manager of a large London firm.

The exhibition, which contained objects brought together from all parts of the country, was opened at the Agricultural Hall on the 3rd of September, 1866. An "Ode to Labour," written by John Plummer (who had been a factory operative at Kettering), and set to music by Dr. Spark, was sung at the opening ceremony by a choir of a thousand voices. Arrangements had been made to supplement the attractions of the exhibition by auxiliary features, care having been taken that these should be in harmony with the desire to make it a genuine "Workmen's Festival," into which should not enter any political or trades union element. Accordingly, the Tonic-Sol-Fa Association organised six concerts, at each of which from five hundred to a thousand choristers took part; the Band of Hope Union furnished eight concerts of a thousand voices; there were also oratorio performances, miscellaneous concerts, and organ recitals. The National Temperance League held five meetings, the United Kingdom Alliance two meetings, and there were special gatherings of the Foresters, Working Men's Clubs, Sunday Schools, Ragged Schools, &c., besides numerous lectures upon subjects of interest to workmen. The exhibition was open for ten weeks, during which time upwards of 530,000 persons paid for admission, the fee in the evening being twopence. The financial results of the undertaking enabled the council to provide prize medals of silver and bronze, and illuminated certificates of merit, which were awarded by the officials of the Society



of Arts, and presented to most of the exhibitors personally at Exeter Hall by the Right Hon. G. J. Goschen, and also to present to every exhibitor a large framed chromo view of the interior of the exhibition, as a souvenir.



My share in the management of these exhibitions was certainly the most arduous and most responsible undertaking that ever fell to my lot outside of my ordinary occupation, and, as an old soldier is expected to display his medals on special occasions, I may perhaps be excused the vanity of recording that the exhibitors gave me a silver snuff-box, the Agricultural Hall Company a costly clock and candelabra, the council a vote of thanks elaborately illuminated on vellum, and the adjudicators awarded me a silver medal. Similar presentations were made to my two coadjutors, but they paid dearly for them,



for the labours and anxiety incidental to the undertaking, which extended over eighteen months, were said to have shortened their lives.

**L'ENVOI.**

In conclusion, permit me to remind the reader that this booklet does not profess to be an attempt at autobiography. Were my powers of description equal to the tenacity of my memory, I might be tempted to refer to very many "things I have seen" that were remarkable. For instance:—

From a window at 352, Strand, I saw the Royal procession on its way to the City, on the 9th of November, 1837, when Her Majesty went in State to dine with the Lord Mayor on her accession.

About the same time I saw Scott, "the American diver," accidentally hang himself on a scaffold which had been erected for his use on the east side of Waterloo Bridge, and shall never forget the excitement of the mob when it was discovered by his wife that his eccentric movements were not the antics of a mountebank, but the struggles of a dying man.

I well remember Bartholomew Fair, Richardson's Show (with its band of gorgeously appparelled musicians), Wombwell's Menagerie, and the long rows of stalls, one of the chief features of which was the gingerbread "cock in breeches."

I was once taken by a lady friend of Mr. Green, the celebrated aeronaut, to Vauxhall Gardens, and sat in the car of the Great Nassau Balloon while it

was being inflated. This was the balloon in which Albert Smith took an aerial trip some years afterwards from Cremorne Gardens, an account of which he gave in *The Man in the Moon*, which was, I think, illustrated by Sala.

When a schoolboy I had a strong desire to see the inside of the House of Commons, and, knowing a reader engaged on *The Morning Post*, I sought his help. I went as the reporters' errand-boy, was admitted into the gallery, and heard Sir Robert Peel Daniel O'Connell, and Richard Lalor Shiel, address the House.

I once passed some hours locked up in a police cell at Bow Street. It happened thus: Samuel Taylor printed a weekly paper entitled *The Patent Journal*, in which appeared an article deemed libellous. The injured party, instead of prosecuting the editor or proprietor, caused the printer to be arrested. There was of course no difficulty in procuring bail, but the prosecutor's solicitor demanded twenty-four hours' notice, during which the defendant had to remain in prison. He was, however, permitted to read proofs, and I was his reading-boy.

I saw the notorious Lola Montez (Countess of Landsfeld) brought before the magistrate at Marlborough Street on a charge of bigamy, the young man she married (Lieut. Heald) standing by her side all the while. Her influence over the eccentric King of Bavaria, the consequent revolt of the people, and her flight, are matters of history.

I heard Louis Kossuth deliver his first oration

in English at Copenhagen Fields, and Father Mathew address an enormous crowd on Kennington Common, and witnessed the triumphant entry of Garibaldi into London.

And so on. But such incidents come not within the scope of these pages, which contain merely a plain colloquial statement recalling a few facts that may have some interest for printers, and a recital of a few anecdotes, some of which I have before related, with just sufficient personal reference to link them together. With that remark I desire to make my bow, and to wish the reader—

**A HAPPY NEW YEAR.**

LA BELLE SAUVAGE.

*Dec., 1896.*



THE WRITER.

*(A Sketch by his old friend, John Proctor.)*

**The Gresham Press,**

UNWIN BROTHERS,

WOKING AND LONDON.

sl

Bithynia

761







UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**A** 000 088 450 2

