

Punch, Or The London Charivari, Vol. 99, October 18, 1890

Various

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Title: Punch, Or The London Charivari, Vol. 99, October 18, 1890

Author: Various

Release Date: May 20, 2004 [EBook #12395]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

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PUNCH,

OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

VOL. 99.

October 18, 1890.

HOW IT'S DONE.

A HANDBOOK TO HONESTY.

NO. 11.--THE STRAIGHT "TIP."

SCENE--_Sanctum of "Large Wholesale House." Present, one

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of the _ Principals, _ a pompous personage, with imposing watch-chain, and abundant space for it to meander over, and a sleekly subservient _ "Head of Department." Principal _ looks irritated, _ Head of Department _ apprehensive, the former angrily shuffling some papers, the latter nervously "washing his hands with invisible soap, in imperceptible water._"

Principal. Well, Mr.--er--er--SCROOP, we--er--my partners and self, are not quite satisfied with the way in which things are going in--er--in your department.

Head of Department. Indeed, Sir. Sorry to hear that, Sir. May I ask, Sir, in--er--in what particular I have--er--failed to give complete satisfaction. (_Aside._) On the screw again, the old skinflint--I know him.

[Illustration]

Principal. Well, in point of fact, the profits on your branch have lately been very--have seemed--er--have been by no means--what we could wish, Mr. SCROOP, what we could wish, Sir.

H. of D. Really, Sir, I--ah, am grieved to hear it, for, upon my word, I hardly know--

Principal (_abruptly_). There must be cutting down somewhere--I say _somewhere_, Mr. SCROOP-- _where_, I must leave to you. By the way, it seems to me that PUDDICOMBE's prices are a bit high for a beginner in the trade as he is. I think his "lines" ought to run a little lower--eh?

H. of D. Well, Sir, I've suggested it to him myself, but he protested there was hardly a margin left. However, since you name it, Sir, I'll see what I can do with him. (_Aside._) Ruthless old grinder, _that's_ his game, is it? Wants a few "extra" pounds to play with, and means squeezing them out of PUDDICOMBE. Poor PUDDICOMBE, I've already put the screw on him pretty tightly. However, I must give it another turn, I suppose.

SCENE II.--Head of Department _and_ PUDDICOMBE, _a hard-working, struggling manufacturer, who has schemed and screwed for years to keep in with the Big House._

Puddicombe. Upon my word, Mr. SCROOP, I can't--I really can't, knock off another quarter per cent. It's a tight fight already, and I _can't_ do it.

H. of D. (_airily_). All right, PUDDICOMBE my boy,--as you please. Plenty who will, you know.

Puddicombe. Really, Mr. SCROOP, I don't see how they can--

H. of D. (_rudely_). That's _their_ business. I only know they _will_, and jump at it.

Puddicombe (_hesitatingly_). But--er--I thought, when I made that little arrangement with you, a year ago, about the trifling bonus to you, you know, I thought you as good as promised--

H. of D. (_severely_). Mr. PUDDICOMBE, you surprise me. I am here, Sir, to do the best I can for the Firm--and _I shall do it._ If somebody else's prices are better than yours, somebody else gets the line, that's all. Good day, Mr. PUDDICOMBE. (_Aside._) Confound his impudence!--he shan't have another order if _I_ can help it! Trifling bonus, indeed! One thing, he daren't split--so _I_'m safe.

[_Exit_ PUDDICOMBE, _despondently. Enter, presently, a hopeful-looking person, with a sample-bag._

H. of D. (_cheerily_). Ah, Mr. PINCHER, how do--how do? Haven't seen you for an age.

Mr. Pincher. Good day, Mr. SCROOP. I heard you wanted to see me, and, as I've a _very_ cheap line in your way, I thought, as I was passing, I'd venture to look in.

H. of D. Quite right, PINCHER. What's the figure, my boy?

Pincher (_silly_). A shade lower than the lowest you've been giving. Is that good enough?

H. of D. Well--ahem!--yes--of course, if the _quality_ is right.

Pincher. O.K., I assure you, Sir!

H. of D. Well, we're quoted as low as forty-five. If you can beat that, I think I can place the order with you.

Pincher (_aside_). Liar! Even poor PUDDICOMBE wouldn't go under fifty. However, here goes! (_Aloud._) Will five off meet your views?

H. of D. Say seven and a half, and I'm on.

Pincher. Done with you, Sir. (_Aside._) With what he'll want for himself, there's "nothing in it!"--_this_ time.

H. of D. Well--subject, of course, to our Principal's approval, I think I may say the line is yours, PINCHER. (_Aside._) Don't know how the doose he does it! Well, that's none o' my business. Won't old SKINFLINT be pleased? Must try and spring him for a holiday, on the strength of it.

Pincher. Thanks--many thanks. (_Books it._) Hope we shall do more business together,--to our mutual advantage. By the way, Mr. SCROOP--(_in a low voice_)--if there _is_ any little thing I can put in your way, you know, I, er--er!--

H. of D. Oh, don't mention it, PINCHER. Give me a look up on Tuesday evening, at home. You know my little place at Peckham. My good lady'll give you a little music.

Pincher. Ah, I've a good deal of influence in that line. Now, if there's anything Mrs. SCROOP might fancy--I know "perks" are not in _your_ line, but the ladies, my boy, the ladies!

H. of D. (_laughing_). You will have your joke, PINCHER. Well, oddly enough, the Missis was only saying last night she wanted a new piano--one of BROADWOOD's grands, for choice--and if you--

Pincher (_mysteriously_). Leave it to me, my dear Sir, leave it to me. If Mrs. SCROOP isn't satisfied by this day week, why--never give me another line. Ha! ha! _Good_ day, Mr. SCROOP!

[_Exit, chuckling_.

* * * * *

ROBERT'S RETURN TO THE CITY.

I've bin jolly cumferal lately at the Grand Hotel, as ewerybody in fac seems to be, for they cums in a smilin with hope, and gos away smilin with satisfacshun, and with the thorow conwicshun of soom cumming again, and sum on 'em says to me, says they, "Oh rewor! Mr. ROBERT!" and others says, "Oh Plezzeer! Mr. ROBERT!" which both means, as my yung French frend tells me, "Here's to our nex merry meeting!" but that sounds more like a parting Toast with a bumper of good old Port to drink it in, but I dezzay as he's right. But larst week I receeves a most prumptery order from the LORD MARE, "to cum back to the City, if it were ony for a week." So in coarse back I cums, and a grand sort of a week we has all had on it! I shall fust begin with a reglar staggerer of a dinner at the Manshun House on Munday, given, as I was told, to all the Horthers and Hartists of Urope, who had jest bin a holding of a Meeting to let ewerybody kno as how as they ment for to have their rites in their hone ritings and picters, or they woodn't rite no more, nor paint no more!

[Illustration]

My prefound estonishment may be more heasily described than conseved when I says as they was amost all Forreners of wariou countries! so that when I handed anythink werry speshal to sum on 'em they would shake their heds and say, "No mercy!" or "Nine darnker!" as the case mite be.

Well, so much for Monday. On Toosday I spent nearly the hole day at Gildhall in surveyin, and criticisin, hay, and in one case, acshally _tasting_ the wundrus collecshun of all kinds and condishuns of Frute that the hole Country can perduce, that had been colleckted there! I wunders how many of the tens of thousands who came to Gildhall to see the temting sight, can say the same. But ewery wise perducer of heatables or drinkables allus tries to captiwate the good opinyon of a Hed Waiter. The hidear jest ocur to my mind to ask at about what part of the next Sentry the County Counsil will be a dewoting of their time and money to a similar usefool purpuss! And hecco answers, Wen! The uniwersal werdick of heverybody as was there agreed in saying, that nothink like it in buty, and wariety, and size, wasn't never seen nowheres before. And then came the werry natural enquiry, what on airth's a going to be done with it all? And then came the equally nateral answer, "The Fruiterers' Company is a going to send all the werry best of it to the LORD MARE?" And then, "Hey, Presto!" as the cunjurer says, and on Wensday evening there it was on the table at another Grand Bankwet at the Manshun House, and quite a number of the Fruiterers' Company a sitting a smiling at the LORD MARE's horspitable table, and the werry head on 'em all, Sir JAMES WHITEHEAD, giving the distingwished compny sitch a delightful acount of what they had bin and gone and done, and was a going to do, as made ewerybody rejoice to think that we had such a nobel Company as the Fruiterers' Company, and

such a prince of Masters to govern 'em. And I feels bound in honor to say, that the black grapes was about the werry finest as ewer I ewer tasted. ROBERT.

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[Illustration: THE SHIELD AND THE SHADOW.]

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[Illustration: THE VICTIMS OF HIGH SPEED.

THE DREAM OF AN ANXIOUS CAPTAIN AFTER TEARING ACROSS THE FISHING-GROUNDS OF NEWFOUNDLAND.]

* * * * *

THE SHIELD AND THE SHADOW.

["Before the 'silent millions' who make up the rank and file of Hindoos discard the cruelties of their marriage system, their opinions, prejudices, and habits of thought must change. Nothing is more certain than that they will change slowly; but we hold to the belief that judicious legislation will hasten the process more powerfully than anything else."--_The "Times" on Child-Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India_.]

Yes, compassion is due to thee, India's young daughter;
The sound of thy sorrow, thy plaint of despair
Have reached English ears o'er the wide westward water,
And sympathy stirred, seldom slumbering there.

Child-Wife, or Child-Widow, in agony kneeling
And clasping the skirts of the armed Island Queen,
Her heart is not cold to thine urgent appealing;
Considerate care in her glances is seen.

Not hot as the urgings of zealotry heady
The action of her who's protectrice and guide.
Her stroke must be measured, her sympathy steady,
Whose burden's as great as her power is wide.

She stands, AEgis-armed, looked forth calm, reflective,
Across the wide stretches of old Hindostan.
The plains now subdued to her power protective,
Saw politic AKBAR and sage SHAH JEHAN.

If AKBAR was pitiful, Islam's great sworder,
Shall she of the AEgis be less so than he?
The marriage of widows he sanctioned, his order
Three centuries since laid the ban on Suttee.

And she, his successor, has rescued already
The widow from fire, and the child from the flood;
For mercy's her impulse, her policy steady
Opposes the creed-thralls whose chrism is blood.

And now the appeal of the Child-Widow reaches
The ears ever open to misery's plaint.

She _thinks_ --for the sway of long centuries teaches
That zeal should not hasten, and patience not faint.

The child kneeling there at her skirts is the creature
Of tyrannous ages of creed and of caste;
She bears, helpless prey of the priest, on each feature.
The pitiful brand of a pitiless past.

Long-wrought, closely knit, subtly swaying, deep-rooted,
The system whose shadow is over the child;
By grey superstition debased and imbruted,
By craft's callous cruelty deeply defiled.

But long-swaying custom hath far-reaching issues,
The hand that assails it doth ill to show haste.
The knife that would search poor humanity's tissues,
Hath healing for object, not ravage or waste.

Not coldness, but coolness, sound policy pleads for,
But, subject to that, human sympathies yearn
To aid the child-victim the woman's heart bleeds for,
For whom a man's breast with compassion must burn.

Poor child! The dark shadow that closely pursues her
Means menacing Terror; she sues for a shield,
And how shall the strong AEGis-bearer refuse her?
The bondage of caste to calm justice must yield.

We dare not be deaf to the voice of the pleader
For freedom and purity, nature and right;
Let Wisdom, high-throned as controller and leader,
Meet cruelty's steel with the shield of calm might!

* * * * *

MY MOTHER BIDS ME DYE MY HAIR.

[Auburn is said to be the present fashionable colour in hair.]

[Illustration: The Hazard of the Dye.]

My Mother bids me dye my hair
A lovely auburn hue,
She says I ought to be aware
It's quite the thing to do.

"Why sit," she cries, "without a smile,
Whilst others dance instead?"
Alas! no partners ask me while
My tresses are not red.

When no one else at all is near,
And I am quite alone,
I sadly shed a bitter tear
To think the Season's gone.

But when the time again draws nigh,
The time when maidens wed,

I'm quite resolved to "do _and_ dye"--
My tresses _shall_ be red!

* * * * *

TO ENGELBERG AND BACK.

BEING A FEW NOTES TAKEN EN ROUTE IN SEARCH OF A PERFECT CURE.

I don't exactly know how I got mixed up with it, but I found myself somehow "fixed," as our American cousins would say, to join a party who were going to see Old JEPHSON (the Q.C.), who had broken "down," or broken "up," or had gone through some mental and physical smashing process or other, that necessitated an immediate recourse to mountain air,--to where he could get it of the right sort and quality with as little strain or tax on his somewhat shattered nerves as might be compatible with a dash into the heart of Switzerland at the fag-end of the swarming tourists' season. "Murren will be too high for him: distinctly too high for him," thoughtfully observed the distinguished specialist who had been called in, and had at once prescribed the "air tonic" in question; "and the Burgenstock would be too low. His condition requires an elevation of about 3500 feet. Let me see. Ha! Engelberg is the place for him. My dear lady," he continued, addressing Mrs. JEPHSON, who had already imbibed the theory that every altitude, from Primrose Hill to Mont Blanc, suited its special ailment, the only thing necessary being to hit on the right one, "My dear lady, get your good husband to Engelberg at once. Write to HERR CATTANI, Hotel Titlis, Engelberg, Unterwalden, asking what day he can receive you (use my name), and then, as soon as you can possibly get off, start. I can promise you it will do wonders for our patient."

[Illustration: Lit de Luxe!]

So, in about five days, we found ourselves, a party of six (including young JERRYMAN, who said that, though he saw no difference between Lucerne and Bayswater, except that Bayswater was a "howling site bigger," he would come, "if only for the lark of seeing the dilapidated old boy" (his way of referring to his invalid Q.C. Uncle) "shovelled about the Bernese Oberland like a seedy Guy Faux,") crossing the silver streak on that valued, steady-going, and excellently well-found Channel friend, the Calais-Douvres. Of course we made a fresh friend for life on board--one always does. We counted up fifty-seven fresh friends for life we had made, one way and another, on our way, before we got home again. This was a Dr. MELCHISIDEC, who at once yielded his folding-chair to the Dilapidated One, and, finding himself bound also for Engelberg, attached himself as a sort of General-Director and Personal Conductor to our party. "Had we got our tickets through COOK, and asked him to secure our places in the train?" he inquired. "We had." "Ha! then it would be all right." And it was. On our arriving at Calais, no crush, or excitement, and fighting for places. We were met by three courteous, military-looking officials, who talked four languages between them, and ushered us to our "reserved" places. Royalty could not have fared better. "You're all right with COOK," observed Dr. MELCHISIDEC. "He's got a man everywhere; and, if there's any hitch, you've only got to call him in. A clear case of too many Cooks not spoiling the broth." And so we found it. I had always hitherto considered Cook's Excursionists as rather a comic institution, and as something to be laughed at. Nothing of the sort. "Blessed be COOK!" say I. All I

know is, that we found his name a perfect tower of strength along the entire route we traversed.

And now we were whirling along towards Basle in the rather stuffy splendours provided for us by the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits, that reminded one, as much as anything of being fixed into one's allotted place in a sort of gigantic Gladstone Bag--an illusion assisted, no doubt, by the prominence of a deal of silver-plated fittings, in the shape of knobs and door-handles, all somewhat tarnished and dusty. True, the compartment, which gave on to a corridor running the whole length of the carriage, was provided with a table, an inkstand, a large pan for cigar-ash, and a colossal spittoon; but as one had no immediate need of any of these things, and they filled up the already sufficiently limited space, one was strongly disposed, but for the presence of the military official of the Wagons Lits who paced the corridor before alluded to, to pitch them all out of the window then and there. But it was drawing on towards seven o'clock, and the question of feeding naturally came to the fore. How was the Dilapidated One to get his meal at Tergnier, the place where the military official informed us we should find "an excellent repast, 'ot, and ready, with plenty of time to dispose of 'im with every facility," waiting for us.

[Illustration: "C'est tout, Monsieur?"]

Young JERRYMAN suggested the luncheon-basket, which he saw an American get through the other day, containing two pork sandwiches, nine inches long; half a fowl, a couple of rolls, three peaches, a bunch of grapes, a jam-tart, and a bottle of wine; but Dr. MELCHISIDEC put his veto on this, and, looking at the Dilapidated One critically, as if he was wondering how much he weighed, if it came to carrying him, came in with a judicial "No! no! I think we can manage to get him to the Buffet," which settled the matter; and with the announcement that we had all of us "_vingt-trois minutes d'arret_," we found ourselves stepping across the growing dusk of the platform, into the cheerful and brightly-lighted Station _Restaurant_, where a capital and comfortable meal, excellently served, was awaiting us. And, O ye shades of Rugby, Swindon, Crewe, Grantham, and I know not what other British Railway feeding centres, at which I have been harassed, scalded, and finally hurried away unfed, would that you could take a lesson from the admirable management, consideration for the digestion of the hungry passengers, and general all-round thoughtfulness that characterises the taking of that meal "_de voyage_" at Tergnier.

[Illustration: Nach Engelberg!]

* To be continued till further notice.]

To begin with, you have about finished your soup, when a station official appears at the door and informs all the feeding passengers in an assuring and encouraging voice that they have "_encore dix-huit minutes_"--as much as to say, "Pray, my dear Monsieur, or Madame, as the case may be, do not hurry over that capital portion of _boeuf braise a l'Imperiale_, but enjoy its full flavour at your perfect leisure. There is not, pray believe me, the remotest occasion for any excitement or hurry." A little later on, in your repast, when you are just, perhaps, beginning to wonder whether you oughtn't to be thinking about returning to the train, the good fairy official again appears at the door, this time announcing that you have "_encore douze minutes_"

in the same encouraging tones, that seem to say, "Now, I beg you will quite finish that excellent '_poulet_' and '_salade_.' Believe me, you have ample time. Trust to me. I charge myself with the responsibility of seeing that you catch your train calmly and comfortably;" which he certainly does, looking in again as Madame comes round, and you pay her her modest demand of three francs fifty for her excellently-cooked and well-served repast (_vin compris_), with the final announcement of, "_Maintenant en voiture, Mesdames et Messieurs_," that find you comfortably seated in your place again, with three minutes to spare before the departure of the train. But perhaps the best testimony to the excellence of the management may be found in the fact that the Dilapidated One was not only got out, but well fed, and put back in his place, with a whole minute to spare, without any excitement, or more than the usual expenditure of nerve-force required for the undertaking.

"I will, when Monsieur desires it, make up the bed for 'im," volunteers the military officer, towards eleven o'clock; and, as there isn't much going on, we say, "All right--we'll have it now;" and we disport ourselves in the corridor, while he works a sort of transformation in our Gladstone Bag compartment, which seems greatly to diminish its "containing" capacity. Indeed, if it were not for the floor, the ceiling, and the walls, one would hardly know where to stow one's packages. _Le train de Luxe_ I know has come in, of late, for some abuse, and some grumblers have made a dead set at it. I don't know what their experience of a _lit de luxe_ may have been, but, if it was anything like mine, they must have experienced a general feeling of wanting about a foot more room every way, coupled with a strong and morbid inclination to kick off roof, sides, back, and, in fact, everything, so as, somehow, to secure it.

However, the night passed, the unceasing rattle of the train being occasionally changed for the momentary dead stillness, when it stopped, as it did now and then, at some small place on the way, for apparently no better reason than that of pulling the station-master out of bed to report it. Practically I was undisturbed, except at, I think, a place called _Delle_, where, in the very small hours of the morning, a gentleman opened the door of my bedroom _de Luxe_, and asked me in a voice, in which melancholy and sleep seemed to be struggling for the mastery, whether "I had any declaration I wished to make to the Swiss _Douanes_," and on my assuring him that I had "none whatever," he sadly and silently withdrew.

Nothing further till Basle, where we halted at 6 A.M. for breakfast and a change of trains, and where I was much impressed with the carrying power of the local porter, whom I met loaded with the Dilapidated One's effects, apparently surprised that that "was all" he was expected to take charge of. Lucerne in a blaze of stifling heat, with struggling Yankee and British tourists being turned away from the doors of all the hotels, so we were glad to get our telegram from Herr CATTANI announcing that he was able to offer us rooms that he had "disponible;" and at 3 P.M. we commenced our carriage-drive to Engelberg. Towards five we quitted the plain and began the ascent.

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

A promising series, so far, is this re-issue by Messrs. CHATTO

AND WINDUS of "The Barber's Chair, Etc.," by DOUGLAS JERROLD; "Gulliver's Travels," by DEAN SWIFT, "Etc.;" and SHERIDAN's Plays. "Etc.," in both the first-mentioned books, forms a considerable portion of each volume. "Etc.," in the first includes the Hedgehog Letters, which are very Jerroldian; and in the second it means the immortal Tale of a Tub, the Battle of the Books, and a fragment from the Dean's correspondence.

[Illustration: Bound in Boards.]

The Baron begs to return thanks for an odd volume, one of privately printed opuscula of "The Sette of Odd Volumes," which has been presented to him by the Author, Mr. WALTER HAMILTON, F.R.G.S., and F.R.H.S., who has the honour of filling the important post of "Parodist" in the above-mentioned society or "Sette." This little odd volume epitomises the Drama of England within the last three centuries in most interesting fashion, without losing a single important point. Why it should have fallen to the lot of the "Parodist to the Sette" to do this, is only explained by the Sette being made up of Odd, very odd, Volumes. What are their rules? Do they go "odd man out" to decide who shall pay for the banquet? Must they dine in the daytime, because, being an odd lot, they cannot sit down to dinner at eventide?

A list of the Odd members is given in the little book; but who cares what, or who, the Odds are, as long as they each and all are happy? 'Tis a pity that, in this multum in parvo of a book, the author should have spoken disparagingly of "Glorious JOHN." It would be worth while to refer to MACAULAY's Dramatists of the Restoration, and to compare the licence of that age with that of SHAKSPEARE's time, when a Virgin Queen, and not a Merry Monarch, was on the throne. And, when we come to SHERIDAN's time, how about The Duenna, and The Trip to Scarborough, which was supposed to be an improvement on the original? However, puris pura puerisque puellis, as my excellent friend, Miss MAXIMA DE BETUR observes. But one ought not to look a gift pony in the mouth any more than one ought to critically examine a jest which is passed off in good company. The jest was not meant to be criticised, and the pony wasn't given you in order that you might critically express an opinion on its age. If a pony--a very quiet, steady grey pony--were presented as a mark of affection and esteem to the Baron, he most certainly would not inspect its mouth, seeing that he would not be a tooth the wiser for the operation; but, if the Baron had a friendly vet. or a hipposcientist at hand, he would certainly ask him to examine the gift cob before the Baron either drove or rode him.

Quo tendimus? In Latium? Verily, for the next work at hand is Mr. HUTTON's Monograph on Cardinal Newman, which, of all the writings about his Eminence that I've lately read, I can (says the Baron, in one of his more severely sedate moods,) most confidently recommend to general readers of all denominations, and of all shades of opinion, whom Mr. HUTTON may address as "Friends, Romans, Countrymen!" That learned Theban, "JOHN OLDCASTLE," has written an interesting Biography of "The noblest Roman of them all," which forms a special number of the Merry England Magazine.

Margaret Byng, by F.C. PHILLIPS and FENDALL, is a clever sensational story, spun out into two volumes, which can be devoured by the accomplished novel-swallower in any two hours' train journey, and can be highly recommended for this particular purpose. It would have been

better, because less expensive and more portable, had it been in one volume; but the Baron strongly recommends it for the above space of time in a train, or whenever you've nothing better to do, which will happen occasionally even to the wisest and best of us. The secret is very well kept to the end; and an expert in novel-reading can do the first volume in three-quarters of an hour, and the next in half an hour easily, and be none the worse for the _tour de force_, as he will have amused and interested himself for the time being, will forget all about it in an hour or so, and wonder what it was all about if at any future time the name of the book should be mentioned in his hearing. It's the sort of book that ought to be the size of a Tauchnitz edition, in one volume only, and sold for a couple of shillings.

The facsimile of DICKENS's MS. of the _Christmas Carol_, published by Messrs. ELLIOTT STOCK, is a happy thought for the coming Christmas, and that Christmas _is_ coming is a matter about which publishers within the next six weeks will not allow anyone to entertain the shadow or the ghost of a doubt. What a good subject for a Christmas story, _The Ghost of a Doubt; or, The Shadow of a Reason_! "Methinks," quoth the Baron, "it would be as well to register these two titles and couple of subjects before anyone seizes them as his own." Most interesting is this facsimile MS., showing how DICKENS wrote it, corrected it, and polished it up. Though, that this was the only MS. of this work, the Baron doubts. It may have been the only complete MS., but where are all the notes, rough or smooth, of the inspirations as they occurred? Those, the germs of this story or of any story, would be the most interesting of all; that is, to the confraternity of Authors. There is a pleasant preface, lively, of course, it should be, as coming from a Kitten who might have given us a catty-logue of the works of DICKENS in his possession.

"Thank you, Mr. B.L. FARJEON," says the Baron, "for a clever little novel called _A Very Young Couple_." Perhaps it might have been a trifle shorter than it is with advantage; and, if it had been published in that still more pocketable form which has made the Routledgean series of portable-readables so popular with the Baron, and those who are guided by his advice, the book would be still better. As it is, it is clever, because the astute novel-reader at once discards the real and only solution of the mystery as far too commonplace, and this solution is _the_ one which Mr. FARJEON has adopted. It is the expected-unexpected that happens in this case, and the astute reader is particularly pleased with himself, because he finishes by saying, "I knew how it would be, all along."

BARON DE BOOK-WORMS.

* * * * *

MR. PUNCH'S DICTIONARY OF PHRASES.

DURING A VISIT.

"_Pray don't move;_" i.e., "He will be a brute if he doesn't."

"_I hope I am not disturbing you;_" i.e., "I don't care the least if I am."

"_What a delightful volume of poems your last is!_" i.e., "Haven't read one of them; but he won't find it out."

"_So much in your new book that is interesting about those dear Japanese;_" i.e., "Glad I happened to glance at that page."

"_Do tell me when you next lecture. Wouldn't miss it for worlds!_" i.e., "Wild horses would not drag me there."

"So _sorry you are going. Mind you come and stay with us again_ very _soon;_" i.e., "Unless she comes without an invitation, she is not likely to cross _this_ threshold again."

* * * * *

INCOMPREHENSIBLE!--At the dinner given by the LORD MAYOR, a few days since, to the representatives of Art and Literature of all nations, a linguist, who is believed to understand seventeen languages, made a speech in the eighteenth!

* * * * *

[Illustration: OUR COMPATRIOTS ABROAD.

SCENE--_A Table d'hote._

Aristocratic English Lady (_full of diplomatic relations_). "A--CAN YOU TELL ME IF THERE IS A RESIDENT BRITISH MINISTER HERE?"

Scotch Tourist. "WELL, I'M NOT JUST QUITE SURE--BUT I'M TOLD THERE'S AN EXCELLENT PRESBYTERIAN SERVICE EVERY SUNDAY!"]

* * * * *

A FAMILY QUESTION.

A SONG FOR THE SITUATION.

AIR--"_THE CHESAPEAKE AND THE SHANNON_"

MCKINLEY, brave and bold, as the universe is told,
Brought forth his Tariff Bill so neat and handy, O!
And true patriots, everyone thought the business splendid fun,
With their music playing Yankee-doodle dandy, O!
Yankee-doodle, Yankee-doodle dandy. O!
The patriots came running, and admired MCKINLEY's cunning,
In the interests of Yankee-doodle dandy, O!

The Britisher might blame the new Economic game,
That only fired the Yankee like neat brandy, O!
If J.B. should be stone-broke by MCKINLEY's master-stroke,
Tant mieux, my boys, for Yankee-doodle dandy, O!
Yankee-doodle, Yankee-doodle dandy, O!
The measure is a lark, it _may_ transfer the British market
To the able hands of Yankee-doodle dandy, O!

The fight has scarce begun, and the Yank has seen the fun
Of the rush of freighted vessels to be handy, O!

Just in time for the old duties; they competed, like young beauties
For the smile of some young roving Royal dandy, O!
Yankee-doodle, Yankee-doodle dandy, O!
They knew there'd be a scare if the ships didn't dodge the Tariff,
The New Tariff dear to Yankee-doodle dandy, O!

The Etruria and Zaandam found the business quite a flam,
The Thingvalla, in good time, was not quite handy, O!
Whilst some sugar-laden ships found they'd wholly missed their tips,
To the merriment of Yankee-doodle dandy, O!
Yankee-doodle, Yankee-doodle dandy, O!
Yet the prudent thoughts are giving to the "increased cost of living,"
Home-expenses burden Yankee-doodle dandy, O!

Miss COLUMBIA and her "Ma" have a fancy that Pap-pa,
At raising "worsted-stuffs" has been too handy, O!
Fifty per cent. on frocks, upon petticoats and socks,
Scares the women-folk of Yankee doodle dandy, O!
Yankee doodle, Yankee doodle dandy, O!
"Taxing the Briti_sher_" may yet create a stir
In the Home-affairs of Yankee doodle dandy, O!

Pennsylvania will rejoice, but a sort of still small voice
In the ear of Uncle SAM may sound quite handy, O!
Wall Street may feel smart shocks at the lowering of Stocks,
And will "Tin-plates" comfort Yankee doodle dandy, O?
Yankee doodle, Yankee doodle, dandy O!
Lower Stocks by raising "Stockings" Ah, methinks I hear the "Shockings!"
Of the women-folk of Yankee-doodle dandy, O!

Howsoever that may fare, let JOHN BULL keep on his hair,
And Miss CANADA with flouts be not too handy, O!
Common sense is safe commander, and we need not raise our dander
At the Tariff tricks of Yankee doodle dandy, O!
Yankee doodle! Yankee doodle dandy, O!
And may it ever prove in trade fights, or brotherly love,
BULL can keep upsides with Yankee doodle dandy, O!

* * * * *

"CHARGE, CHESTER, CHARGE!"--The Times reports that at Chester
County Court last week, Mr. STAVELEY HILL, Q.C, M.P., Judge Advocate
of the Fleet, was summoned for L25--for goods supplied, and that the
claim was unsuccessfully contested on the score that it was barred by
the Statute of Limitations. Mr. SEGAR, who represented the Plaintiff,
said that the Defendant was "wrong in his law," and Judge Sir HORATIO
LLOYD assented to the proposition by giving a verdict for the full
amount claimed. From this it would appear that there was "no valley"
(as a Cockney would say) in the point of the Hill--the Judge Advocate
of the Fleet being on this occasion, if not in his native element, at
any rate, "quite at sea!"

* * * * *

[Illustration: A FAMILY QUESTION.

Miss COLUMBIA. "SAY, PAP-PA, WON'T THAT BILL RILE THE BRITISHERS,
SOME? ANYHOW, GUESS YOU'LL HAVE TO SHELL OUT PRETTY CONSIDERABLE ALL
ROUND--_AT HOME!!_"

* * * * *

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

STEAM-ROLLING EXPERIENCES.--That you should have endeavoured to have turned the birthday-gift of your eccentric nephews to account, and made an offer to the Municipality of West Bloxham to "set" the High Street for them by going over it with the seventeen-ton steam-roller, with which your youthful relatives had presented you, was only a nice and generous impulse on your part; and it is undeniably a great pity that, owing to your not fully understanding the working of the machine, you should have torn away the front of three of the principal shops, finally going through the floor of a fourth, and getting yourself apparently permanently embedded in a position from which you cannot extricate yourself, in the very centre of the leading thoroughfare. Your idea of getting out of the difficulty by presenting the steam-roller then and there to the Borough was a happy one, and it is to be regretted that, under the circumstances, they felt no inclination to accept your offer. Their threat of further proceedings against you unless you take immediate steps to remove your machine, though, perhaps, to be expected, is certainly a little unhandsome. Perhaps your best plan will be to try and start your Steam-roller as a "Suburban Omnibus Company," as you propose. Certainly secure that Duke you mention for Chairman, and, with one or two good City names on the Directorate, it is possible you may be successful in your efforts to float the affair.

Meantime, since the proprietor of the premises in which your Steam-roller has fixed itself refuses to allow you to try to remove it by dynamite, leave it where it is. Put the whole matter into the hands of a sharp local lawyer, and go on to the Continent until it has blown over.

* * * * *

[Illustration: A HERO "FIN DE SIECLE."]

Podgers (of Sandboys Golf Club). "MY DEAR MISS ROBINSON, GOLF'S THE ONLY GAME NOWADAYS FOR THE MEN. LAWN-TENNIS IS ALL VERY WELL FOR YOU GIRLS, YOU KNOW."]

* * * * *

HIGHWAYS AND LOW WAYS.

There is evidently all the difference in the world between "The King's Highway"--of song--and the Kingsland highway--of fact. Song says all is equal to--

"High and low on the King's highway."

Experience teaches that a sober citizen traversing the highway unfavourably known as the Kingsland Road, is liable to be tripped up, robbed and thumped senseless by organised gangs of Kingsland roughs. It seems doubtful whether Neapolitan banditti or Australian bush-whackers are much worse than these Cockney ruffians, these vulgar, vicious and villanous "Knights of the (Kingsland) Road." Is it not high time that the local authorities--and the local police--looked

to this particular "highway," which seems so much more like a "byway"
not to say a "by-word and a reproach" to a city suburb?

* * * * *

A CASE FOR THE SURGEONS.--Mrs. Ramsbotham, who has a great respect
for the attainments of Members of the Medical profession, cannot
understand why Army Doctors should be called "non-competents."

* * * * *

THE MODERN MILKMAID'S SONG.

(AT THE DAIRY SHOW.)

AN EXTRACT FROM THE "COMPLETE ANGLER" OF THE FUTURE.

Piscator, MAUDLIN, I pray you, do us the courtesy to sing a song
concerning your late visit to London.

MAUDLIN _sings_ :--

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That come in competition's field
From reckoning up the Shorthorn's "yield."

To Town we'll come in modish frocks,
Where swells appraise our herds and flocks,
By days "in profit" great or small,
All in the Agricultural Hall.

Cockneys shall come and poke their noses
Into our churns as sweet as roses;
And to quiz MAUDLIN in clean kirtle
The toffs of Town will crush and hurtle.

You'll see the Queen, of pride chock-full,
Take first prize with her Shorthorn bull;
Dr. H. WATNEY, of Buckhold,
With "Cleopatra" hit the gold.

A medal or a champion cup
For cheese to munch, or cream to sup,
Are pleasures rural souls to move,
So live with me and be my love.

Butter and eggs, milch cows and churns,
With cattle foods shall take their turns;
If Dairy Shows thy mind have won,
Then come with me to Islington.

Viator. Trust me, Master, it is an apt song, and archly sung by
modish MAUDLIN. I'll bestow a bucolic Cockney's wish upon her, _that
she may live to marry a Competitive Dairyman, and have good store of
champion cups and first prizes stuck about her best parlour._

* * * * *

A LICENCE FOR LORDS.

[At the Blackheath Petty Sessions, Mr. LAWLESS, stated that the Trafalgar Hotel, belonged to the Lords of the Admiralty, and asked the Bench to transfer the licence to the resident caretaker.

Captain ROBERTSON-SHERSBY, J.P.: Why not transfer it to the First Lord of the Admiralty? Are there no whitebait dinners held there?

Mr. LAWLESS said that he was afraid that the days of whitebait dinners were over.

The Bench, finding the Admiralty held the hotel for charitable purposes, granted the application.]

Come, landsmen, give ear to my ditty,
I'll make it as short as I can.
There was once--was it London?--a city
Which stretched from Beersheba to Dan.
Of course that is gammon and spinach,
Or, to put it correctly, a joke.
It extended from Richmond to Greenwich,
This city of darkness and smoke.

It had sailors who ruled o'er the ocean,
And sat all the day upon Boards,
And described, with delightful emotion,
Themselves and their colleagues as "Lords."
They had tubes that were always exploding,
And boilers that never were right,
But had all got a trick of exploding,
And blowing a crew out of sight.

They had docks (and, alas! they had dockers),
They had ships that kept sinking like stones,
Which resulted in filling the lockers
Provided below by D. JONES.
Of their country these lineal successors
Of NELSON deserved very well,
When at last they became the possessors
Of an old fully-licensed hotel.

And they made up a case which was flawless,
For the Sessions that sat at Blackheath,
And they sent--which was strange--Mr. LAWLESS,
Who was crammed full of law to the teeth.
"The days when we all lived in clover,
With whitebait, can never revive,
I assure you," said LAWLESS, "they're over,
But, oh, keep the licence alive."

But the Bench, when they heard him, grew bolder--
"Make it out to George Hamilton--he
Is the man who should figure as holder,"
Said ROBERTSON-SHERSBY, J.P.
Just to think of the head of the Navy,
The proudest and strongest afloat,

Cutting joints or distributing gravy,
First Lord of his own _table d'hote!_

Will their Charity be a beginner
At home? Will they dine there each day,
These Lords, on a succulent dinner,
Free, gratis, and nothing to pay?
Well, well, though we'd rather prefer ships
That burst not, we'll take what they give.
So we offer our thanks to their Worships
For permitting the licence to live.

* * * * *

[Illustration: AMUSEMENTS FOR THE GALLERY--AND THE MOB!]

* * * * *

[Illustration: "BEG PARDON, SIR! BUT IF YOU WAS TO AIM _AT_ HIS
LORDSHIP THE NEXT TIME, I THINK HE'D FEEL MORE COMFÖRBLER, SIR!"]

* * * * *

MR. PUNCH'S PRIZE NOVELS.

NO. III.--JOANNA OF THE CROSS WAYS.

(_BY_ GEORGE VERIMYTH, _AUTHOR OF "RICHARD'S SEVERAL EDITIONS," "THE
APHORIST," "SHAMPOO'S SHAVING-POT."_)

[With this story came a long, explanatory letter. The story,
however, is itself so clear and easy to understand (as is all
the work of this master), that the accompanying commentary is
unnecessary.]

CHAPTER I.

In the earlier portion of the lives of all of us there is a time,
heaven-given without doubt, for all things, as we know, draw their
origin thence, if only in our blundering, ill-conditioned way we trace
them back far enough with the finger of fate pointing to us as in
mockery of all striving of ours on this rough bosom of our mother
earth, a time there comes when the senses rebel, first faintly, and
then with ever-increasing vehemence, panting, beating, buffeting and
breasting the torrent of necessity, against the parental decree that
would drench our inmost being in the remedial powder of a Gregorian
doctor, famous, I doubt not, in his day, and much bepraised by them
that walked delicately in the light of pure reason and the healthful
flow of an untainted soul, but now cast out and abhorred of childhood
soaring on uplifted wing through the vast blue of the modern
pharmacopoeia. Yet to them is there not comfort too in the symbolic
outpourings of a primaeval wisdom which, embodied for all time in
imperishable verse, are chanted in the haunts of the very young like
the soft lappings of the incoming tide on a beach where rounded pebble
disputes with shining sand the mastery of the foreshore?

[Illustration]

So, too, while the infant chariot with its slow motion of treble

wheels advances obedient to the hand of the wimpled maid who from the rear directs its ambiguous progress, the dozing occupant may not always understand, but, hearing, cannot fail to be moved to tears by the simple tale of JOANNA crossed in all her depth and scope of free vigorous life by him that should have stood her friend. For the man had wedded her. Of that there can be no doubt, since the chronicles have handed down the date of it. Wedded her with the fatal "yes" that binds a trusting soul in the world's chains. A man, too. A reckless, mutton-munching, beer-swilling animal! And yet a man. A dear, brave, human heart, as it should have been; capable, it may be, of unselfishness and devotion; but, alas! how sadly twisted to the devil's purposes on earth, an image of perpetual chatter, like the putty-faced street-pictures of morning soapsuds. His names stand in full in the verse. JOHN, shortened familiarly, but not without a hint of contempt, to JACK, stares at you in all the bravery of a Christian name. And SPRATT follows with a breath of musty antiquity. SPRATT that is indeed a SPRATT, sunk in the oil of a slothful imagination and bearing no impress of the surname that should raise its owner to cloudy peaks of despotic magnificence.

But of the lady's names no hint is given. We may conjecture SPRATT to have been hers too, poor young soul that should have been dancing instead of fastened to a table in front of an eternal platter. And of all names to precede it the fittest surely is JOANNA. For what is that but the glorification with many feminine thrills of the unromantic chawbacon JOHN masticating at home in semi-privacy the husks of contentment, the lean scrapings of the divine dish which is offered once in every life to all. So JOANNA she shall be and is, and as JOANNA shall her story be told.

CHAPTER II.

Many are the tales concerning JOANNA's flashing wit. There appeared many years back, in a modest shape that excited small interest amongst the reviewing herd, a booklet whereof the title furnished little if any indication to the contents. *The Spinster's Reticule*, for so the name ran, came forth with no blare of journalistic trumpets challenging approval from the towers of critical sagacity. It appeared and lived. But between its cardboard covers the bruised heart of JOANNA beats before the world. She shines most in these aphorisms. Her private talk, too, has its own brilliancy, spun, as it was here and there, out of a museful mind at the cooking of the dinner or of the family accounts. She said of love that "it is the sputter of grease in a frying-pan; where it falls the fire burns with a higher flame to consume it." [1] Of man, that "he may navigate Mormon Bay, but he cannot sail to Khiva Point." The meaning is too obvious it may be, but the thought is well imaged.

She is delightful when she touches on life. "Two," she says, "may sit at a feast, but the feast is not thereby doubled." And, again, "Passion may lift us to Himalaya heights, but the hams are smoked in a chimney." And this of the soul, "He who fashions a waterproof prevents not the clouds from dripping moisture." Of stockings she observes that, "The knitting-needles are long, but the turn of the heel is a teaser." Here there is a delightful irony of which matrons and maids may take note.

Such, then, was our JOANNA--JOANNA MERESIA SPRATT, to give her that full name by which posterity is to know her--an ardent, bubbling,

bacon-loving girl-nature, with hands reaching from earth to the stars, that blinked egregiously at the sight of her innocent beauty, and hid themselves in winding clouds for very love of her.

CHAPTER III.

Sir JOHN SPRATT had fashions that were peculiarly his own. Vain it were to inquire how, from the long-perished SPRATTS that went before him, he drew that form of human mind which was his. Laws that are hidden from our prying eyes ordain that a man shall be the visible exemplar of vanished ages, offering here and there a hook of remembrance, on which a philosopher may hang a theory for the world's admiring gaze. Far back in the misty past, of which the fabulists bear record, there have swum SPRATTS within this human ocean, and of these the ultimate and proudest was he with whose life-story we are concerned. It was his habit to carry with him on all journeys a bulky note-book, the store in which he laid by for occasions of use the thoughts that thronged upon him, now feverishly, as with the exultant leap of a rough-coated canine companion, released from the thralldom of chain and kennel, and eager to seek the Serpentine haunts of water-nymphs, and of sticks that fell with a splash, and are brought back time and again whilst the shaken spray bedews the onlookers; now with the staid and solemn progression that is beloved of the equine drawers of four-wheeled chariots, protesting with many growls against a load of occupants.

He had met JOANNA. They had conversed. "An empty table, is it not?" said she. "Nowhere!" said he, and they proceeded. His "Nowhere!" had a penetrating significance--the more significant for the sense that it left vague.

And so the marriage was arranged, the word that was to make one of those who had hitherto been two had been spoken, and the celebrating gifts came pouring in to the pair.

Sir JOHN walked home with triumph swelling high in his heart. Overhead the storm-clouds gathered ominously. First with a patter, then with a drenching flood, the prisoned rain burst its bars, and dashed clamouring down to the free earth. He paused, umbrellaless, under a glimmering lamp-post. The hurrying steeds of a carriage, passing at great speed, dashed the gathered slush of the street over his dark-blue Melton over-coat. The imprecations of the coachman and his jeers mingled strangely with the elemental roar. Sir JOHN heeded them not. He stood moveless for a space, then slowly drawing forth his note-book, and sharpening his pencil, he wrote the following phrase:--"Laid _Brother to Banjo_, one, two, three, 5 to 4."

CHAPTER IV.

A year had gone by, and with the spring that whispered softly in the blossoming hedge-rows, and the melancholy cry of the female fowl calling to her downy brood, JOANNA had learnt new lessons of a beneficent life, and had crystallised them in aphorisms, shaken like dew from the morning leaf of her teeming fancy.

They sat at table together. BINNS, the butler, who himself dabbled in aphorism, and had sucked wisdom from the privy perusal of Sir JOHN's note-book, had laid before them a dish on which reposed a small but well-boiled leg of one that had trod the Southdowns but a week before

in all the pride of lusty life. There was a silence for a moment.

"You will, as usual, take the fat?" queried Sir JOHN.

"Lean for me to-day," retorted JOANNA, with one of her bright flashes.

"Nay, nay," said her husband, "that were against tradition, which assigns to you the fat."

JOANNA pouted. Her mind rebelled against dictation. Besides, were not her aphorisms superior to those of her husband? The cold face of Sir JOHN grew eloquent in protest. She paused, and then with one wave of her stately arm swept mutton, platter, knife, fork, and caper sauce into the lap of Sir JOHN, whence the astonished BINNS, gasping in pain, with much labour rescued them. JOANNA had disappeared in a flame of mocking laughter, and was heard above calling on her maid for salts. But Sir JOHN ere yet the sauce had been fairly scraped from him, unclasped his note-book, and with trembling fingers wrote therein, "POOLE's master-pieces are ever at the mercy of an angry woman."

CHAPTER V.

But the world is hard, and there was little mercy shown for JOANNA's freak. Her husband had slain her. That was all. She with her flashes, her gaiety, her laughter, was consigned to dust. But in Sir JOHN's note-book it was written that, "The hob-nailed boot is but a bungling weapon. The drawing-room poker is better."

THE END.

[Footnote 1: I guarantee all these remarks to be intensely humorous and brilliant. If you can't see it, so much the worse for you. They are _screamers_.--G.V.]

* * * * *

"THE GRASSHOPPER" AT THE LYRIC.

[Illustration: "Turned on the Toe."--_Shakspeare_.]

Nothing prettier than _La Cigale_ at the Lyric Theatre has been seen in London for a very long time. The dresses are perfect, and the three stage pictures which illustrate the graceful story could not be better. Then the book is admittedly a model libretto, set to music at once fresh and charming. What more could be desired? Why capable exponents. Here, again, Mr. SEDGER is in luck's way. With Miss GERALDINE ULMAR as the Grasshopper, and Miss EFFIE CLEMENTS as the Ant, who could ask for more? Without replying to the question, it may be said at once that "more" is excellently represented by Mr. ERIC LEWIS as a Duke, Mr. LIONEL BROUGH as a Landlord (by the way the Uncle of the Ant), and Mr. E.W. GARDEN as the Bill of the Play. Perhaps on the first night the CHEVALIER SCOVEL as the _Chevalier de Bernheim_ was not quite at home in his new surroundings. Accustomed to a more serious kind of entertainment, he appeared a trifle heavy, and his tenor notes (not unsuggestive of the Bank of Elegance) were sometimes of doubtful value. By this time, however, no doubt, he has regained his normal composure, and sings as successfully as any of his colleagues.

After the last Act everyone was called, inclusive of the composers and the author; the latter, being at that very moment on his way to France, could not respond to the hearty applause with which his name was greeted, and must accordingly await the personal congratulations of the audience until his return from foreign parts. Mr. CARYLL who had done so much to musically illustrate the Christmas Tree Scene (thus meriting the title of Mr. CHRISTMAS CARYLL), was also not to be found when wanted, and so the Sole Lessee and Manager had nothing more to do than return thanks for all concerned, and make up his mind to a run that seems likely to keep him on his legs until Easter.

* * * * *

TO MR. STANLEY.

[At a meeting of the Cardiff Corporation on Tuesday, October 7, a letter was read from Mr. H.M. STANLEY stating, that he would be unable to fulfil his engagement to visit Cardiff and accept the freedom of the borough. All preparation for the ceremony had been made, and a costly silver casket, which is now useless, was specially ordered. Mr. STANLEY's excuse was pressure of business in preparing for his American tour.--_Daily Paper_.]

The Council at Cardiff looked angry and glum,
Their chagrin was so great it was useless to mask it,
They had only just heard you were not going to come,
And alack! and alas! they had ordered the casket!

The address had been settled; the language was tall,
The phrases were apt and so beautifully rounded,
They had told of your pluck so well known to us all,
And your praises, of course, they had suitably sounded.

And then you can't come!--But it scarcely avails
To become of excuses a common concocter,
For if "pressure of business" will keep you from Wales,
Why go down to Cambridge to pose as a Doctor?

Yes, think once again of your promise, and so
Just alter your mind, it would be much too hard if
You left unfulfilled your engagement to go
And receive (in a casket) the Freedom of Cardiff.

* * * * *

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