

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 101, September 19, 1891 eBook

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 101, September 19, 1891

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Contents

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 101, September 19, 1891 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	4
Page 1.....	5
Page 2.....	7
Page 3.....	9
Page 4.....	11
Page 5.....	13
Page 6.....	15
Page 7.....	17
Page 8.....	19
Page 9.....	21
Page 10.....	23
Page 11.....	24
Page 12.....	26
Page 13.....	28
Page 14.....	30
Page 15.....	32
Page 16.....	34
Page 17.....	35
Page 18.....	37
Page 19.....	38
Page 20.....	39
Page 21.....	40



Page 22.....	41
Page 23.....	43

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	
Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
Title: Punch, Volume 101, September 19, 1891	1
PUNCH,	1
ANNALS OF A QUIET WATERING- PLACE	14
CHAPTER V.	17

Page 1

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PUNCH,

Or the London charivari.

Vol. 101.

September 19, 1891.

[Illustration: *Off duty.*

The "Daily Graphic" Weather-Young-Woman gets her "Sundays out."]

* * * * *

Silence and sleep.

(LINES WRITTEN AT COCK-CROW.)

Night-time and silence! O'er the brooding hill
The last faint whisper of the zephyr dies;
Meadows and trees and lanes are hushed and still,
A shroud of mist on the slow river lies;
And the tall sentry poplars silent keep
Their lonely vigil in a world of sleep.

Yea, all men sleep who toiled throughout the day
At sport or work, and had their fill of sound,
The jest and laughter that we mate with play,
The beat of hoofs, the mill-wheel grinding round,



The anvil's note on summer breezes borne,
The sickle's sweep in fields of yellow corn.

And I too, as the hours go softly by,
Lie and forget, and yield to sleep's behest,
Leave for a space the world without a sigh,
And pass through silence into dreamless rest;
Like a tired swimmer floating tranquilly
Full in the tide upon a peaceful sea.

But hark, that sound! Again and yet again!
Darkness is cleft, the stricken silence breaks,
And sleep's soft veil is rudely rent in twain,
And weary nature all too soon, awakes;
Though through the gloom has pierced no ray of light,
To hail the dawn and bid farewell to night.

Still is it night, the world should yet sleep on,
And gather strength to meet the distant morn.
But one there is who, though no ray has shone,
Waits not, nor sleeps, but laughs all rest to scorn,
The demon-bird that crows his hideous jeer,
Restless, remorseless, hateful Chanticleer.

One did I say? Nay, hear them as they cry;
Six more accept the challenge of the foe:
From six stretched necks six more must make reply,
Echo, re-echo and prolong the crow.
First shrieking singly, then their notes they mix
In one combined cacophony of six.

Miscalled of poets "herald of the day,"
Spirit of evil, vain and wanton bird,
Was there then none to beg a moment's stay
Ere for thy being Fate decreed the word?
Could not ASCLEPIAS, when he ceased to be,
Take to the realms of death thy tribe and thee?

Page 2

What boots it thus to question? for thou *Art*,
And still shalt be; but never canst be still,
Destined at midnight thus to play thy part,
And when all else is silent to be shrill.
Yea, as I lie all sleepless in the dark,
I love not those who housed thee in the Ark.

* * * * *

"As good as A better."

Dr. Andrew Wilson (in "Science Jottings," in the *Illustrated London News*) dares disparage Golf "as an ideal game for young men," venturing to advocate the preferential claims of fogeyish Cricket, and even of futile Lawn Tennis—

"O Scots, wha hae wi' *Balfour* teed."

What *wull* ye say to this disloyal, slanderous, sacrilegious *Andy*? He hints that Golf is a mere modish fashion—even a *fin de siecle* fad!!! How many perfervid and patriotic Scots will

"Condemn his soul to eternal perdition
For his theory of the—National Game?"

He says "you hit a ball and walk after it, and manoeuvre it into a hole." Eugh! Such icy analysis would make Billiards a bore, and resolve "Knuckle-down" into nonsense! "It is not (*Golf* is not!) a proceeding (*proceeding, quotha!*) of which youths and young men should grow enamoured." As though, forsooth, Golf were a sort of elderly Siren luring limp and languorous youths into illegitimate courses; a *passee* Delilah, whose enervating fascinations sapped the virile vigour that might be dedicated to "that noblest of sports," Cricket, or even that "much better game," Lawn Tennis!!!

Surely the devotees of the Golf-cultus, the lovers of the Links, will be down like a "driver" upon Dr. *Wilson*. Oh, *Andy, Andy*, between you and your "brither Scots" there is henceforth "a great Golf fixed"!

* * * * *

A cricket paradox.

Though true without questioning, yet all the same,
It's a trifle perplexing to know what it means
That the counties that hate most to lose in a game
Would be pleased very much at your giving them Beans

* * * * *

Wigs on the (sea) Green!—Some Frenchman (we are told by *The Gentlewoman*) has done Ladies a good turn by inventing a Bathing Wig, which keeps the hair dry without making the fair bather look “a fright.” Hooray! *Sabrina* herself might shout for such an invention, which even the Nereids need not despise. *Dizzy* once sarcastically referred to certain “Bathing W(h)igs,” but they were of another sort. Not even the most adventurous Tory could “steal the clothes” of our latter day “Bathing Wigs.”

* * * * *

[Illustration: “*Fine Salmon you’ve got there, Poulter!*”—“*Sixty-five Pounds, my Lord! Shall I send it home to your Lordship?*”—“*Well—er—look here! Just cut me half A Pound out of the middle there, and give it me in A piece of paper!*”]

Page 3

* * * * *

The travelling companions.

No. VII.

Scene—A Second-Class Compartment on the line between Wurzburg and Nuremberg. PODBURY has been dull and depressed all day, not having recovered from the parting with Miss TROTTER. CULCHARD, on the contrary, is almost ostentatiously cheerful. PODBURY is intensely anxious to find out how far his spirits are genuine, but—partly from shyness, and partly because some of their fellow travellers have been English—he has hesitated to introduce the subject. At last, however, they are alone, and he is determined to have it out on the very first opportunity.

[Illustration: “Puts me in mind o’ the best part o’ Box ’Ill.”]

Culchard. Abominably slow train, this *Schnell-zug*. I hope we shall get to Nuremberg before it’s too dark to see the general effect.

Podbury. We’re not likely to be in time for *table d’hôte*—not that *I’m* peckish. (*He sighs.*) Wonder whereabouts the—the TROTTERS have got to by now, eh?

[*He feels he is getting red, and hums the Garden Scene from “Faust.”*]

Culch. (*indifferently*). Oh, let me see—just arriving at St. Moritz, I expect. Wonderful effect of colour, that is. [*He indicates the West, where a bar of crimson is flaming between a belt of firs.*]

Podb. (*absently*). Oh, wonderful!—where? (*Hums a snatch of a waltz.*) Dum-dum-diddle-um-tum-dum-dum-dum-ty-doodle; dum-dum—I say, *you* don’t seem particularly cut up?

Culch. Cut up? Why should I be cut up, my dear fellow?—about what?

[*Before PODBURY can explain, two Talkative British Tourists tumble up into the compartment, and he has to control his curiosity once more.*]

First T.T. Well, I ’ope we’re all right *now*, SAM, I’m sure—these German jokers have chivied us about enough for one journey! (*To CULCHARD.*) Not in your way, this ’at-box, Sir? Don’t give yer much space in these foreign trains. (*They settle down and the train starts.*) Pretty bit o’ country along ’ere!—puts me in mind o’ the best part o’ Box ’Ill—and I can’t say more for it than *that*!

Second T.T. (a little man with a sandy fringe and boiled-looking eyes). What I notice about the country abroad is they don't seem to 'ave no *landmarks*.

First T.T. (with a dash of friendly contempt). What d'yer mean—no landmarks—*signposts*?

Second T.T. (with dignity). I mean to say, they don't 'ave nothing to indicate which is JACK's property, and which is JOE's.

First T.T. Go on—they've as much as what we 'ave.

Second T.T. 'Ave they? We 'ave fences and 'edges. I don't see none 'ere. P'raps you'll point me *out* one?

Page 4

First T.T. There's precious few 'edges or fences in the Isle o' Thanet, as you'd know if you've ever been to Margit.

Second T.T. (loftily). I'm not talkin' about Margit now. I'm talkin' of 'ere, and I'll trouble you to show me a landmark.

First T.T. Depend on it they've their own ways of knowing which is 'oo's.

Second T.T. That's not what I'm sayin'. I'm sayin' there ain't nothing to *indicate* it. [*They argue the point at length.*]

Podb. (to CULCHARD). Then you really aren't cut up—about Miss T. you know?

Culch. (with the reserve of a man who only wants to be pressed). There is no reason that I am aware of, why I should be—but (*lowering his voice*) don't you think we had better wait till we are alone to discuss that subject?

Podb. Oh, all right. I'm not partic—at least. Well, I'm glad you *aren't*, you know, that's all.

[*He becomes silent again—but his face brightens visibly.*]

First T.T. (to Second Do.). See that field there? That's tobacco, *that* is.

Second T.T. What they make their penny smokes of. (*The train enters a station.*) What funny engines they do 'ave 'ere! I expect the guard'll be wanting to see our *billyetts* again next. It's as bad as it used to be with the passports. I've 'eard—mind yer, I don't know 'ow much likeli'ood there is in the assertion—that they're going to bring 'em in again. Most intricate they were about them. (*To CULCHARD.*) Why, if you'll believe me, a friend o' mine as 'ad one—well, they got 'is description down to a ioter! He'd a cast in 'is eye,—they put it down, and a pimple you'd 'ardly notice—but down *that* went!

First T.T. It's no use 'aving such things if they don't do it thoroughly.

Second T.T. (irrelevantly). I wish I 'adn't 'ad that glass o' peach wine where we changed last. (*A Guard appears at the window, and makes some guttural comments on the couple's tickets.*) Wechseln? Why, that means *wash*, don't it? I'm as clean as *him*, anyway. "Anshteigen,"—ah, I ought to know what *that* means by this time! SAM, my boy, we're bundled out again. I *told* yer 'ow it would be!

[*They tumble out, and the carriage is presently filled by an assortment of Germans, including a lively and sociable little Cripple with a new drinking-mug which he has just had filled with lager, and a Lady with pale hair and sentimental blue eyes.*]



Podb. We can talk all right *now*, eh? *They* won't understand. Look here, old fellow, I don't mind owning *I'm* rather down in the mouth about—you know what. I shouldn't care so much if there was any chance of our coming across them again.

Culch. (*cordially*). I am very glad to hear you say so. I was rather afraid you had taken a dislike—er—in that quarter.



Page 5

Podb. I?—is it *likely*! I—I admire her awfully, you know, only she rather seemed to snub me lately.

Culch. (with patronising reassurance). Quite a mistake on your part, I assure you, my dear fellow. I am sure she will learn to appreciate you—er—fully when you meet again, which, I may tell you, will be at no very distant date. I happen to know that she will be at the Italian Lakes early next month, and so shall we, if you let me manage this tour my own way.

Podb. (with surprise and gratitude). I say, old boy, I'd no notion you were such a nailing good chap! Nein, danky. *(To the little Cripple, who is cheerily inviting him, in pantomime, to drink from his mug.)* Cheeky little beggar. But do you really think anything will—er—come of it, if we do meet her again—*do* you now?

Culch. I—ah—have the best reasons for feeling tolerably certain of it. *[He looks out of window and smiles.*

Podb. But that cousin of hers—CHARLEY, you know—how about *him*?

Culch. I put that to her, and there is nothing in it. In fact, she practically admitted—*(He glances round and lowers his voice.)* I will tell you another time. That lady over there is looking at us, and I'm almost certain—

Podb. What if she is, she don't understand a word we're saying. I want to hear all about Her, you know.

Culch. My dear PODBURY, we shall have ample time to talk about her while we are at Nuremberg together—it will be the greatest pleasure to me to do so as long as ever you please.

Podb. Thanks, old chap! I'd no idea you were doing all this, you know. But just tell me this, what did she say about me?

Culch. (mystified). About you? I really don't recollect that she mentioned *you* particularly.

Podb. (puzzled). But I thought you said you'd been speaking up for me! What *did* you talk about then?

Culch. Well, about myself—naturally. *[He settles his collar with a vague satisfaction.*

Podb. (blankly). Oh! Then you haven't been arranging to meet her again on *my* account?

Culch. Good Heavens, no—what a very grotesque idea of yours, my dear fellow! [*He laughs gently.*]

Podb. Is it? You always gave out that she wasn't your style at all, and you only regarded her as a "study," and rot like that. How could I tell you would go and cut me out?

Culch. I don't deny that she occasionally—er—jarred. She is a little deficient in surface refinement—but that will come, that will come. And as to "cutting you out," why, you must allow you never had the remotest—

Podb. I don't allow anything of the sort. She liked me well enough till—till you came in and set her against me, and you may think it friendly if you like, but I call it shabby—confoundedly shabby.

Page 6

Culch. Don't talk so loud, I'm sure I saw that woman smile!

Podb. She may smile her head off for all I care. (*The train stops; the Cripple and all but the Pale-haired Lady get out.*) Here we are at Nuremberg. What hotel did you say you are going to?

Culch. The Bayrischer-Hof. Why?

[He gets his coat and sticks, &c., out of the rack.

Podb. Because I shall go to some other, that's all.

Culch. (in dismay). My dear PODBURY. this is really too childish! There's no sense in travelling together, if we're going to stay at different hotels!

Podb. I'm not sure I shall go any further. Anyway, while I *am* here, I prefer to keep to myself.

Culch. (with a displeased laugh). Just as you please. It's a matter of perfect indifference to *me*. I'm afraid you'll be terribly bored by yourself, though.

Podb. That's *my* look out. It can't be worse than going about with you and listening while you crow and drivel about her, that's one comfort! [*The Pale-haired Lady coughs in a suspicious manner.*

Culch. You don't even know if there *is* another hotel.

Podb. I don't care. I can find a pot-house somewhere, I daresay.

The Pale-haired Lady (in excellent English, to PODBURY as he passes out). Pardon me, you will find close to the Bahnhof a very goot hotel—the Wurtemburger.

[PODBURY thanks her and alights in some confusion; the Lady sinks back, smiling.

Culch. (annoyed). She must have understood every word we said! Are you in earnest over this? (*PODBURY nods grimly.*) Well, you'll soon get tired of your own society, I warn you.

Podb. Thanks, we shall see.

[He saunters off with his bag: CULCHARD shrugs his shoulders, and goes in search of the Bayrischer-Hof Porter, to whom he entrusts his luggage tickets, and takes his seat in the omnibus alone.

* * * * *

“ANGELS AND MINISTERS OF GRACE!”

[“The London Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* hears that certain ungallant Members of Parliament are threatening at the beginning of next Session to make a formal protest against the wholesale admission of ladies to the precincts of the House.”]

Ungallant! Vastly fine! But when they crowd
The terrace seats, elbow us in the lobbies,
Chatter and laugh, and care no more about
(Elderly) senators than boys or bobbies;
Why then, Sir, all M.P.’s of nerve and *nous*
Will say that, though we love the babbling beauties,
The swarming of these “Angels in the House,”
Will simply play the devil with its duties!

[Illustration: “NOS ET MUTAMUR IN ILLIS!”]

Page 7

(INTERNATIONAL FELINE AMENITIES.)

Fair French Republican. "SO YOU 'AVE RETURN FROM PARIS? HOW DID YOU LIKE IT?"

Lady Godiva. "OH, *PAS DE TOUT*—IT IS SO ALTERED FOR THE WORSE! FOR I CAN REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS IN THE DEAR OLD DAYS OF THE EMPIRE!"

Fair French Republican. "AH, MILADI, IS IT NOT POSSIBLE ZAT PARIS MAY FIND YOU A LITTLE BIT ALTERED TOO!"]

* * * * *

STORICULES.

IV.—A REVIEWER'S CONFESSION.

I am extremely fond of sitting and looking on; but I do not care about taking part in anything. There are some people who cannot even witness a cab accident without wanting to be the horse or the man who is sitting on the horse's head. They walk round the prostrate animal and give advice; and if they are allowed to help in any way, they are quite happy. If such people watch a game of any sort, they always wish they were taking part in it. I once went to a cricket-ground to eat luncheon, and I went with an enthusiast of this kind. We noticed that his attention seemed distracted, that he only replied in monosyllables when we spoke to him, and that there was something on his mind. "I would give," he exclaimed, at last—and it was the only remark that he had volunteered for half-an-hour—"I would give a year of my life for twenty minutes with that bowling." He was evidently deeply affected. "*Why* don't they take him off?" he moaned. There were tears in his eyes. I do not quite understand that feeling. I can watch absolutely anything, but I never want to do more. I was not made to undertake principal parts—I can witness amateur theatricals without wishing to be the prompter. I review novels, but I do not write them.

The other day I watched a game of tennis. I had placed the lounge-chair in a safe and shady position. I had got a paper-knife and the third volume with me. The cat had followed me out of the library, and sat down in a convenient position so that I could scratch it gently behind the ear if I wanted to. I was smoking a pipe that had just reached the right stage of maturity, and, in some indefinable way, made life seem richer and better. Everything was well arranged for the watching of tennis.

There were two players—BILL, a young son of the house, whom I knew intimately, and TOMMY, a boy of the same age, who had just come up from the Rectory. I had not seen TOMMY before. He was a nice-looking little boy, and wore a black necktie in the collar of his silk tennis-shirt. BILL is not good-looking; he is red and freckled, and grins

vastly. He was wearing rather unclean flannels, and did not look quite so refined and delicate as TOMMY. I compared the two boys, and thought that I preferred BILL. In the first game of the set, BILL, who plays wonderfully well, won easily; after that, my attention got fixed on that third volume. I turned down a corner of the page whenever I came

Page 8

across anything that was at all conventional. I was reading the book for review, and my notice of it was to appear in *The Scalpel* on the following Saturday. It was, on the whole, a capital novel, but it was by an author who had been, I thought, more successful than was good for him. He had been elected freely to the best Clubs. During the season he had gone everywhere. Many editions of his book had been sold. He had acquired a little cult who said extravagant things about him in the literary papers. It is sickening to see a man revered during his lifetime. I could imagine him posing before his cult and being pleased; even before I had read a page of his novel, I had made up my mind to administer to him a wholesome corrective in the pages of *The Scalpel*. I was rather sorry to find that it was really a capital novel; but it had enough faults for my purpose.

I had read for some time before I turned my attention to the game again. When I did so, I was startled, for it was perfectly obvious that BILL was giving the game away. His usual service is a little like invisible lightning with a bend in it; he was now serving in a modified manner, which he generally uses only when he is playing with girls who are not his sisters. It was also obvious that TOMMY, who looked very elated, fully believed that he was winning on his own merits, and had no idea that BILL was merely allowing him to win.

[Illustration]

“My game—and set!” cried TOMMY, joyously.

“You’ve improved awfully,” said BILL.

I could not imagine why BILL had intentionally lost that set, for I knew that he hated losing. When TOMMY had gone home again to the Rectory, BILL came up to me to ask how old I thought a man ought to be before he began smoking. I said that I thought thirty-six was about the right age, and asked BILL why he had let TOMMY win.

“Oh, nothing particular,” said BILL, in his matter-of-fact way; “only I’d never seen him wear that kind of tie before, and I asked him what he was doing it for, and he said it was for his aunt; she died a few weeks back; so I thought I might as well give him the set to make up for it.”

I was rather amused. “TOMMY looked very pleased with himself,” I said.

“Yes, he’ll brag about that game all over the place,” replied BILL, rather despondently. For a moment or two he was silent, imagining the triumph and pride of TOMMY. “I’d punch his head as soon as look at him,” he added.

“What on earth for? He thought he’d won by play.”

“He can’t play any more than a cow, but that’s not it. I hate to see anyone get so glorious about anything. Well, I don’t know—it’s kind of natural. He’d have had a right to brag, if he had really won, and he thought he did.”

“Anyhow,” I said, severely, “it’s a mean trick to want to damage anyone, just because he’s pleased with himself when he’s got a right to be.”

Page 9

"Well, yes—I'll give you thirty."

"Can't play. I'm going to finish this novel, BILL."

"Is that one of the books you write about in the papers?"

"Yes."

"Are you going to praise it, or cut it up?"

"I'm going to give it such a—well, no, on second thoughts, I believe I'm going to praise it." And I did.

* * * * *

LETTERS TO ABSTRACTIONS.

NO. III.—TO POMPOSITY.

MY DEAR POMPOSITY,

It was only yesterday that I dined with BULMER, the wealthy brewer, in his magnificent mansion in the neighbourhood (I dare not be more precise) of Belgrave Square. You know as well as I do that BULMER's origin, though it may not have been humble, was certainly obscure. Nobody quite knows how he first managed to become a partner in the great concern which he now entirely controls. Fifteen years ago few people ever heard of or drank the "Pellucid Ale" without which no tap-room and few middle-class luncheon tables can now be considered complete. Suddenly, however, column upon column of the daily press overflowed, as it were, with those two magic words; analytical chemists investigated the properties of the beverage, and one and all pronounced it in highly technical language to contain more bone-forming and sinew-developing elements than any other known beer. The poetry-and-beer-loving public was fascinated by a series of memorable stanzas:—

[Illustration]

"The hardy Briton loves good cheer,
His mighty sinews never fail:
'Pour me,' he cries 'a draught of Beer,
And let it be Pellucid Ale.'"

So the verse began, and it was illustrated by a flaring symbolical picture in two compartments. In the first a throng of gaunt and miserable creatures was represented crawling with difficulty towards an immense barrel, astride which sat a lusty, hop-crowned deity. In the second, every member of the same throng had become stout and

hearty. The hollow cheeks were round and shining with health, the bent backs were straight, the dreary faces were wreathed in smiles, and every hand held a foam-topped glass of "Pellucid Ale." Underneath were painted the words, "After one glass." Even without the title, the inference was obvious; the confiding public drew it, and immense quantities of BULMER's ale, almost simultaneously, and the result was that, in a very short time, BULMER might have rolled in money if he had felt disposed—as, to do him justice, he never did—to render himself ridiculous. Now what is there in the fact that BULMER has made a fortune in beer that should inflate him to so insufferable an extent? Can it be that there is some mysterious property in the liquid itself, some property which, having escaped even the careful investigation of the analytical chemists, has pervaded the being of BULMER, and has induced him to patronise the inhabited world? I thought so once. Indeed I have lost myself

Page 10

in conjectures on this point. But I now know that BULMER has fallen under your sway, and that you, my dear POMPOSITY, direct his every movement, and inspire his every thought. Now, the other night, when, as I say, I was dining at his table, BULMER was in one of his most glorious and vain-glorious moods. Patronage radiated from him upon my humble self and the rest of the tribe of undoubted inferiors whom he permitted to bask in his shining presence.

“My dear boy,” said BULMER to me, while he inserted his thumbs in the arm-openings of his waistcoats, and drummed an approving tattoo upon his shining shirt-front, “my dear boy, I have always been your friend, and nobody knows it better than you. Many a time have I proved it to you, and I can honestly assure you that nothing gives me greater pleasure than to welcome you in person to my humble home.”

I thanked the great man deferentially, and assured him I was deeply sensible of his many kindnesses. But after he had turned away, some malicious spirit prompted me, in spite of myself, to reflect upon the favours that BULMER has conferred upon me. Were they, after all, so numerous and so great? Was I, on the whole, so poor a worm as he imagined me to be? Had he in fact made me what I am? These ungrateful thoughts chased one another through my perplexed brain, and I was forced to acknowledge to myself that at the various crises of my career the fairy form of BULMER had been absent. Yet BULMER is firmly convinced that I owe any modest success I may have attained and all my annual income to his beneficent efforts on my behalf. And the worst of it is, that he has a kind of top-heavy and overwhelming good-nature about him. He honestly means to be kind and genial where he only succeeds in irritating his perverse acquaintances. Was BULMER always thus? When he began on his small salary, did he patronise the office-boy? When he had learnt to spell, did he devote his first epistolary efforts to the pompous patronage of his parents? I fancy I can hear him declaring to his tottering father that a man so blessed in his son might well console himself for many a grievous disappointment, and the old man I am sure meekly accepted his son’s assurance, and joined with his wife in thanking providence for granting them so great a happiness. But BULMER has different fashions of showing his superiority. I will do him the credit of saying that I do not believe him to be a Snob. He does not prostrate himself before the great, since he believes himself to be greater than they can ever be. But he knows that ordinary human nature is apt to be impressed by the appearance of intimate familiarity with persons of title. And BULMER therefore uses the Peers of his circle as instruments wherewith he may belabour the minds of his humbler friends.

“The Marquis of CHEDDAR,” he will say, in a tone of grandeur, “did me the honour to consult me about his furniture to-day, and I told him what I thought. The fact is her Ladyship has no taste, and the Marquis has less, but I arranged it all for them.”

Page 11

And I am certain that BULMER spoke the truth, but I am equally certain that it was unnecessary for him to mention the subject at all. Yet little KINKES, I know, went away persuaded that the aristocracy trembled at BULMER's nod, and that to know him was a privilege. Unfortunately BULMER, with all his good-nature, wearies me, I know I am not worthy to tie his shoe-string, but I am disposed to imitate MONTROND, who, when he was told that he cheated at cards, replied, "*C'est possible, Monsieur, mais je n'aime pas qu'on me le dise,*" and flung his wine-glass in his accuser's face. Cease, my dear POMPOSIT, to torment me by means of BULMER. I may address you again, but, in the meantime,

I remain, your humble Servant,
DIOGENES ROBINSON.

* * * * *

A ROYAL (OLYMPIC) DIVORCE.

(A PAGE FROM FRENCH HISTORY BY MRS. MARKHAM, AFTER W.G. WILLS.)

[Illustration: Wills and Ways; or, a Hand at Nap.]

And so, when NAPOLEON had won Austerlitz, he thought he would marry MARIE LOUISE, Archduchess of Austria, although, as you know, he was already wedded to JOSEPHINE, his first wife. To effect this purpose, he sent his Minister of State, TALLEYRAND, and two comic Marshals, called MURAT and NEY, to see the EMPRESS and explain to her his wishes; and this they did with so much effect that Her Majesty consented, and fainted on the spot. Whether the swoon was real, or in another sense a feint, is not known, because she was a mistress of deception. For instance, although she was nearly a negress in complexion, she managed, at the Palace of Fontainebleau, to appear in a flaxen wig, and with all the appearance of a blonde beauty. Shortly after the EMPEROR's marriage with his new wife, that lady called upon her predecessor, and behaved in such a fashion that JOSEPHINE was justified in calling her "vulgar." A little later, with the assistance of a British Dramatist, called W.G. WILLS (who had already made some alterations in the History of England for the benefit of CHARLES THE FIRST and Mr. HENRY IRVING), she managed to protect the baby King of Rome from a *ballet* mob in the Gardens of the Tuileries, and also to afford considerable assistance to her Austrian successor while that "vulgar" person was crawling up some stone steps. Later still, she contrived to have an affecting interview on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo with NAPOLEON himself, although it has been reported in some quarters that she had become defunct a year before the occurrence of that important victory. It was on this occasion that the Hero of Austerlitz gave a most valuable testimonial to the British Army, to whom he referred as "bull-dogs who never knew when they were beaten," and soldiers with iron-like tenacity. JOSEPHINE subsequently died of visions

at Malmaison to the soothing sound of soft music kindly supplied by a semi-concealed orchestra.

CONVERSATION ON A ROYAL (OLYMPIC) DIVORCE.

Page 12

Mrs. Markham. And now, dear little FRANK, can you tell me why the Battle of Waterloo was lost?

Frank. Because, dear Mamma, it was removed from its resting-place in the Panorama close to Victoria Street.

Mrs. Markham. That is a most intelligent reply, but I do not think you are quite right. I fancy the Battle must have been lost because, out of the couple of dozen or so of French soldiers who took part in the Victory in Wych Street, a considerable number had to be told off to see that NAPOLEON's charger behaved himself.

[Illustration: Waterloo in Play; or, the Charge of a Charger.]

George. And yet, dear mother, after the performances, I myself saw the noble steed trotting most good-naturedly in rear of a hansom cab.

Mrs. Markham. When you are all older, I will take you myself to examine the Model of the celebrated Battle in the Royal United Service Institution; in the meanwhile, you may rest satisfied with the explanation I have afforded you.

Mary. But mother, dear, do you not think that NAPOLEON and his Army may possibly have trembled at the red fire and the picture of carnage on the painted canvas, that, on the occasion under discussion, confronted them?

Mrs. Markham. It is not improbable; and now, CHARLES, can you tell me anything about NAPOLEON?

Charles. Yes, dearest Mamma. He was strikingly like Mr. BOLTON the excellent Member of Parliament, who represents so ably a portion of St. Pancras, and had a curious and clever way of hugging his elbows when his arms were crossed behind his back.

Mrs. Markham. That was indeed the case, and I am glad to see that you have paid so much attention to historical accuracy. And you, MARY, what do you know about the Ladies-in-waiting upon the Empress JOSEPHINE?

Mary. That even in the direst straits they were fond of practical joking. One of them, for instance, on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo, finding a general's uniform, that for some unaccountable reason was hanging up in an inn at Jenappes, assumed the costume, and, thus disguised, had a great deal of fun with her husband, the Marshal AUGEREAU, who was then on his way to the front, with the avowed purpose of engaging the allied armies of England and Prussia in mortal combat.

Mrs. Markham. And you, FRANK—what do you know of TALLEYRAND?

Frank. That there seemed to be some doubt about his proper title. Some called him “Monseigneur,” some “Monsieur,” and some even “My shoe” and “My sheer.”

Mrs. Markham. Well, my dear children, you all seem to have been very observant, and let me hope that if *A Royal Divorce* does not exactly add to the reputation of NAPOLEON, JOSEPHINE, Mr. WILLS, or MARIE LOUISE, it may yet fill the coffers of Miss GRACE HAWTHORNE.

* * * * *

Page 13

NAVAL NOTE.—The Shibboleth of international courtesy in these days of big Iron-clad Fleets should surely be, “May it please your Warships!”

* * * * *

SONG OF THE SHAMPOOED ONE (AFTER TENNYSON),—“Sweet after showers ambrosial (h)air!”

* * * * *

[Illustration: CAUSE AND EFFECT.

“MY LITTLE BOY, SIR, DIED WHEN HE WAS ONLY TWO MONTHS OLD, JUST AFTER HE HAD BEEN VACCINATED.”

“HOW VERY SAD! HAD HE BEEN BAPTISED?”

“YES, SIR; BUT IT WAS THE *VACCINATION* AS CARRIED HIM OFF, SIR!”]

* * * * *

THE MODERN “BED OF PROCRUSTES.”

[PROCRUSTES, or “the Stretcher,” was the surname of one POLYPEMON, a Greek “gentleman of the road,” whose amiable habit was to stretch or shorten the bodies of travellers who fell into his hands, so as to make them of the same length as a certain bed of his upon which it was his wont to tie them.]

To shorten the long, and to lengthen the short,
May have made the Greek robber-chief excellent sport;
But the Stretcher’s strange pallet-rack seems out of date
In the land of the free, ’neath a well-ordered State.
MENIPPUS told NIREUS,[1] that pet of the ladies,
Equality perfect prevaieth in—Hades
“Where all are alike.” Said THERSITES, “for me
That’s enough,” but *beau* NIREUS could hardly agree
With such levelling down to the churl who for shape
In his strange second life chose the form of an ape.
For THERSITES & Co., for the weakly and small,
Who in free competition must go to the wall,
The plan of PROCRUSTES has obvious charms:
“Cut ’em down to *our* standard, chop legs, shorten arms!
Bring us all to one level in power and pay,
By the rule of a legalised Eight Hours Day!”
So shouts Labour’s Lilliput—that is *its* voice,



And the modern PROCRUSTES thereat must rejoice.
“No giants, no dwarfs!” So say BROWNING and BURT,
But to “raise the whole race” can’t be done in a spurt,
And while Nature provides us with genius *and* clown,
There is nought to be gained by mere levelling down.
So the plan of PROCRUSTES, my boys, will not work,
Or will benefit none save the sluggard or shirk.
Oh yes, the bold bully stands swaggering there
With the axe in his hand, and his head in the air,
Type of heedless Compulsion, the shallow of pate,
Who man’s freedom would sell to a fetish of State.
Self-help and joint effort, as BURT wisely said,
Are better by far than—that comfortless bed.
That new Little-Ease that free Labour would pack,
On a sort of plank-pillow combined with a rack.
“Come on, longs and shorts!” shouts PROCRUSTES the New,
“Law shall lend us its axe, and its rope, and its screw
I must make you all fit to my Bed standard-sized!”

Page 14

Ah! Labour may well look a little surprised.
“Fit us all to *that* cramped prison-pallet! Oh lor!
It may suit a few stumpies, but England holds more.
Might as well fit us out with fixed ‘duds’ from our birth.
Regardless of difference in growth, or in girth.
No! Snap-votes may be caught ‘midst a Congress’s roar,
But tool us all down to one gauge, mate? Oh lor!!!”

New Unionist Titan and Stentor in one,
To pose as PROCRUSTES may seem rather fun;
When it comes to the pinch of experiment, then
You may find that some millions of labouring men
Of all sorts and sizes, all callings and crafts,
The toilers by furnaces, factories, shafts,
The thrall of the mine, and the swart stithy slave,
The boys of the bench, and the sons of the wave,
Are not quite so easy to “size up” all round
To that comfortless bed where you’d have them all bound,
As the travellers luckless who fell in the way
Of the old Attic highwayman THESEUS did slay.
Though your voice may sound loud and your thews look immense,
You may fall to the THESEUS—of Free Common Sense!
As BURT says—and his eloquence moves but beguiles not—
On short cuts to Millennium Providence smiles not!

[Footnote 1: LUCIAN’s *Dialogues of the Dead*.]

* * * * *

APPROPRIATE LOCATION.—“Yes,” said a friend of the person they were discussing,
“he is a great traveller, and tells you some of the most marvellous stories.” “Where does
he live?” was the question. And the very natural answer was, “Oh, in some out-and-out-
lying district.”

* * * * *

[Illustration: THE MODERN “BED OF PROCRUSTES.”]

PROCRUSTES. "NOW THEN, YOU FELLOWS; I MEAN TO FIT YOU ALL TO MY LITTLE BED!"

CHORUS. "OH LOR-R!!"

["It is impossible to establish universal uniformity of hours without inflicting very serious injury to workers."—*Motion at the recent Trades' Congress.*]]

* * * * *

THE BITTER CRY OF THE OUTCAST CHOIR-BOY.

[Illustration]

Break, break, break,
O voice, on my old top C!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me!

O, well for the fishmonger's boy
That he shrieks his two notes above A.!
O, well for the tailor's son
That he soars in the old, old way!

And the twelve-year chaps go on
Up the gamut steady and shrill;
But, O, for the creak of a larynx cracked,
And a glottis that won't keep still!

Break, break, break,
O voice, on my dear top C.
But the swell solo parts of a boyhood fled
They'll never give more to me!

* * * * *

ANNALS OF A QUIET WATERING-PLACE

Page 15

THAT HAS "SEEN ITS DAY."

This is the nineteenth day that I have had my face glued to the window-pane watching for the promised "break" in the weather that is to enable me to get a little of the benefit of the sea-air of this place that my doctor assures me is "to do such wonders for me in a week that I shall not know myself." What it might do for me if I could only get hold of it, I can only guess, but the result of the persistent rain has been slowly but surely to empty the Grand Esplanade, the drawing and dining-room floors of which announce on colossal cards that the whole twenty-four establishments are "to let," with the result that all the recreation that Torsington-on-Sea affords has formed a sort of conspiracy to drive me mad with amusement.

The trombone of the town band steals a march on the rest, commencing as early as eight o'clock in the morning with a very powerful rendering of "*Il Balen*," who is succeeded in turn by the discarded Christy Minstrel with the damaged concertina. Then comes a Professor in black velvet spangled tights, who insists, spite my shaking my head at him dolefully through the drizzling mist, in going through a drawing-room entertainment for the amusement and edification of a Telegraph-office Boy, who has apparently only one message to deliver, and it is to be presumed finds time hang in consequence a little heavily upon his hands. Spite my menacing and almost fierce refusal to appear at my window, however, he has the hardihood to knock, and ask for a "trifle." This, if I could only ensure that he would devote it to the purchase of a place on the coach to Barminster, I would gladly give him; but knowing that it will only enable him to make an early breakfast of cold gin and bitters at the "Boar's Head and Anchor," I shake my fist at him, as much as to say, "I am feeble I admit, and do not, I dare say, look as if there were much fight in me! But, by Jove! there is such a thing as the law, even, I suppose, at Torsington-on-Sea! You had best not tempt me too far, my fine fellow."

His reply to this is characteristic; at least, I think so. For within twenty minutes the discarded Christy Minstrel, the Silvery-voiced Tenor, some performing dogs, the whole of the Town Band, the Man with the Bath-chair and general crowd of "loafers," assemble opposite my dining-room windows, braving south-west wind (half a gale of it), and a general downpour, leaden sky, and indications of "being in" for "another day of it."

I feel quite convinced that the Professor in velvet tights has rapidly whipped up the whole place with some such sentence as "No. 27 on the Grand Esplanade. Give the Old Bloke there a taste. He wants waking up a bit!"

I write to my Medical Adviser. One day is much like another here, I cannot say I go forward very fast. I admit the weather has been against me here; still, things might, I think, have been better.

Take this, for instance, as a typical day for an invalid. It is hardly the sort of place to “pick up” in; at least, so it strikes me.

Page 16

9 A.M.—Am disturbed after a windy night, which has threatened, to blow the front of the house (one of the twenty-four commanding a fine sea-view “both ways”) off, and in my first and only turn of refreshing sweet sleep, by the Silvery-voiced Tenor, who persists, spite entreaties, requests, and finally threats, to move a little further away, or curtail a singularly florid version of “*Fra Poco*” under eighteen-pence. On, at length, threatening to send for the police if he declines to desist, he meets the announcement with shouts of derisive laughter, a fact which, Mrs. COBBLES, my landlady, is kind enough to explain, indicates that “The Policeman,” not retiring till half-past one that morning, he will not be available, even for a murder, before two o’clock in the afternoon. I compromise the matter, therefore, by sending out sixpence to the Silvery-voiced Tenor, begging Mrs. COBBLES to give as heartrending a description as possible of my exhausted condition, which has the effect of wringing from the MARIO of Torsington an expression of sympathy, and an intimation that he will finish “*Fra Poco*” round the corner.

[Illustration]

But ill news travels apace, and within ten minutes the discarded Christy Minstrel with the concertina that is somewhat out of order, and the Town Band (reduced to three), as if by common consent, together with the man in black velvet spangled tights, a short walking-stick, wash-hand basin, and small square of carpet, draw up, as if by magic, before Mrs. COBBLES’ lodgings, and with the un-earning increment of Torsington-on-Sea as audience, commence a simultaneous *matinee* for my special benefit at twenty-five minutes and a half to ten.

Mrs. COBBLES’ assurance that the poor gentleman has “not closed his eyes all night” seems only to stimulate them to further effort. As I feel that even twenty minutes of this recreation will certainly drive me mad, I beg Mrs. COBBLES to send the boy who comes to clean the boots and knives to disturb the One Policeman in his first sweet slumber. If nothing else will stir him, he is to be informed that No. 34 on the Esplanade is on fire, or if that fails, he may throw in 33 and 35 as well. In fact, he need not be particular as to facts, but *return with the Policeman he must!* There is a good-sized crowd assembled on the Esplanade, but as I am attired in a scarlet flannel dressing-gown, white nightcap, and am arguing the Act of Parliament with the deserted Christy Minstrel with some warmth, it may account for it.

* * * * *

THE KING OF THE BEASTS.

A ZOOLOGICAL ELEGY.

[CHARLES JAMRACH, the celebrated naturalist and menagerie-keeper, of St. George’s-in-the-East, died on September 6, at the age of 76.]

Page 17

The news on the town like a thunderbolt burst,
The loss of the Season 'tis reckoned;
We mourned long ago for King JAMRACH THE FIRST,
Now we weep for King JAMRACH THE SECOND.
There's grief at the Zoo, all the Lions bohoo,
And the Elephants dolefully trumpet;
The Tiger's in tears, and the lonely Koodoo
With sorrow's as cold as a crumpet.
He was seventy-six; but to cross o'er the Styx
At that age—for a JAMRACH—was premature;
There are lots of young cubs who feel quite in a fix
At the thought that he will not see *them* mature.
They howl with wide gorges to think that St. George's
Will see him no more—ah! no, never!
He will not preside at their shin-of-beef orgies,
Or nurse them through phthisis or fever.
The travelling menagerie must wait an age 'ere he—
JAMRACH—will find any fellow.
BARNUM, 'tis well you are gone we can tell you!
Bison, old boy, do not bellow
There quite so tremendously! Sad? Oh, stupendously!
So is the Ornithorhynchus.
But don't howl the roof off, your anguish in proof of,
Or Regent's Park swells mad may think us.
Yes, Marsupial Mole, we are "left in the hole,"
But still we must think of our dignity.
Animal sorrow from bardlings must borrow
The true elegiac benignity.
That Japanese pug I could willingly hug,
He yaps out his grief so discreetly,
And dear Armadillo knows how to sing "Willow,"
Like poor *Desdemona*, most sweetly.
My dear *Felis Leo*, I do feel that we owe
A debt to the urban proprieties.
Don't shame yourself, Ursa, but quite *vice versa*,
You know how impressive caste's quiet is!
But, JAMRACH! O JAMRACH! Woe's stretched on no sham rack
Of metre that mourns you sincerely;
E'en that hard nut o' natur, the great Alligator,
Has eyes that look red, and blink queerly.
Mere "crocodile's tears," some may snigger; but jeers
Must disgust at a moment so doleful.



For JAMRACH the brave, who has gone to his grave,
All our sorrow's sincere as 'tis soulful!

* * * * *

TELLING THE WASPS.

(WITH ACKNOWLEDGMENTS TO THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY AND MR. ANDREW LANG.)

Cynics, and ye critics cold,
When the wasps return with Spring,
Tell them that THERSITES old
Perished in his fault-hunting,
Perished on an Autumn night.
Now no more he 'll ban and blight
In the "weeklies," as of yore;
But the valley and the height
Miss a biter and a bore!

* * * * *

[Illustration: MR. PUNCH HAS A LITTLE TOUR IN IRELAND.]

* * * * *

SOME CIRCULAR NOTES.

CHAPTER V.

Page 18

POPPERIE—NOISE—QUIET—
DESCENT—CERBERUS—PICTURE—CATACOMBS SENSATIONAL—STALACTITE
—SURMISES—
DREADS—POPPY—WEIRD—DESERTION—LOST—TERRORS—CANDLE—OUT!

Arrived! These are the works that POPPERIE & Co. built. On a height, commanding fine panoramic view. Approach to the house and stores is through a fresh-looking garden, everything neat and trim. Quite a surprise to find oneself suddenly among hundreds of casks and cases. Distant sound of carts and horses, of pulleys and cranks, of bringing in and sending out; but this sound is only a gentle hum—a murmuring accompaniment as it were; for, considering the amount of work that involves a lot of noise throughout the day, except, perhaps, during the feeding hours, the note of this place is its air of quiet activity. There is, I remark, a curious flavour in the atmosphere, that causes me to smack my lips, quite involuntarily, as if tasting wine. Remember somebody telling me, that the mere wine-laden atmosphere of the London Docks is quite enough to make anyone feel the worse for liquor, even though you do not touch a single drop in the vaults. We have not yet reached the vaults, but somehow there's something peculiarly exhilarating in the knowledge that we are in the outer court of one of King Champagne's many palaces. *Mem.* Grand idea for a scene in a Drury Lane Pantomime. Visit to Palace of POPPIN THE FIRST, king of the Champagne country. Register copyright and suggest it to Sir DRURY O'LANUS.

[Illustration]

DAUBINET has his hat in his hand and his overcoat over his arm. With his handkerchief he is mopping his fevered brow. "Piff!" he exclaims, "*qu'il fait chaud!* No? You don't find it? I do. *Caramba! O Champagnski! da Karascho! O Maman!* Come on! Here is our leader, *le bon VESQUIER! Allons! Marchons!* Long to reign over us!"—then as we move forward, DAUBINET again bursts into song, as usual more or less out of tune. This time he favours us with snatches of "*God save the Queen!*" and finally, as we enter a huge tunnel, and, as I judge from the steep incline, are commencing our descent into the cave, I hear his voice behind me singing "We're leaving thee in sorrow, ANNIE!"

Darker and darker as we descend through this tunnel. Orpheus going to find Eurydice. No Cerberus about, thank goodness. Wonder if any rats or blackbeetles? By the way, Cerberus would have been a nasty one for rats. Cerberus, with three to one on him ("Heads I win—tails you rats lose"), doing a match against time in killing rats, is a fine subject for a weird classical picture yet to be painted. What R.A. could grapple with so tremendous a composition? On returning to "carp the upper air," must mention the subject to Sir FREDERICK the Great. Cerberus would be a nasty one for rats to tackle. My ideas of anything alive underground are generally associated with suchlike warmint. At last—out of the tunnel! and now, I presume, in the caves.

Page 19

Here someone, gradually assuming a palpable form, emerges from somewhere out of a dark corner, and hands to each of us a long piece of wood about the length of a harlequin's bat (*note*, pantomime again), only that this is an inch or so thick and quite two inches wide at one end, where presently a candle is fixed by an attendant sprite,—the slave of the tallow candle,—and the wand, so to speak, tapers off towards the handle. *A propos* of “tapers off”—the question occurs to me, later on, as we pass through labyrinths of dark passages, where should I be in the case of “taper off”? Beautiful title for sensational story—“Lost in the Catacombs.”

Our trusty guide, M. VESQUIER, is well ahead, and DAUBINET follows closely at my heels. Thus we proceed, and if this order is preserved throughout, I feel that the sensational romance above mentioned will not be written, at least not on this occasion. We are in stalactite caverns; I expect a subterranean lake,—of still champagne of course,—and a boat; strange silver foil and gold foil fish ought to be swimming about, and the name of the subterranean lake should be Loch Foil, Loch Gold or Silver Foil, according to the material. No, nothing of the sort. It is all quite dry; uncommonly dry; atmosphere dry; ground dry; and, gradually, throats dry. Probably, champagne also dry. But remembering what I have heard of someone else's experience of Dock-visiting, which I presume is similar to cave-visiting, I do not mention my sudden drought. I feel that, while down here, if I took one glass of champagne, my head first, and then my legs, might become unsteady, whereupon nothing would be more likely than for me to take the wrong turning and lose my companions; if I did, what are the chances against my ever finding them again? Or if my legs failed me and I disappeared between the casks, who would think of looking for me there? Then, years afterwards, in some specially and unaccountably good vintage year, when there would be a run upon these particular casks, my mouldering skeleton would be found, among the sawdust, between the barrels, and some purveyor of ballads would write a song whereof the burden would not be unlike that of the once popular “*Mistletoe Bough*.” As I follow my leader through the vaults all this occurs to me, as does also the appropriately melancholy refrain of another old song or “catch,” “Down among the dead men let him lie!”

We are under the central dome of this Stalactite Champagne Cathedral dedicated to the worship of Bacchus. [*Happy Thought*.—The Champagne country is the true “Poppy Land.” I present this with my compliments to Mr. CLEMENT SCOTT, whose pleasant articles in the *Daily Telegraph* on “Poppy Land” are, and will be, for some time to come, so deservedly poppylar on the North coast of Norfolk. When driving round and about Cromer, our flyman pointed out “Poppy Land” to me. *Happy Thought*.—In future let this be known as “Caledonia Up to

Page 20

Date, or the New Scott-land.”] A strange light descends from somewhere above, producing a blueish atmospheric effect. Weird, very. We are now in the Wine Demon’s Cave. More pantomimic effects: big demons and little demons at work everywhere: champagne demons with strange faces,—I should say “fizzes,”—moving about noiselessly: the only sound is that of the occasional irrepressible effervescence of youth, or a pop from a recalcitrant cork in a distant cell, and, in a mysterious all-pervading way, an accompaniment of hammering. The lights and awful shadows of the scene recall to my mind CRUIKSHANK’s grim illustrations to AINSWORTH’s *Tower of London*. If these wild figures under this Central Stalactited Dome, these fearsome Troglodytes, were suddenly to join hands and dance round us, keeping a “Witches’ Sabbath,” I should not feel surprised. I might be considerably alarmed; but surprised, no. It would be in keeping with the scene. Only where’s the music? Surely a Special Champagne Dance ought to be supplied by the orchestra of “The Monday Pops.”

Here DAUBINET, being tired, sits. He has seen it all before. “He knows his way,” explains M. VESQUIER, “and we shall meet him again above.” This sounds funereal, but, as an expression of Christian sentiment, hopeful.

DAUBINET, mopping his forehead, mutters something, in Russian I believe, which sounds like “*Preama! Pascarry! da padadidi*,” which he is perhaps rendering into English when he says, “Go straight on! Be quick! All r-r-r-right!”

Suddenly finding myself the only follower of our guide, I begin to realise to its full extent the loss of one who, up to now, has been my companion. I realise this one fact among others, but quite sufficient of itself, namely, that if I once lose sight of M. VESQUIER in this maze of caverns down in the depths below, I shall have the utmost difficulty in ever coming up to the surface again. Now we are walking on a line of rails. All at once I lose sight of M. VESQUIER. He must have turned off to the right or left—*which?*—and I shall see his light in the distance when I reach the opening into the right, or left, passage.... What’s that? A shriek? a howl? a flash!—“*He la bas!*” and at a rapid pace out of the blackest darkness emerge two wine-demons on a trolly. I have just time to reduce myself to the smallest possible compass against the barrels, when the wine-demons brandishing a small torch-light have whizzed past,—“Ho! Ho!”—goblin laughter in the distance, as heard in *Rip Van Winkle*, and described in *Gabriel Grub*—“Ho! Ho!”—and before I have recovered myself, they have vanished into outer and blacker darkness, and all around me the gloom is gloomier than ever.

[Illustration]

Page 21

"He! Monsieur VESQUIER!" I shout. I have taken a wrong turning; that is, I have taken some turning or other to the right, and there is no sign of my guide. My fears have come true. My forebodings are realised. I stumble on—over the tram-way lines—against the casks—"He, la bas! He! M. VESQUIER!!"—O dear!—"Home Sweet Home!" What was that negro melody that now recurs to me as a sort of singing in my ears—"Home once more! Home once more! Shall I ever see my home once more!!"—A shout in the distance—or is it an echo—no! Is it VESQUIER! I shout in return—then in the far distance I descry a light ... it grows bigger ... a shriek ... a wild waving of a blazing garish torch, and again I have to compress myself against the barrels as another trolley whizzes past at full speed, carrying two cheerful-looking, and except for that one shout, silent demons. "Hey trolley lolly!" I cannot stay there—they have gone like a flash—and the obscurity is becoming oppressive.... Shall I retrace my steps? It isn't a question of "shall I,"—it is "*can I*"? Through how many turnings have we come? No—I should never find my way back again. Better push on. I shout again: desperately but nervously. There is not even an echo. And now my candle, which has been guttering and sputtering for the last few moments, is threatening dissolution. It is the beginning of the end—of the candle-end. If the candle goes out before I do—Heavens! but I must move very cautiously. What a subject for a Jules-Verne novel! *Ah, how I should enjoy reading about it in a story!!* But as a personal experience ... Where am I? Is it straight on? or to the left?—I think there is a left passage—or to the right? I peer down in the hopes of seeing some evidence of life, at all events the glimmer of a light, which may probably mean my guide. No; not a sign. Are there rats here? If so.... the candle-end is sputtering worse than ever ... it is flickering ... What's to be done?... I shout "Hullo!" at the top of my voice. Yes, at the top of my voice, but at the bottom of the caves. Then the question occurs to me, of what use is it to shout in English? No one will understand me. The candle-end is making a final struggle for life. So must I. "*He', la bas!*" I shout "with all my might and main," like the celebrity of the old nursery tale, who jumped into a quickset hedge as an infallible remedy for blindness. No result. I think of the man in the dungeon who was eaten by rats. Well-known case, but quite forget the gentleman's name. Political prisoner probably whose offence had been "ratting"—and so his punishment was made "to fit the crime," as Mr. GILBERT's *Mikado* used to observe. Why do such grimly comic reminiscences occur to me now, when I am in so really awful a situation? So, once more I shout with desperation in my lungs, "*He! la—! bas!*"

And—oh, the joy—oh, the rapture!—there comes back to me—"He, la bas! Blass the Prince of WAILES!"

Page 22

It is DAUBINET. He advances from somewhere, from an opening, the existence of which I had never suspected.

“Here! This way! *Par ici, mon ami; par ici!*”

And in another minute I am with him—I am out—and *so is the candle-end*. Ah! I breathe again!

“The first time, I believe, that you have ever seen these caves,” observes M. VESQUIER, quietly, “which, one way and another, represent several miles of walking.” Then looking at his watch, he adds, “It is time for breakfast. You must be hungry.”

I am. Hungry, but oh! so grateful! If it weren’t so expensive, I should give a Champagne-window to the Reims Cathedral, *in piam memoriam* of my fortunate escape. A *real pane* (not coloured paper pretence) in a window would be an appropriate memorial. Or, at all events, I might give one small “light,” which, as recalling that little guttering, sputtering, candle, would be still more appropriate.

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OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

The Baron’s Assistant Reader reports again:—I have just read *The Book-bills of Narcissus, An Account rendered by* RICHARD LE GALLIENNE. (FRANZ MURRAY; Derby. Leicester and Nottingham.) It doesn’t make any difference to me whether this dainty little book was actually published at Derby or at Leicester or even at Nottingham, noted of old for lambs. It makes right pleasant reading, and that is the chief point. The Narcissus, about whose life (except in the matter of book-bills, by the way) we here learn a good deal, must have been an agreeable companion—for those who allowed the lad to have his own way, and always kept a spare L10 note handy for the humouring of his little caprices. His wayward moods, his innocent love affairs, his wanderings, his reading, his culminating grand passion, Mr. LE GALLIENNE renders his account of them all, and does it in a fresh and breezy style which suits his pleasant subject admirably. There is a special charm too about the graceful lyrics which sparkle here and there in the pretty little volume. In fact Mr. LE GALLIENNE is an artist. I don’t say a *genuine* artist, because he justly dislikes the qualification.

[Illustration]

OSCAR WILDE has desisted for a space from mere paradox, and gives us (am I late in thus noticing it?) *Lord Arthur Savile’s Crime. and other Stories*. (London, J.R. OSGOOD, MCILWAINE & Co.) *Macte virtute*, say I; the tag is old, but ’twill serve. If you want to laugh heartily, read *Lord Arthur Savile’s Crime*, the story of a deeply conscientious man to whom murder very properly presents itself as a duty. Then, if you

wish to laugh even more violently, read *The Canterville Ghost*, in which OSCAR goes two or three better than Mr. W.S. GILBERT. I am specially thankful to OSCAR. When he is on humour bent, he doesn't dig me in the ribs and ask me to notice what a wonderfully funny dog he is going to be. He lets his fun take care of itself, a permission which it uses with great discretion. Please, OSCAR, give us some more of the same sort, and pray introduce me once more later on to the *Duchess of Cheshire*. If she continues to be as delightful as she was in her sweet girlhood, I envy his Grace.

Page 23

The Baron is taking it easy. He has still by his side as his constant travelling companion, GEORGE MEREDITH's *One of Our Conquerors*, which has travelled to Switzerland with him, and was only left behind at the inn when the Baron had to go by a new route up a lofty mountain. To make this path known the Baron's assent was necessary, and he gave it. He had time, however, to read one shilling thrilling story. The Shilling Thrilling is by two authors, WALTER POLLOCK and ALEXANDER GALT, and is called *Between the Lines*. A happy title, as it enables the Baron to recommend everyone to *read between the lines*. A clever sensation story for which the Baron, now far away in his sea-girt home, thanks the two clever boys who wrote it. No more at present from

THE BARON DE BOOK-WORMS & Co.

Peak Castle, Eagle's Nest, N.E.W.

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VOX ET PRAETEREA NIHIL!

"Philosophy is essentially the Voice of the Silence."—A
Disciple of the Mahatmas.

Voice of the Silence? Brotherhood prodigious,
A babble-ridden age might well rejoice
Could you but give instead of talk litigious,
The Silence of the Voice.

* * * * *

"REAL MEAN."—The English Churchman, who, on returning from abroad, puts all his surplusage of Swiss silver—ten and twenty centime-pieces—into the offertory bag or plate.

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SHAKSPEARE (ADAPTED) AT THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS.—"We must Vote by the Card, or Equality will be our undoing."

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