

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 103, November 26, 1892 eBook

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LETTERS TO ABSTRACTIONS.

No. XVII.—*To failure.*

A Philosopher has deigned to address to me a letter. "Sir," writes my venerable correspondent, "I have been reading your open letters to Abstractions with some interest. You will, however, perhaps permit me to observe that amongst those to whom you have written are not a few who have no right whatever to be numbered amongst Abstractions. Laziness, for instance, and Crookedness, and Irritation—not to mention others—how is it possible to say that these are Abstractions? They are concrete qualities and nothing else. Forgive me for making this correction, and believe me yours, &c. *A Platonist.*"—To which I merely reply, with all possible respect, "Stuff and nonsense!" I know my letters have reached those to whom they were addressed, no single one has come back through the Dead-letter Office, and that is enough for me. Besides, there are thousands of Abstractions that the mind of "*A Platonist*" has never conceived. Somewhere I know, there is an abstract Boot, a perfect and ideal combination of all the qualities that ever were or will be connected with boots, a grand exemplar to which all material boots, more or less, nearly approach; and by their likeness to which they are recognised as boots by all who in a previous existence have seen the ideal Boot. Sandals, mocassins, butcher-boots, jack-boots, these are but emanations from the great original. Similarly, there must be an abstract Dog, to the likeness of which, in one respect or another, both the Yorkshire Terrier and the St. Bernard conform. So much then for "*A Platonist.*" And now to the matter in hand.

[Illustration]

My dear *failure*, there exists amongst us, as, indeed, there has always existed, an innumerable body of those upon whom you have cast your melancholy blight. Amongst their friends and acquaintances they are known by the name you yourself bear. They are the great army of failures. But there must be no mistake. Because a man has had high aspirations, has tried with all the energy of his body and soul to realise them, and has, in the end, fallen short of his exalted aim, he is not, therefore, to be called a failure. *Moses*, I may remind you, was suffered only to look upon the Promised Land from a mountain-top. Patriots without number—*Kossuth* shall be my example—have fought and bled, and have been thrust into exile, only to see their objects gained by others in the end. But the final triumph was theirs surely almost as much as if they themselves had gained it. On the other hand there are those who march from disappointment to disappointment, but remain serenely unconscious of it all the time. These are not genuine failures. There is CHARSLEY, for instance, journalist, dramatist, novelist—Heaven knows what besides. His plays have run, on an average, about six nights; his books, published mostly

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at his own expense, are a drug in the market; but the little creature is as vain, as proud, and, it must be added, as contented, as though Fame had set him, with a blast of her golden trumpet, amongst the mighty Immortals. What lot can be happier than his? Secure in his impregnable egotism, ramparted about with mighty walls of conceit, he bids defiance to attack, and lives an enviable life of self-centred pleasure.

Then, again, there was *Johnnie* TRUEBRIDGE. I do not mean to liken him to CHARSLEY, for no more unselfish and kind-hearted being than *Johnnie* ever breathed. But was there ever a stone that rolled more constantly and gathered less moss? Yet no stroke could subdue his unconquerable cheerfulness. Time after time he got his head above the waters; time after time, some malignant emissary of fate sent him bubbling and gasping down into the depths. He was up again in a moment, striving, battling, buffeting. Nothing could make *Johnnie* despair, no disappointment could warp the simple straightforward sincerity, the loyal and almost childlike honesty of his nature. And if here and there, for a short time, fortune seemed to shine upon him, you may be sure that there was no single friend whom he did not call upon to bask with him in these fleeting rays. And what a glorious laugh he had; not a loud guffaw that splits your tympanum and crushes merriment flat, but an irrepressible, helpless, irresistible infectious laugh, in which his whole body became involved. I have seen a whole roomful of strangers rolling on their chairs without in the least knowing why, while *Johnnie*, with his head thrown back, his jolly face puckered into a thousand wrinkles of hearty delight, and his hands pressed to his sides, was shouting with laughter at some joke made, as most of his jokes were, at his own expense.

It was during one of his brief intervals of prosperity, at a meet of the Ditchington Stag-hounds that I first met *Johnnie*. He was beautifully got up. His top-hat shone scarcely less brilliantly than his rosy cheeks, his collar was of the stiffest, his white tie was folded and pinned with a beautiful accuracy, his black coat fitted him like a glove, his leather-breeches were smooth and speckless, and his champagne-coloured tops fitted his sturdy little legs as if they had been born with him. He was mounted on an enormous chestnut-horse, which Anak might have controlled, but which was far above the power and weight of *Johnnie*, plucky and determined though he was. Shortly after the beginning of the run, while the hounds were checked, I noticed a strange, hatless, dishevelled figure, riding furiously round and round a field. It was *Johnnie*, whose horse was bolting with him, but who was just able to guide it sufficiently to keep it going in a circle instead of taking him far over hill and dale. We managed to stop him, and I shall never forget how he laughed at his own disasters while he was picking up his crop and replacing his

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hat on his head. Not long afterwards, I saw our little Mazeppa crashing, horse and all, into the branches of a tree, but in spite of a black eye and a deep cut on his cheek, he finished the run—fortunately for him a very fast and long one—with imperturbable pluck and with no further misadventure. “Nasty cut that,” I said to him as we trained back together, “you’d better get it properly looked to in town.” “Pooh,” said *Johnnie*, “it’s a mere scratch. Did you see the brute take me into the tree? By Jove, it must have been a comic sight!” and with that he set off again on another burst of inextinguishable laughter.

About a week after this, the usual crash came. A relative of *Johnnie* was in difficulties. *Johnnie*, with his wonted chivalry, came to his help with the few thousands that he had lately put by, and, in a day or two, he was on his beam-ends once more. And so the story went on. Money slipped through his fingers like water—prosperity tweaked him by the nose, and fled from him, whilst friends, not a whit more deserving, amassed fortunes, and became sleek. But he was never daunted. With inexhaustible courage and resource, he set to work again to rebuild his shattered edifice, confident that luck would, some day, stay with him for good. But it never did. At last he threw in his lot with a band of adventurers, who proposed to plant the British flag in some hitherto unexplored regions of South or Central Africa. I dined with *Johnnie* the evening before he left England. He was in the highest spirits. His talk was of rich farms, of immense gold-mines. He was off to make his pile, and would then come home, buy an estate in the country—he had one in his eye—and live a life of sport, surrounded by all the comforts, and by all his friends. And so we parted, never to meet again. He was lost while making his way back to the coast with a small party, and no trace of him has ever since been discovered. But to his friends he has left a memory and an example of invincible courage, and unceasing cheerfulness in the face of misfortune, of constant helpfulness, and unflinching staunchness. Can it be said that such a man was a failure? I don’t think so. I must write again. In the meantime I remain, as usual,

D.R.

* * * * *

Signs of the season.—“*Beauty’s Daughters!*” These charming young ladies are to be obtained for the small sum of one penny! as for this trifling amount,—unless there is a seasonably extra charge,—you can purchase the Christmas Number of the *Penny Illustrated*, wherein Mr. *Clement Scott* “our dear departed” (on tour round the world—“globe-trotting”), leads off with some good verses. Will he be chosen Laureate? He is away; and it is characteristic of a truly great poet to be “absent.” And the Editor, that undefeated story-teller, tells one of his best stories in his best style, and gives us a delightful picture of Miss *Elsie Norman*. “Alas! she is another’s! she never can be mine!” as she is Somebody Elsie’s. Success to your Beauties, Mr. LATEY, or more correctly,

Mr. *Early-and-LATEY*, as you bring out your Christmas Number a good six weeks before Christmas Day.



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* * * * *

Motto for the labour commission.—"The proper study of mankind is—*Mann!*"

* * * * *

The new employment.—Being "Unemployed."

* * * * *

[Illustration: *A Cabbin' it Council in November.*]

* * * * *

Cabbin' it Council.

(*In November.*)

Grand Old Jarvie, loquitur:—

O Lud! O Lud! O Lud!
(As *Tom Hood* cried, apostrophising London),
November rules, a reign of rain, fog, mud,
And Summer's sun is fled, and Autumn's fun done.
Far are the fields M.P.'s have tramped and gunned on!
Malwood is far, and far is fair Dalmeny,
And Harwarden,
Like a garden
(To Caucus-mustered crowds) glowing and greeny
In soft September,
Is distant now, and dull; for 'tis November,
And we are in a Fog!
Cabbin' it, Council? Ah! each *absent* Member
May be esteemed a vastly lucky dog!
The streets are up—of course! No Irish bog
Is darker, deeper, dirtier than that hole
SP-NC-R is staring into. On my soul,
M-RL-Y, we want that light you're seeking, swarming
Up that lank lamp-post in a style alarming!
Take care, my *John*, you don't come down a whopper!
And you, young R-S-B-RY, if *you* come a cropper
Over that dark, dim pile, where shall we be?
Pest! I can hardly see
An inch before my nose—not to say clearly.
Hold him up, H-RC-RT! He was down then, nearly,



Our crook-knee'd "crook." Seems going very queerly,
Although so short a time out of the stable.
Quiet him, *William*, quiet him!—if you're able.
This is no spot for him to fall. I dread
The need—just here—of "sitting on his head."
Cutting the traces
Will leave us dead-lock'd, *here* of all bad places!
Oh, do keep quiet, K-MB-RL-Y! You're twitching
My cape again! Mind, ASQ-*th*! You'll be pitching
Over that barrier, if you are not steady.
Fancy us getting in this fix—already!
Cabbin' it in a fog is awkward work,
Specially for the driver, who can't shirk,
When once his "fare" is taken.
I feel shaken.
'd rather drive the chariot of the Sun
(That's dangerous, but rare fun!)
Like Phaethon,
Than play the Jehu in a fog so woful
To this confounded "Shoful"!

* * * * *

[Illustration: *Real presence of mind.*

*Policeman X 24, drunk and almost incapable, is just able to blow his
Whistle for help!]*

* * * * *

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Lady GAY'S ghost.

Mount Street, Berkeley Square.

Dear Mr. Punch,

More than a fortnight ago I fled from the London fog, with the result that it got thicker than ever about me in the minds of your readers and yourself! I determined during my absence to do what many people in the world of Art and *Letters* have done before me, employ a "Ghost"—(my *first* dealings with the supernatural, and probably my *last*!). I wired to one of the leading Sporting Journals for their most reliable Racing Ghost—he was busy watching *Nunthorpe*—(who is only the Ghost of what he was!)—and the Bogie understudy sent to me was a Parliamentary Reporter!—(hence the stilted style of the letter signed "POMPERSON." Heavens! what a name!)—I had five minutes to explain the situation to him before catching the *train de luxe*—(Lord ARTHUR had gone on with the luggage)—and I don't think he had the ghostliest idea of what I wanted!—the one point he grasped, was, that he was to use anonymous names—which he did with a vengeance!—My horror on reading his letter was such that I dropped all the money I had in my hand on the "red" instead of the "black"—and it won!—(I think I shall bring out a system based on "fright.")

Of course all my friends thought Lord ARTHUR and I had quarrelled, and I was "off" with someone else!—What a fog. This idea being confirmed by the following week's letter, which was the well-meant but misdirected effort of my friend Lady HARRIETT ENTOUCAS, to whom I wired to "do something for me"—(she pretty nearly did for me altogether!)—there was nothing for it but to come home—where I am—Lord ARTHUR wanted to write you this week, but I thought one explanation at a time quite enough—so his shall follow—"if you want a thing done, do it yourself!"—so in future I will either be my own Ghost or have nothing to do with them! Yours apparitionally,

LADY GAY.

* * * * *

ALL ROUND THE FAIR.

NO. II.

INSIDE THE "QUEEN'S GRAND COLLECTION OF MOVING WAXWORKS
AND LIONS, AND MUSEUM DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN WONDERS AND
NOVELTIES."

The majority of the Public is still outside, listening open-mouthed to a comic dialogue between the Showman and a juvenile and irreverent Nigger. Those who have come in find that, with the exception of some particularly tame-looking murderers' heads in

glazed pigeon-holes, a few limp effigies stuck up on rickety ledges, and an elderly Cart-horse in low spirits, there is little to see at present.

Melia (to JOE, as they inspect the Cart-horse.) This 'ere can't never be the live 'orse with five legs, as they said was to be seen inside!

Joe. Theer ain't no other 'orse in 'ere, and why *shouldn't* it be 'im, if that's all?

Melia. Well, I don't make out no more'n *four* legs to'un, nohow, myself.

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Joe. Don't ye be in sech a 'urry, now—the Show ain't *begun* yet!

[Illustration: “It’s quoite tri-ew!”]

[The barrel-organ outside blares “God Save the Queen,” and more Spectators come stumping down the wooden steps, followed by the Showman.]

Showman. I shell commence this Exhibition by inviting your inspection of the wonderful live 'orse with five legs. (*To the depressed Cart-horse.*) 'Old up! (*The poor beast lifts his off-fore-leg with obvious reluctance, and discloses a very small supernumerary hoof concealed behind the fetlock.*) Examine it! for yourselves—two distinct 'oofs with shoes and nails complete—a *great novelty*!

Melia. I don't call that nothen of a leg, *I* don't—it ain't 'ardly a *oof*, even!

Joe (*with phlegm*). That's wheer th' old 'orse gits the larf on ye, that is!

Showman. We will now pass on to the Exhibition. 'Ere (*indicating a pair of lop-sided Orientals in nondescript attire*) we 'ave two life-sized models of the Japanese villagers who caused so much sensation in London on account o' their peculiar features—you will easily reckernise the female by her bein' the ugliest one o' the two. (*Compassionate titters from the Spectators.*) I will now call your attention to a splendid group, taken from English 'Istry, and set in motion by powerful machinery, reppresentin' the Parting Interview of CHARLES THE FIRST with his fam'ly. (*Rolls up a painted canvas curtain, and reveals the Monarch seated, with the Duke of GLOUCESTER on his knee, surrounded by OLIVER CROMWELL, and as many Courtiers, Guards, and Maids of Honour as can be accommodated in the limited space.*) I will wind up the machinery and the unfortunate King will be seen in the act of bidding his fam'ly ajew for ever in this world.

[CHARLES begins to click solemnly and move his head by progressive jerks to the right, while the Little Duke moves his simultaneously to the left, and a Courtier in the background is so affected by the scene that he points with respectful sympathy at nothing; the Spectators do not commit themselves to any comments.]

Showman (*concluding a quotation from MARKHAM*). “And the little Dook, with the tears a-standin' in 'is heyes, replies, 'I will be tore in pieces fust!’” Other side, please! No, Mum, the lady in mournin' *ain't* the beautiful but ill-fated MARY, Queen o' Scots—it's Mrs. MAYBRICK, now in confinement for poisonin' her 'usban', and the figger close to her is the MAHDI, or False Prophet. In the next case we 'ave a subject selected from Ancient Roman 'Istry, bein' the story of ANDROCLES, the Roman Slave, as he appeared when, escaping from his crule owners, he entered a cave and found a lion

which persented 'im with 'is bleedin' paw. After some 'esitation, ANDROCLES examined the paw, as repperesented before you. (*Winds the*

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machinery up, whereupon the lion opens his lower jaw and emits a mild bleat, while ANDROCLES turns his head from side to side in bland surprise.) This lion is the largest forestbred and blackmaned specimen ever imported into this country—the *other* lion standing beyind (*disparagingly*), has nothing whatever to do with the tableau, 'aving been shot recently in Africa by Mr. STANLEY, the two figgers at the side reppresent the Boy Murderers who killed their own father at Crewe with a 'atchet and other 'orrible barbarities. I shall conclude the Collection by showing you the magnificent group reppresentin' Her Gracious Majisty the QUEEN, as she appeared in 'er 'appier and younger days, surrounded by the late Mr. SPURGEON, the 'Eroes of the Soudan, and other Members of the Royal Fam'ly.

INSIDE THE CIRCUS.

After some tight-rope, juggling, and boneless performances have been given in the very limited arena, the Clown has introduced the Learned Pony.

Clown. Now, little Pony, go round the Company and pick me out the little boy as robs the Farmer's orchard.

[The Pony trots round, and thrusts his nose confidently into a Small Boy's face.

Small Boy (indignantly). Ye're a *liar*, Powney; so theer!

Clown. Now, see if you can find me the little gal as steals her mother's jam and sugar. Look sharp now, don't stand there playin' with yer bit!

A Little Girl (penitently, as the Accusing Quadruped halts in front of her). Oh, please, Pony, I won't never do it no more!

Clown. Now go round and pick me out the Young Man as is fond o' kissin' the girls and married ladies when their 'usbands is out o' the way. (*The Pony stops before an Infant in Arms.*) 'Ere, think what yer *doin'* now. You don't mean 'im, do you? (*The Pony shakes his head.*) Is it the Young Man standin' just beyind as is fond o' kissin the girls? (*The Pony nods.*) Ah, I thought so!

The Rustic Lothario (with a broad grin). It's quoite tri-ew!

Clown. Now I want you, little Pony, to go round and tell me who's the biggest rogue in the company. (*Reassuringly, as the Pony goes round, and a certain uneasiness is perceptible among some of the spectators.*) I 'ope no Gentleman 'ere will be offended by bein' singled out, for no offence is intended,—it is merely a 'armless—(*Finds the Pony at his elbow.*) Why, you rascal! do you mean to say *I'm* the biggest rogue 'ere?

(*The Pony nods.*) You've been round, and can't find a bigger rogue than me in all this company? (*Emphatic shake of the head from Pony; secret relief of inner circle of Spectators.*) You and me'll settle this later!

First Spectator (as audience disperses). That war a clever Pony, sart'nly!

Second Spect. Ah, he wur that. (*Reflectively.*) I dunno as I shud keer partickler 'bout 'avin of 'im, though!

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IN THE HOME OF MYSTERY.

A small canvas booth with a raised platform, on which a Young Woman in short skirts has just performed a few elementary conjuring tricks before an audience of gaping Rustics.

The Showman. The Second Part of our Entertainment will consist of the performances of a Real Live Zulu from the Westminster Royal Aquarium. Mr. FARINI, in the course of 'is travels, discovered both men and women—and this is one of them. (*Here a tall Zulu, simply attired in a leopard's-skin apron, a bead necklace, and an old busby, creeps through the hangings at the back.*) He will give you a specimen of the strange and remarkable dances in his country, showin' you the funny way in which they git married—for they don't git married over there the same as we do 'ere—cert'n'ly *not!* (*The Spectators form a close ring round the Zulu.*) Give him a little more room, or else you won't notice the funny way he moves his legs while dancin'.

[The ring widens a very little, and contracts again, while the Zulu performs a perfunctory prance to the monotonous jingle of his brass anklets.

Melia (critically). Well, that's the silliest sort of a weddin' as iver I see!

Joe. He do seem to be 'avin' it a good deal to 'isself, don't 'e?

Showman. He will now conclude 'is entertainment by porsin round, and those who would like to shake 'ands with 'im are welcome to do so, while at the same time, those among you who would like to give 'im a extry copper for 'isself you will 'ave an opportunity of noticin' the funny way in which he takes it.

Spectators (as the Zulu begins to slink round the tent, extending a huge and tawny paw). 'Ere, come arn!

[The booth is precipitately cleared.

* * * * *

“*WRITE Letter Days*” should be the companion volume to *Red Letter Days*, published by BENTLEY.

* * * * *

[Illustration: THAT IT SHOULD COME TO THIS!

Boy. “SECOND-CLASS, SIR?”

Captain. "I NEVAH TRAVEL SECOND-CLASS!"

Boy. "THIS WAY THIRD, SIR!"]

* * * * *

CONVERSATIONAL HINTS FOR YOUNG SHOOTERS.

THE SMOKING-ROOM.

The subject of the Smoking-room would seem to be intimately and necessarily connected with the subject of smoke, which was dealt with in our last Chapter. A very good friend of mine, Captain SHABRACK of the 55th (Queen ELIZABETH'S Own) Hussars, was good enough to favour me with his views the other day. I met the gallant officer, who is, as all the world knows, one of the safest and best shots of the day, in Pall Mall. He had just stepped out of his Club—the luxurious and splendid Tatterdemalion, or, as it is familiarly called, "the Tat"—where, to use his own graphic language, he had been "killing the worm with a nip of Scotch."

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"Early Scotch woodcock, I suppose," says I, sportively alluding to the proverb.

"Scotch woodcock be blowed," says the Captain, who, it must be confessed, does not include an appreciation of delicate humour amongst his numerous merits; "Scotch, real Scotch, a noggin of it, my boy, with soda in a long glass; glug, glug, down it goes, hissins' over the hot coppers. You know the trick, my son, it's no use pretendin' you don't"—and thereupon the high-spirited warrior dug me good-humouredly in the ribs, and winked at me with an eye which, if the truth must be told, was bloodshot to the very verge of ferocity.

"Talkin' of woodcock," he continued—we were now walking along Pall Mall together—"they tell me you're writin' some gas or other about shootin'. Well, if you want a tip from me, just you let into the smokin' room shots a bit; you know the sort I mean, fellows who are reg'lar devils at killin' birds when they haven't got a gun in their hands. Why, there's that little son of a corn-crake, FLICKERS—when once he gets talkin' in a smokin' room nothing can hold him. He'd talk the hind leg off a donkey. I know he jolly nearly laid me out the last time I met him with all his talk—No, you don't," continued the Captain, imagining, perhaps, that I was going to rally him on his implied connection of himself with the three-legged animal he had mentioned, "no you don't—it wouldn't be funny; and besides, I'm not donkey enough to stand much of that ass FLICKERS. So just you pitch into him, and the rest of 'em, my bonny boy, next time you put pen to paper." At this moment my cheerful friend observed a hansom that took his fancy. "Gad!" he said, "I never can resist one of those india-rubber tires. Ta, ta, old cock—keep your pecker up. Never forget your goloshes when it rains, and always wear flannel next your skin," and, with that, he sprang into his hansom, ordered the cabman to drive him round the town as long as a florin would last, and was gone.

Had the Captain only stayed with me a little longer, I should have thanked him for his hint, which set me thinking. I know FLICKERS well. Many a time have I heard that notorious romancer holding forth on his achievements in sport, and love, and society. I have caught him tripping, convicted him of imagination on a score of occasions; dozens of his acquaintances must have found him out over and over again; but the fellow sails on, unconscious of a reverse, with a sort of smiling persistence, down the stream of modified untruthfulness, of which nobody ought to know better than FLICKERS the rapids, and shallows, and rocks on which the mariner's bark is apt to go to wreck. What is there in the pursuit of sport, I ask myself, that brings on this strange tendency to exaggeration? How few escape it. The excellent, the prosaic DUBSON, that broad-shouldered, whiskered, and eminently snub-nosed Nimrod, he too, gives way occasionally. FLICKERS'S, I own, is an extreme case. He has indulged himself in

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fibs to such an extent, that fibs are now as necessary to him as drams to the drunkard. But DUBSON the respectable, DUBSON the dull, DUBSON the unromantic—why does the gadfly sting him too, and impel him now and then to wonderful antics. For was it not DUBSON who told me, only a week ago, that he had shot three partridges stone dead with one shot, and in measuring the distance, had found it to be 100 yards less two inches? Candidly, I do not believe him; but naturally enough I was not going to be outdone, and I promptly returned on him with my well-known anecdote about the shot which *ricocheted* from a driven bird in front of me and pierced my host's youngest brother—a plump, short-coated Eton boy, who was for some reason standing with his back to me ten yards in my rear—in a part of his person sacred as a rule *plagoso Orbilio*. The shrieks of the stricken youth, I told DUBSON, still sounded horribly in my ears. It took the country doctor an hour to extract the pellets—an operation which the boy endured, with great fortitude, merely observing that he hoped his rowing would not be spoiled for good, as he should bar awfully having to turn himself into a dry-bob. This story, with all its harrowing details, did I duly hammer into the open-mouthed DUBSON, who merely remarked that “it was a rum go, but you can never tell where a *ricochet* will go,” and was beginning upon me with a brand-new *ricochet* anecdote of his own, when I hurriedly departed.

Wherefore, my gay young shooters, you who week by week suck wisdom and conversational ability from these columns, it is borne in upon me that for your benefit I must treat of the Smoking-room in its connection with shooting-parties. Thus, perhaps, you may learn not so much what you ought to say, as what you ought not to say, and your discretion shall be the admiration of a whole country-side. “The Smoking-room: with which is incorporated ‘Anecdotes.’” What a rollicking, cheerful, after-dinner sound there is about it. SHABRACK might say it was like the title of a cheap weekly, which as a matter of fact, it does resemble. But what of that? Next week we will begin upon it in good earnest.

* * * * *

ON THE BOXING KANGAROO.

From SMITH and MITCHELL to a Kangaroo!!!

The “noble art” *is* going up! Whilloo!

Stay, though! Since pugilist-man seems coward-clown,

Perhaps 'tis the Marsupial coming down!

* * * * *

[Illustration: FELINE AMENITIES.

“I’VE BROUGHT YOU SOME LACE FOR YOUR STALL AT THE BAZAAR, LIZZIE. I’M AFRAID IT’S NOT QUITE OLD ENOUGH TO BE *REALLY* VALUABLE. I HAD IT WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL.”

“OH, *THAT’S* OLD ENOUGH FOR *ANYTHING*, DEAREST! HOW LOVELY! THANKS SO *VERY* MUCH!”]

* * * * *

“LE GRAND FRANCAIS.”

[“With all his faults, M. DE LESSEPS is perhaps the most remarkable—we may even say the most illustrious—of living Frenchmen.”—*The Times*.]

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JACQUES BONHOMME *loquitur*:—

Someone should suffer—yes, of course—
For the depletion of my stocking;
But *Le Grand Francais*? Bah! Remorse
Moves me to tears. It seems too shocking.
Get back my money? *Pas de chance*!
And then he is the pride of France!

I raged, I know, four years ago,
Against those Panama projectors.
The law seemed slack, inquiry slow;
How I denounced them, the Directors,
Including *him*—in some vague fashion;
But then—BONHOMME was in a passion!

And now to see the *gendarme*'s hand—
Half-shrinkingly—upon *his* shoulder,
Our *Grand Francais*—so old, so grand!
Ma foi, it palsies the beholder.
And will it lessen my large loss
To fix a stain on the Grand Cross?

Too sanguine? Too seductive? Yes!
But was it not such hopeful charming
That led him to his old success?
The thought is softening, and disarming;
O'er Suez and the Red Sea glance,
And see what he has done for France!

Peste on this Panama affair!
Egyptian sands sucked not our savings
As did those swamps. Still I can't bear
To see *him* suffer. 'Midst my cravings
For *la revanche*, I'd fain not touch
Our Greatest Frenchman—'tis too much!

* * * * *

SHORT AND SWEET.

["The Young Ladies of Nottingham have formed a Short-skirt League."—*Daily Graphic*.]



Ye pretty girls of England,
So famous for your looks,
Whose sense has braved a thousand fads
Of foolish fashion-books,
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe,
And refrain
From the train
While the stormy tempests blow,
While the sodden streets are thick with mud,
And the stormy tempests blow!

See how the girls of Nottingham
Inaugurate a League
For skirts five inches from the ground;
They'll walk without fatigue,
No longer plagued with trains to lift
Above the slush or snow;
They'll not sweep
Mud that's deep
While the stormy tempests blow;
Long dresses do the Vestry's work,
While stormy tempests blow.

O pretty girls of Nottingham,
If you could save us men
From our frightful clothing,
How we should love you then!
We'd shorten turned-up trouser,
And widen pointed toe,
Leave off that
Vile silk hat,
When the stormy tempests blow—
Wretched hat that stands not wind or rain
When the stormy tempests blow.

We're fools. Yet, girls of England,
We might inquire of you,
Why wear those capes and sleeves that seem
Quite wide enough for two?
And why revive the *chignons*—
Huge lumps pinned on? You know
You would cry
Should they fly
Where the stormy tempests blow;
For they catch the wind just like balloons,
Where the stormy tempests blow.

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FAULTS O' BOTH SIDES.—Ardent Radicals grumbled at the Government for not holding an Autumn Session. That was a fault of omission. Now touchy Tories are angry with it for showing too strong a tendency to what Mr. GLADSTONE once sarcastically called "a policy of examination and inquiry"—into the case of Evicted Tenants, Poor-Law Relief, &c. This is a fault of (Royal) Commission. Luckless Government! The verdict upon it seems to be that it

"Does nothing in particular,
And does it very—*ill*."

* * * * *

NOTICE.—The Twin Fountains of Trafalgar Square regret to inform the British Public that, although they have performed gratuitously and continuously for a number of years, they are compelled to retire from business, as they cannot compete with the State-aided spouting which takes place in their Square.

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A GREAT "TREAT."—Public-house Politics at Election time.

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[Illustration: "LE GRAND FRANCAIS!"]

JACQUES BONHOMME (*regarding* M. DE LESSEPS, *apart*). "BAH! I HAVE LOST MY MONEY! (*Pause.*) ALL THE SAME, I CANNOT DESIRE THAT HE, SO OLD AND SO DISTINGUISHED, SHOULD SUFFER!!"]

* * * * *

[Illustration: GALLANTRY REWARDED.

Lady (having had a fall at a Brook, and come out the wrong side,—to Stranger, who has caught her Horse). "OH, I'M SO MUCH OBLIGED TO YOU! NOW, DO YOU MIND JUST BRINGING HIM OVER?"]

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

Books from the publishing house of FISHER UNWIN are always goodly to look upon, the public having to thank him for something new in form, binding, and colour, in other

series than the Pseudonym Library. In a new edition of *The Sinner's Comedy*, just issued at the modest price of Eighteenpence, he has solved a problem that has long baffled the publisher, and bothered the public. Few like the appearance of a book with the pages machine-cut; fewer still can spare the time to cut a book. Mr. FISHER UNWIN compromises by presenting this dainty little volume with the top pages ready cut, the reader having nothing to do but to slice the side-pages, a labour which no book-lover would grudge, seeing that it leaves the volume with the uncut appearance dear to his heart. The story, told in 146 pages, is, my Baronite says, worthy the distinction of its appearance. The characters are clearly drawn, the plot is interesting, the conversation crisp, and the style throughout pleasantly cynical. The author, JOHN OLIVER HOBBS, has a pretty turn of aphorism. "A man's way of loving is so different from a woman's"; and again, "Genius is so rare, and ambition is so common." Here be truths, old enough perhaps, but cleverly re-set.

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Some people complain that politics are dull. They should read the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary utterances of the Member for Wrotenborough. They appear weekly in that rising young paper, the *Sunday Times*, and an extremely readable selection of them has lately been published “in book form,” for the enlivening of the Recess. Adapting the Laureate’s lines, the Baron would say,—

“They who would vote for an M.P. whose sense with humour chimes,
Will read the Member for Wrotenborough, all in the *Sunday Times*—
A paper our sires paid Sevenpence for, along of its grit and go,
Seventy years ago, my Public, seventy years ago!”

For whimsical audacity, and quaint unexpectedness. Mr. PAIN, in his latest book, *Playthings and Parodies*, would be hard to beat. In this there is a good back-ground of shrewd observation. He does not propose to make your flesh creep, or your eyes run torrents. He simply succeeds in making you laugh. In “The Processional Instinct,” Mr. PAIN informs us that he has discovered that our private life is circular, and our public life is rectilineal. SHAKSPEARE, who, being for all time, and not merely for an age, recommends this author to the general public when he says that everybody “should be so conversant with PAIN.”

The Memories of Dean Hole is rather a misleading title; “but,” says the Baron, “I suppose the term ‘Reminiscences’ is played out. The word ‘Memories’ seems to suggest that someone, whether Dean HOLE, or Dean CORNER, or any other Dean, had more than one memory, as indeed those persons appear to possess who mention their ‘good memory for names,’ and their ‘bad memory for dates,’ and *vice versa*. *Soit!*” quoth the Baron, in excellent French, “you may take it from me (if I’ll part with it) that the Hole book is by no means a half-and-half sort of book, but is vastly entertaining.” The stories of “The Cloth” form the most entertaining part of the work. The Baron wishes success to this work of the Dean in Holey Orders, and suggests that the volume should be re-entitled *Gathered Leaves from Dean Hole’s Rose Garden*, a better title than “Reminiscences.”

MARION CRAWFORD’S *Don Orsino* (published by MACMILLAN & CO.) would be worth reading were it only for the colour of its word-painting, and for its high-comedy dialogue. Yet is Mr. CRAWFORD rather given to pause in his story, for the sake of moralising on the tendencies of the age; and the reader, patient though he may be, when he has become interested in the personages of the novel, does not care to be button-holed by a digression. MARION CRAWFORD’S recipe for commencing an amorous duologue (early in Vol. III.), which is to lead up to a declaration of love, is deliciously ingenious. It begins with the gentleman taking a seat, and his first remark is upon the chair. Mr. CRAWFORD evidently remembers the old story of how the tenor who knew but one song,

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"*In my Cottage near a Wood*," used to introduce it into any scene of any Opera by the simple process of making his entrance alone and finding a chair on the stage. "Aha!" quoth he. "What's this? A chair? and made of wood! Ah! that word! how it reminds me of my 'umble home, 'my cottage near a wood.'" Cue for band; chord; song. In this instance, the love-scene, admirably led up to on the above plan, is strikingly powerful; it is the work of a master-hand. The *denouement* is both artistically original and, at the same time, ordinarily probable. May all readers enjoy this excellent novel as much as has the sympathetic

BARON DE BOOK-WORMS.

* * * * *

CLASSICAL QUESTION.—If some schoolboys, home for Christmas holidays, wanted Sir AUGUSTUS DRURIOLANUS to give them a Christmas Box (not a private one at the Pantomime), what Ancient Philosopher would they mention? Why—of course—"ARISTIPPUS."

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[Illustration: A LABOUR OF LOVE.

The Vicar. "AND WERE YOU AT THE BALL LAST NIGHT, MRS. RAMSBOTTOM?"

Mrs. R. "OH, YES; I WAS SHAMPOOING EIGHT YOUNG LADIES THERE!"]

* * * * *

LOCAL COLOUR.

Mr. ALFRED AUSTIN, in his new poem, *Fortunatus, the Pessimist*, has hit upon a new notion, to say nothing of a novel rhyme. Sings he:—

"When the foal and brood-mare hinny,
And in every cut-down spinney
Lady's-Smocks grow *mauve and mauver*,
Then the Winter days are over."

This opens a polychromatic vista to the New Poetry. Technical Art comes to the aid of the elder Muses. The products of gas-tar alone should greatly regenerate a something time-worn poetic phraseology. As thus:—



When the poet, Mr. PENNYLINE,
Is inspired by beauteous Aniline,
Products chemical and gas-tarry
Give the modern Muse new mastery.
Mauve *may* chime with love, and mauver
Form a decent rhyme to lover;
While (and if not, why not?) *mauvest*
Antiphonetic proves to lovest.
(Verse erotic always sports
Tricksily with longs and shorts.
Verbal votaries of Venus
Are an arbitrary genus,
And as arrogant as HOWELLS
In their dealings with the vowels.
Love, move, rove, linked in a sonnet,
Pass for rhymes; the best have done it!)
Then again there is Magenta!
Surely science never sent a
Handier rhyme to—well, polenta,
Or (for Cockney Muses) Mentor!
The poetic sense auricular
Can't afford to be particular.
Rags of rhymes, mere assonances,
Now must serve. Pegasus prances,
Like a Buffalo Bill buck-jumper,
When you have a “regular stumper”
(Such as “silver”) do not care about
Perfect rhyming; “there or thereabout”
Is the Muse's maxim now.
You *may* get (bards have, I trow)
Rhyme's last minimum irreducible,
From dye-vat, retort, or crucible.

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Verily (as *Touchstone* says), "I'll rhyme you so, eight years together, dinners and suppers, and sleeping hours excepted." And if it is "the right butterwoman's rate to market," or "the very false gallop of verses," it is at any rate good enough for a long-eared public or a postulant for the Laureateship.

* * * * *

WAR ON A LARGE SCALE.

(AN ACCOUNT OF THE CONFLICT, FROM THE DIARY OF AN INHABITANT OF HERNE BAY.)

Monday.—Extremely awkward—the entire British Fleet have come ashore; and, as it is impossible to move them on account of their enormous tonnage, this will entail a loss of L24,000,000,000!

Tuesday.—Troubles never come singly! The French, taking advantage of the temporary suspension of our naval operations, have declared war. This means the utter ruin of the bathing season, not only at Herne Bay, but Southend, and the Isle of Thanet.

Wednesday.—As I expected! The French Fleet are coming up towards London. They are sure to pepper us as they pass. As every gun carries several hundred miles, I do not see how books can be uninterruptedly issued from and returned to the Circulating Library.

Thursday.—Our first slice of luck! The entire French Fleet during the mist last night came into collision with the Nore Light, and sank immediately. I was surprised at their sparing the Reculvers and the local bathing-machines, but now the mystery is explained.

Friday.—Just learned that the great gun of Paris, which carries forty-four thousand miles, is to be tried for the first time to-morrow. It would have been used earlier, had it not been necessary to raise a foreign loan to supply funds to load it. Trust it won't be laid in our direction. This war has already caused the Insurance Companies to double their charges! Too bad!

Saturday.—All's well that ends well. Hostilities are at an end. This morning all the glass in the windows were broken at 8 o'clock. Ten minutes later the Champs Elysees was deposited half a mile from Birchington. We now know that the great Paris gun burst on its first discharge, and France exists no longer as a country, but as a "geographical expression" is deposited in various parts of Europe.

* * * * *

REAL AND IDEAL.—“A Really Hard-Headed Man”—the Iron-skulled individual now exhibiting at the Aquarium. If his will is as iron as his head, what a despot he would be! If France is tired of her Republic, she might try the Iron-Headed Man as a ruler. There is the chance, of course, that he might turn out a numskull, and be only King Log, after all.

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[Illustration: A GENTLEMAN WHO “TAKES LIFE EASILY.”]

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[Illustration: A REMINISCENCE OF THE BASEBALL SEASON.]

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JIM'S JOTTINGS.

["Do the poor make the slums, or the slums make the poor?"—*Henry Lazarus, in "Landlordism."*]

[Illustration]

Is it the poor wot makes the Slums, or the Slums wot makes the poor?
Well, that's the question, Guv'nor, and I've 'eared it arsked afore,
And the arnser ain't so easy, if you wants to be O.K.
Don't suppose as *I* can settle it, but I'll have my little say.

My old friend Mister LAZARUS, now, he ups and sez, sez he,
The great Ground Landlord is the great *prime* cause. "Yah!
fiddlededee!"

Cries the House-Farmer; "Slums is Slums, acos the Poor is *Pigs!*"
"You try 'em, friend philanthropist! They'll play you proper rigs."

Yus, there's two sides to heverythink, wus luck! That's where
we're fogged.

Passiges like foul pigstyes, gents, and backyards like black bogs,
Banisters broke for firewood, and smashed winders stuffed with rags,
These make the sniffers slate the poor, Peticular if they're wags.

Well, gents, you know, it's *this* way. Just you fancy yerselves
born

In a back-slum like Ragman's Rents. 'Old 'ard, don't larf with
scorn!

Some on us *is* born there, yer know; it might ha' bin *your* luck,
If yer mother'd bin a boozier, and yer father'd got the chuck.

Of course *yourn* was respectable; *mine* wosn't; there's the diff.!
Ah! things like this ain't settled by a snort or by a sniff.
Jest fancy hopening yer eyes fust time in a dark dive,
Or a sky-parlour where a plarnt o' musk won't keep alive.

Emagine, if yer washups can, some ten foot square o' room,
With a stor-heap in one corner, and a "dip" to light the gloom;
With the walls dirt-streaked with damp-lines, outside, a drunken
din,
And hinside, a whiff of sewer-gas in a hatmosphere of gin.



Some on you carn't emagine there's sech 'orrors on the earth;
But there are, you bet your buttons. Who'd select 'em for their
birth?

Not you, not me, not no one, if you asked 'em, I expect;
But yer place o' birth yer see, gents' jest the thing yer *carn't*
select.

If you're born where streets is narrer, and where rooms is werry
small,
Where you've damp sludge for a ceiling, rotting plarster for a wall;
Where yer carn't eat, sleep, wash yerselves, or lay up when you're
sick,
Without tumbling one o'er tother, wy, yer *sinks*, gents, pooty
quick.

Sinks! Yes, when wot yer lives in *is* a sink, or somethink wus;
With a drunkard for a mother, and some neighbour for a nuss;
With the gutter for yer playground, and a 'ome from which yer
shrink,
Can you wonder that poor Slum-birds is give o'er to Dirt and Drink.

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Ah! them two D's goes together. Just you plant some orty Queen
In a rookery, in her kidhood, and then tell her to keep *clean*,
Wash 'er face, and mend 'er garments,—wich they're mostly
sewed-up rags,—
In six months she'd be a scare-crow, 'ands like sut, and 'air all
jags.

Wot yer washups don't quite tumble to's the fack as like breeds
like.
If you would himprove Slum-dwellers, at the Slum you fust must
strike.
Give us small dark 'oles to dwell in, and you must be jolly green
If you think folks bred in dirt like, are a-going to keep 'em clean.

When the sewer-rats take to sweetening and lime-washing *their*
foul 'oles,
And bright light and disinfectants are the fads of skunks and moles,
Then poor souls in cellar-dwellings and in jerry-builders' dens,
Will be smart as young canaries and as clean as clucking hens.

NOCKY SPRIGGINGS guyed me proper, in his chuckly sorter style,
With his thumb 'ooked orful hartful, and his chickaleary smile.
"JIM," sez he, "wot price *your* jabber? Do yer think the blooming
blokes
Cares a cuss for me and you, JIM, any more than for our mokes?

"Shut yer face, you pattering josser! Dirt and Drink is good for
Rents!
If the Poor *wos* clean and sober, where 'ud be their
cent-per-cents?
If it's Public 'Ouse 'gainst Wash 'Ouse, if it's Slumland *wersus*
Swipes,
I am on for booze and backy 'stead o' drains and water-pipes.

"You may be *too* jolly clean, JIM, and a precious sight *too*
light,
Were's the good to scrub yer skin orf! And if when a cove gits
tight,
Or would give his donah wot-for on the Q.T. *wot* a lark
If there weren't no 'andy alleys, nor no corners snug and *dark*.

"If the Public—and the Slops—*wos* always fly to wot *we* done,
'Long o' widened streets and gas-light, wy we'd 'ave no blooming
fun.



Lagged for larrupping yer missus, nailed for boozing till yer nod?
Wy, you jabbering young Juggins, *we should always be in quod!"*

'Ard nut is NOCKY SPRIGGINGS—of the sort as make the slums,
'Cos there ain't much chance for cleanness, or for comfort, when
 he comes.

He's as 'appy in the dirt, gents, as a blowfly or a 'og;
Or poor Paddy in his tater-patch alongside of a bog;

He'd chop up 'is doors and winders for a fire to 'ot his lush,
Don't care a 'ang for decency, and never raised a blush.
But, arter my hexperience—and I've 'ad some down our court—
I believe that—fair at bottom—it's the Slum as makes *his* sort.

Anyways I'm pooty certain, if we'd got more light and space,
And were not jammed up together in a filthy, ill-drained place;
If the sunlight could but see us, and the public *and* the cops,
There would be less booze and bashing, fewer drabs and
 drinking-shops.

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Aye, and fewer NOCKY SPRIGGINGSES! I don't go for to say
As it's *all* along o' Landlords, who'd rent 'ell, if 'twould but
pay;
But I've noticed you find fewest mice where there are lots of cats,
And where there ain't no rat-holes, well—yer won't spot many rats!

* * * * *

THE LAST DISCOVERY.

(A SEQUEL TO A RECENT LECTURE. BY MR. PUNCH'S PROPHETIC REPORTER.)

The enormous crowd cheered again and again. It was furious. The enthusiasm spread from throng to throng, until a mighty chorus filled every portion of the land. And there was indeed reason for the rejoicing. Had not the great Arctic Explorer come home? Had he not been to the North Pole and back? At that very moment were not a couple of steam-tugs drawing his wooden vessel towards his native shore? It was indeed a moment for congratulation—not only personal but national, nay cosmopolitan. The victory of art over nature belonged to more than a country, it belonged to the world!

And the tugs came closer and closer, and the cheers grew louder and louder. Then the vessel bearing the Explorer was near at hand. The crowd joyously jumped into the water, and raising him on their shoulders, bore him triumphantly to land.

How they welcomed him! How they seized his hands and kissed them! How they cried and called him “Master,” and “Victor,” and “Hero!” It was a scene never to be forgotten!

When the excitement had somewhat subsided, they began to ask him questions. At last one of them wished to know how he contrived to find the North Pole and get back in safety?

“You intended to drift?” said they. “Great and glorious hero, victorious victor, triumphant explorer, did you do this?”

“I did,” was the reply.

“And tell us what was your method of obtaining the knowledge you now possess? Oh, great chief, how *did* you manage it?”

Then came the answer—

“By sitting still, and doing nothing!”

And now it being dark, they separated to illuminate their homes in honour of the fresh industry—an industry admirably adapted to that great and contented class of the community, the Unemployed!

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