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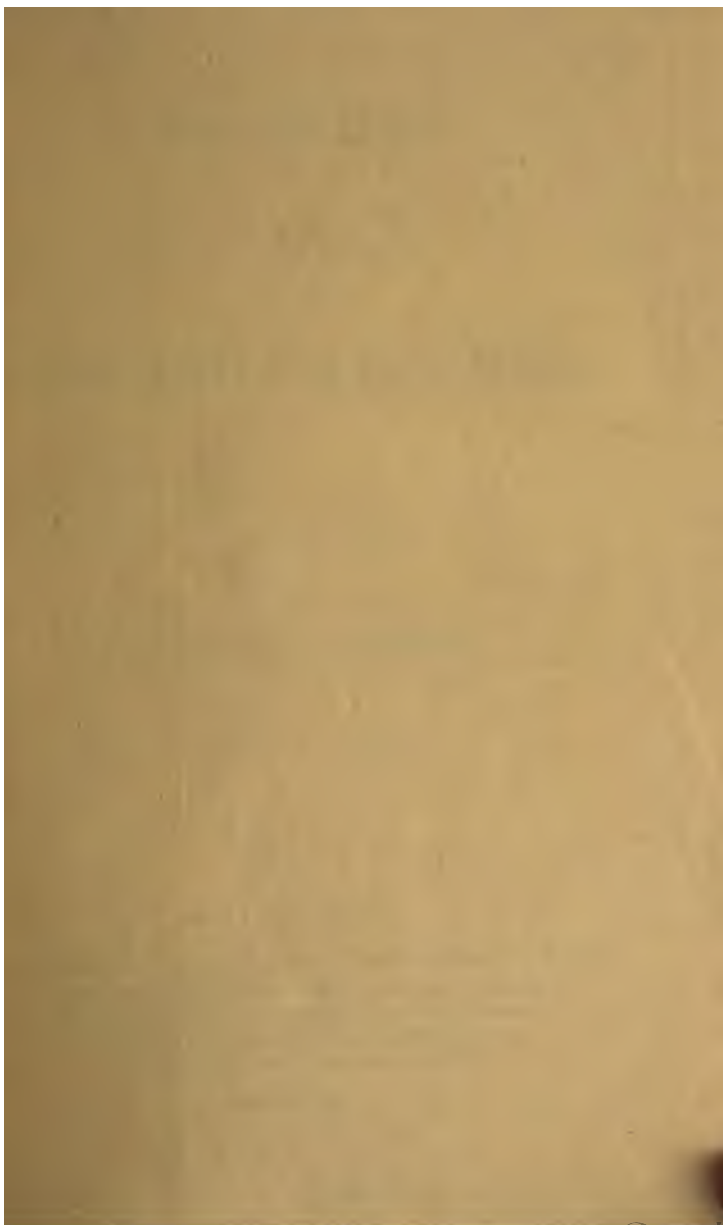




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SKETCHES
OF
LIFE AND CHARACTER.

BY
ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

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TO
GEORGE LUND, ESQ., M.D.,
Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh,
THIS VOLUME
IS GRATEFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY
HIS VERY OBEDIENT AND HUMBLE
SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

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A few of the following Papers appeared originally in the MESSRS CHAMBERS'S EDINBURGH JOURNAL; a greater number in the LONDON SATURDAY JOURNAL, published by William Smith, Fleet Street; and it is by the kind permission of these Gentlemen that they make their appearance in this new shape.

To the original articles contained in the volume it is not thought any allusion is here necessary.

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SKETCHES

OF

LIFE AND CHARACTER.

GETTING ELDERLY.

DEAR reader, we do not know precisely what your age is, and we should think it rather impertinent to inquire ; but if you be, say somewhere about forty, a few years in or over, we can tell you, we think, of certain feelings and sentiments of yours, as regards this same matter of age, which, we rather suspect, you thought were known to nobody but yourself.

In the first place, then, you are beginning to take an unwonted interest in the subject. You are more given to inquiring what people's ages are than you used to be, and to comparing your own with that of your friends and acquaintances, in cases where the matter admits of any question. You are beginning, moreover, to feel a secret satisfaction when, in a doubtful case, you ascertain that the other party is older than you.

When speaking of any person much farther advanced in life than yourself, you are more apt than formerly to lug in the phrase, "old man," or "old woman," as the case may be, because it conveys the insinuation that you yourself are *not* old.

A

When asked to guess ages, you always guess them at something more than you believe them really to be, and are very chary of allowing any one who is much your junior to be called young. You want to bring them as near to your own time of life as possible.

You detest young people. You feel them to be living reflections on your own more advanced years, and abominate all comparisons between their time of life and your own.

It raises your utmost wrath, dear reader of forty, does it not, although, of course, you take great pains to conceal it, to see younger men cutting you out in the good graces of the fair. You console yourself, however, or rather endeavour to console yourself, by mentally calling them a parcel of silly fools. And, if you do not leave the scene of your discomfiture in the pet, try to sneer away the juvenile spirit that is so annoying to you, or to crush it under the weight of some grave, dignified discourse, which you introduce with a look and manner of appalling wisdom. Finding, in short, that you can do nothing as a Lothario, you set up for a Socrates; believing this to be, as it is, your best and safest game.

You are now beginning, dear friend of forty, to hug, as it were, the probable years of life that remain to you, and, like a miser, are given to counting them secretly, as if they were so much coin. Probably, you actually do liken them to money, and suppose the years of life a capital, say of L.3, 10s., or 70s. (years,) which has been given you to spend, and of which, at forty, you have spent a couple of pounds, or forty shillings, leaving you thirty shillings only to come and go upon, a sum which you feel you must disburse with the most rigid economy.

You now, dear reader of forty, take great interest in other people's ideas of age, carefully mark

their notions on the subject, and are pleased or displeased as these class you amongst the young, old, or middling.

If one should say in answer to your inquiry, whether such a one was old, "Oh, yes, pretty well on ; much about your own age ;" do not you feel as if you could knock the fellow down ?

Again, if the reply should be, "Old ! oh no, far from it ; not above half a dozen years older than yourself ;" do not you feel as if you could hug the good soul to your bosom ?

It would hardly go down with you to be called positively young, but you would excuse the erroneous estimate with a bland smile.

If it is a gentleman who exhibits in this comparative or inferential way a favourable idea of your juvenility, you feel so grateful to him that you would at once do him in return any little service in your power. If a lady, it would make you as proud as a peacock. It would delight you with yourself, and impress you with the highest opinion of her taste and judgment ; particularly the justness of her conceptions on the subject of age. Nay, were she a spinster and you a bachelor, there is no saying in what it might end.

You do not like, dear reader of forty, and, therefore, always avoid making inquiries at young persons about people's ages ; for you know by experience, that they are very apt, from their absurd and erroneous notions on the subject, to say very disagreeable things when designating the periods of life by old or young. The ridiculous creatures will call a man of forty old, and begin speaking of their papas.

Thus, all books written by young people, especially novels, are sure to contain a vast number of offensive things of this kind. There you are certain to find all the heroes young and handsome ; running,

in the matter of age, from about eighteen to two or three and twenty. Not a decent, sensible man of your own time of life amongst them. All silly slips of lads, fit for nothing but to dance attendance on sillier girls.

Then, again, the long and enthusiastic descriptions, if the work be by a lady, of the puppy's auburn locks, curling so richly and gracefully around his alabaster brow, &c. &c.

But hear some of the sentiments that the young lady-authoress sports on the subject of age.

"Two gentlemen on horseback were seen approaching the castle; one of them was an elegant youth of nineteen, the other a harsh-looking elderly man of about forty!" There is a pretty opinion for you of what forty is! The poor silly creature.

You would not read another page of a book in which you found such absurd nonsense as this. No, you would not. You would throw it down in disgust.

But if you are annoyed by such ridiculous estimates of age as that above quoted in the case of works by young authors, you are often gratified by the more reasonable and sensible ideas of more mature writers on the subject, and are frequently delighted by meeting in their works with such passages as the following:

"De Lorrain, without having lost the elastic step and ardent spirit of youth, had acquired the manly bearing of maturer years. He was indeed yet comparatively but young, having only just completed his fortieth year!" &c. &c.

Ay, that is as it should be. Here is a sensible writer;—one who knows when people should be called young, when old.

Obituaries, too, dear reader of or about the age so often alluded to, are beginning to interest you a good deal; particularly the different ages of the de-

parted. These you carefully note, and so long as they keep anywhere above sixty, do so with great complacency. But the deaths near your own age rather discompose you. You do not at all relish such intimations as,

"Died at so and so, in the fortieth year of his age," &c. &c. But if such expressions as "prime of life," "early age," &c., are made use of in the announcement, you are at once reconciled to the premature departure of the defunct.

Now, dear reader, all this is silly enough, certainly, and very unphilosophical. But is it not true?

THE OLD LETTER.

MOST persons, we rather think, have some sort of depository or other, in which they keep dingy accumulations of dingy old papers. Old letters, old accounts—how many of these last may be discharged, how many wanting in this important particular, we do not take it upon us to say; it is a delicate sort of question. Old scraps of writing on a prodigious variety of subjects—some written on whole sheets, some on half sheets, some on quarter, some on fragments of various shapes and sizes. Documents, in short, of all imaginable sorts, and for no imaginable uses.

Some methodical people keep this kind of litter in excellent order, every letter and paper being carefully folded and docqueted, and something like classification attempted. But we suspect that in most cases, the depositories alluded to, whether cupboard or cabinet, desk or drawer, would, if looked into, present few traces of such care and consideration in the ar-

range of their contents. We rather think they would be found, in nine instances out of ten, to exhibit nothing but a scene of the most dire confusion. Letters, papers, and accounts, all jumbled together into one heterogeneous mass, in which no given document could possibly be found under an hour's search, and, certainly, not until every paper in the heap had been separately taken up and examined. For the one wanted is, as matter of course, the very last that comes to hand.

As a source of occasional amusement, the higgledy-piggledy way of keeping old letters and papers is by far the best. For, in rummaging a depository in this state, your interest is excited and kept alive by the uncertainty as to what sort of paper it may be on which you shall stumble next, and by the stirring surprises which the discovery, every now and then, of long-forgotten documents is ever and anon exciting.

Now, where all is method and regularity, there cannot, of course, be any thing of this.

In such case, you are quite prepared for all you meet with, and hence nothing can be more tame and flat than a hunt through a well-ordered, well-regulated depository. There is no interest—no excitement. You get what you want at once, and away you go. But where there is the delightful confusion formerly alluded to, how pleasantly, how gradually, and how insensibly, are you led on to pick up, to unfold, and to read paper after paper, until you become quite absorbed in the interesting pursuit, and, for the time, oblivious of every thing else.

On, on you go, picking up and laying down, and reading and re-reading, and folding and unfolding; all but entirely forgetful of the particular document you wanted, and which first set you on the hunt. The present, in truth, is forgotten, and you are now

revelling in the past. For amongst these heaps of dingy papers, there are many melancholy remembrancers of things long passed away.

There is pathos in the picture, and on this feature of it let us for a moment dwell.

Ah, here are a bundle of old papers. You have not seen them for years. They relate to a matter in which you recollect, and recollect with a smile, you once took a great interest. But what is this smile meant to express? Why, a wonder that such a matter ever did interest you, or it may have proceeded from the contempt you *now* feel for the objects which the sight of these papers remind you, you once sought with the utmost eagerness;—an eagerness which you cannot now comprehend, although you have still a pretty distinct recollection of its intensity.

Or, it may be that this smile is a manifestation of how little you are *now* affected by what was once to you a bitter disappointment, and of which these papers are the dismal mementos.

Time has done this. Since these papers were written, you have been carried forward into an entirely new state of existence. Circumstances, whether for better or for worse, have wholly changed since then. New objects and new pursuits engage your attention, and all interest in things so long gone by has passed away with the things themselves.

But what have we here? An old letter; it is dingy and discoloured. The writing, though still perfectly legible, has become faint. The very wax has lost its brightness, and looks dull and faded. Strange, that time should mark its progress so distinctly on things which one should have thought so little susceptible of such impression;—where there has been no exposure, no handling, no tear and wear. Yet that the letter is an old one you perceive at a

glance. Every thing about it bears witness that it is so.

The old letter! Ah, it is many, many years since we came across it before. But quickly do we recognise the well-known hand in which the superscription is written. It is that of an old and dearly beloved friend;—one of the friends of our youth over whom the grave has been closed for many a long year.

Oh, what a throng of melancholy recollections hurry and crowd in at the portals of memory, at sight of this long-forgotten letter! Its writer, too, had been long forgotten. No, not altogether forgotten; but, alas! at intervals only remembered; for the cares and the struggles of the world have weakened the memories of the past, and thrust into the deepest and darkest recesses of the heart a crowd of the fondest and most endearing feelings. But the old letter has flung a sudden light into the dungeons of the captives;—a vivifying ray which has awakened them to life, and brought them forth into the broad sunshine of a bright and vivid recollection.

The past is before us, and in the foreground of the retrospective picture stands, in the full light of memory, the figure of our departed friend.

The letter is opened. We turn to its last page, and “God forever bless you, my dear, dear friend,” we find to be its concluding words.

The heart fills. A sudden tear starts into the eye, and we feel an emotion, which we are glad there is none by to witness.

The warm heart that dictated these kindly words, and the friendly hand that traced them, have been long mouldering in the grave.

“God forever bless you, my dear, dear friend!” It is too late, dear shade of the departed, to say God bless you in return. But it is not too late to express

a fervent hope that you are now in the realms of the blessed.

That letter, which we have silently pressed to our lips in the fulness of our feelings, is like a voice from the tomb. But it is not one of terror, of dire warning. It is a voice filled with the warm, and cheerful, and kind spirit of human affection.

Again, we read over the ardent and heart-felt benediction, and oh, how doth conscience now upbraid us for having so long forgotten one who loved us so well and so sincerely! How could we forget him, cold-hearted, selfish, ingrate, that we are, unworthy of such affection, unworthy of ever having had so true, so warm-hearted a friend!

But we now make all the reparation in our power. With tearful eye and filling heart, we fold up the precious relic—the old letter,—and separating it from the miscellaneous heap of worthless litter, amongst which we had impiously permitted it to lie, we deposit it with reverential care in a separate recess of our bureau; there to lie in sacred security, and unprofaned by mean contact, till we ourselves shall have gone the way of our departed friend.

KICKABLE PEOPLE.

THERE are, as, we think, every body must have felt, certain descriptions of offences and offenders, that have a strong and peculiar tendency towards exciting in you the desire of kicking your man; accompanied by an impression, or feeling, that no other kind of punishment whatever would be so suitable,

or would so adequately express the sentiments you entertain towards him ;—that would, in short, be half so satisfactory. Banishment, fine, imprisonment, suppose you had the power to inflict all or either of them, would not answer your purpose ;—would not express what you would be at. Nothing, in truth, would do this, but the infliction of a good sound kicking ;—and that yet, not so much from any idea of its superior capabilities in the way of causing pain, as from the delightful expression of cordial and thorough contempt it conveys.

It is this last consideration that makes kicking so satisfactory a punishment, so great a luxury to the inflictor.

Kickable people are of various descriptions. Amongst these are your kickable subjects *prima facie* ;—those whose provocatives are visible and external, whose incentives to you to kick them lie chiefly in manner and bearing.

It is not necessary that this sort of person should actually say or do any thing to you to create in you the desire to kick him. The desire rises spontaneously at the very sight of him, and his supercilious air. His insolent tone of voice and swaggering gait complete the temptation. This kind of person you feel disposed at once to kick without further inquiry or provocation.

All bucks, bloods, and dandies of a certain description, are thus highly kickable subjects *prima facie*.

Insolence of office is pre-eminently kickable. Who ever went into a public office, and was treated, as he is very apt to be, with the most offensive hauteur by some saucy, well-paid official, without feeling the desire to kick him rising strong within him ? without feeling that fifteen minutes kicking of the puppy would be one of the greatest luxuries in life ?

Petty tyranny is also eminently kickable. Few, we think, can have witnessed the unfeeling, overbearing, conduct of the little tyrant—the tyrant of ordinary life—to those beneath him, to those who must obey him, and whose bread depends on their obedience, without feeling that a sound and well-prolonged kicking would be just the sort of punishment to inflict on him.

What a treat to take the petty tyrant in the act, precisely at the moment when he is abusing and bullying some poor dependent, and give him twenty minutes of a well-directed shoe-point on the seat of honour !

Conceit of all kinds is kickable in a very high degree. The soft simper that bespeaks the pleasant feelings of the vain ass, as he thinks of his superiority over all mankind, and over you in particular ;—the slight smile of conscious ability that plays round the corners of his unmeaning mug. Who can contemplate them without feeling an itching in his toes ?

There are dirty bits of conduct too ; bits of insolence on the part of those who imagine themselves your superior, that excite the desire to kick pretty strongly.

You would not, perhaps, go far out of your way to inflict it, nor would you give it very severely ;—just two or three kicks to show the feeling you entertain towards the offender, and to give him some idea of the respect you have for him.

As regards his person, the eminently kickable subject, whether kickable from offensiveness of manner or conduct, is, excepting in the case of the buck, perhaps, a little, snuffy, paltry, insignificant-looking creature ;—his being so, if a tyrant, for instance, rendering him doubly obnoxious to the punishment of kicking.

In the case of such a person, of one who, with a wretched and contemptible figure, sports the most offensive insolence of manner and conduct, the desire to kick is all but irresistible.

How one longs to apply the shoe-point to the rear of the conceited, over-bearing little rascal!

There are, dear reader, as you know, a good many other kickable sort of people; but as your own knowledge and experience is quite competent to supply these, we need not enumerate them.

HUMBLE EFFORTS.

HAVE you, good reader, ever paid any particular attention to the little bands of children of the poorer classes that pass you on the streets, or on the roads or lanes in the vicinity of the city, on a Sunday? If you have not, do mark the little creatures, and we think you will acknowledge that there are few things more affecting than the attempts—miserably inadequate in nine instances out of ten—to appear *decent*, which their little persons exhibit.

One little fellow has nothing to boast of but a clean shirt neck. It was all his poor parents could do for him. The rest of his garments are sorely dilapidated, and he is bonnetless and shoeless. But you see the most has been made of the only piece of finery, or rather decency, which could be commanded to set him off. The shirt neck, though of coarse linen, is very white, and has been carefully ironed by his fond mother, who hopes to see her son a great man yet; and there is, besides, an ostentatious dis-

play of it, as if to redeem, as far as possible, the miserable appearance of the other portions of his raiment.

The sole finery of another consists in a light waistcoat, a great deal too large for him ; for it is one of his father's, probably reduced a little, but still too ample for its present possessor. It is sadly worn out, too, and in several places it is united with pins instead of buttons ; but, though it be much decayed, it is particularly clean. It was washed on Saturday night, and hung before the fire to be ready for the little fellow by next morning, and he was very proud when he put it on. He looked downwards on it several times, and, in the contemplation of its splendours, forgot that his jacket was in rags, and that he was without shoes. His mother adjusted the waistcoat on him—for, as it did not fit well, it required adjustment—tied a little cotton neckcloth around his neck, pulled up his shirt-collar, surveyed him for an instant with a look of pride, mingled with an expression of painful regret that she could not do her boy justice, and bade him give his little sister a walk as far as the Park, and hand in hand you see they are now going together.

But pitiable and affecting as these vain struggles after decency of appearance are in the case of boys, they are yet more pitiable and affecting in that of girls. The rattling boldness, gaiety, and thoughtlessness of boys, who are little solicitous themselves on the score of dress, tend rather to lessen the feeling of commiseration which their appearance would otherwise excite ; but it is very different with the girls. The quiet meekness of these little women, the evident delight which even the very youngest of them take in showy apparel, and the prim faces, the stayed and sedate steps with which they move along under the consciousness of finery, though it be but a frill or a

pair of cotton stockings, all tend to render it powerfully affecting, when we see their little harmless vanity compelled, by straitened means, to be content with such gratification as some miserable fragment or remnant of finery may afford. Perhaps it is a scrap of new riband on a wretchedly bad bonnet, ill-coloured, battered, and broken ; perhaps it is a new band for the waist, the splendour of the cincture contrasting pitifully with the indigence bespoken by the sorely-washed frock, in which scarcely a trace of pattern or colour is left, and the shoeless or ill-shod feet ; or, perhaps, it is a little faded shawl, carefully secured in front to hide the deficiencies of the undergarments, while neatly and carefully braided tresses are made to compensate for the absence of a bonnet. See how timidly they look up in your face as you pass them, as if half rejoicing in, and half fearing the impression which their extra decorations on this day—Sunday—may make upon you. They are not sure what you may think of them, but there is, at the same time, a gentle expression of consciousness in the little modest face, that there is something about her not unworthy of notice and admiration, and it will be an amiable act of you to comply with the silent appeal. As you approach, select with your eye the piece of finery, whatever it is, on which you may conjecture her pretensions rest—this you will find no difficulty in doing—and cast an approving, admiring glance on it as you pass, taking especial care, at the same time, not to seem to notice any of the deficiencies which the entire dress may present, and you will be amply rewarded, though you may not see it, by the pleased, nay, triumphant smile, with which the little creature, as she walks on, expresses her sense of the feeling she imagines her finery has inspired. But, alas ! how transitory is her triumph ! See, here comes a little daughter of wealth, pinked

out in the very first style of juvenile fashion, to humble her to the dust. Every thing about the little patrician is elegant, showy, and costly. What a contrast! Mark the very different expressions of countenance with which the two, children as they are, contemplate each other as they approach. The one is bold, pert, and confident, and casts something like a supercilious look on her little ragged sister. The other is humble, timid, and abashed, and glides noiselessly by, with a furtive gaze of wonder and admiration, not of the person, however, of her little rival, but of her clothes. They have now passed each other. See how the little plebeian stares after the little patrician. She seems fixed to the spot where she stands. Finger in mouth, and with saddened face, and look half expressive of hopelessness and abstraction, her eye remains fixed on the retiring splendours of the little green satin pelisse, and Tuscan bonnet with its flaunting ribands, until they are lost in the distance; then casts a glance full of melancholy meaning on her own faded frock, heaves a half-suppressed sigh, and walks quietly on.

SOCIAL CONSPIRACIES.

WE—and we have no doubt many of our readers also—have been often agreeably surprised, at social parties, to find, without our having the slightest previous suspicion of the fact, that we were in the presence of persons of the most splendid talents—that there were amongst the guests, personally unknown to us, and of whom we had never before heard, seve-

ral of the brightest geniuses of the age. This is a discovery, however, which we certainly in no instance should ever have made ourselves ; for there never was anything about these geniuses to distinguish them from mere ordinary mortals,—nothing in their appearance, nothing in what they either said or did, to mark them out as the gifted beings which it seems they really were. For such discovery, then, we have been invariably indebted to the kind offices of some brother genius also present.

But the truth with regard to this matter is, that there exists a secret compact or conspiracy amongst the class of small geniuses, to take advantage of social meetings to puff each other into notice, and to trumpet forth each other's praises. This, however, be it observed, is not done in sincerity of heart, nor with the view of elevating a brother genius, but to secure to themselves a return of the compliment, which, by the understood, if not expressed, terms of the compact, the belarded genius is bound to do. They, in fact, bowl to each other's hands, and thus exhibit the working of what certainly is a very pretty and ingenious device for catching a little temporary and local fame.

The field of operations selected by this fraternity is, as already hinted, the social meeting, either private or public ; but they prefer the former, as being the safest, for, in the latter, there is always great danger of the thing not going well down. There are too many present, and there generally prevails, besides, on such occasions, a certain gruff independence of spirit that is very inimical to the attempts of small geniuses to secure any of those little, quiet, comfortable modicums of admiration for which they are so constantly and so eagerly on the hunt.

The private social meeting, therefore, is greatly to be preferred ; for there reigns there, usually, a

good humour and urbanity that will ungrudgingly give, on the slightest grounds, to any who asks it, any amount of applause they may choose to demand.

The sort of league or conspiracy of which we are speaking, we beg the reader to observe, is not a distinctly expressed thing. Its conditions are not written, spoken, nor formally entered into between the parties in any way ; but it is perfectly *understood*, and is as duly and strictly fulfilled as if its terms were engrossed on parchment. It is, moreover, so dexterously managed, that you would never suspect its existence, without previous information. It is usually conducted after the following manner ; and we entreat the reader to note, that, whenever he witnesses a similar scene to that we are about to describe, he may safely set it down as a case of conspiracy.

A few toasts having gone round, a thin, pale-faced young gentleman suddenly gets upon his legs, leans both his hands upon the table, and, with a modest simper on his countenance, thus addresses the assembled party :—

“ Gentlemen, I hope it will be considered no intrusion my intruding myself on the notice of this good company for a few seconds. (Cheers.) If, gentlemen, I intruded *myself*, it would be an intrusion ; that is, if my purpose was to speak of myself, such proceeding would assuredly be something more than presumptuous. But, gentlemen, when I rise, as I now do, for the purpose of doing homage to genius, and of entreating you to join me in that homage, I am very sure the heart of every man here will go with me. (Considerable cheering.)

“ Gentlemen, to some of you it may be known, but to most of you probably not, that we have the honour of having amongst us this night a poet, whose fame, I do not fear to predict, will one day fill the world

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to its utmost verge and circumference—whose fame, gentlemen, will one day stretch from pole to pole, and encircle the great earth, (cheering,) and which will at once illuminate the dreariest depths of the American forest, and gild the loftiest peaks of Teneriffe. Gentlemen, there is a poet amongst us—a poet, gentlemen, in whose numbers are combined the sublimity of Milton, the harmony of Pope, the pathos of Goldsmith, the fire of Byron, the chivalry of Scott, the philosophy of Wordsworth, and the gaiety of Moore. Yes, gentlemen, there is a poet amongst us in whose verse all these excellencies are combined, in one glorious rainbow of heaven-born poesy! (Tremendous cheering.)

“Gentlemen, need I name the gifted individual to whom I allude—need I point him out to you? I need not. That lofty brow, where genius sits enthroned—that eye, where beams the light of that genius, will guide you to the honoured person I mean, and by these will you know him.

“Gentlemen, I propose the health, with all the honours, of my respected and gifted friend, Mr Higgins.”

It may be thought that the speaker has come it rather strong in this eulogium—that he has laid it on rather thick: but there is good policy in this; for the stronger he gives it, the stronger he gets it back again. It is all returned him, and not unfrequently with interest, as, indeed, we shall find in the very case under discussion. But this is a digression. To proceed.

While the rather flattering speech above recorded is being delivered, you look round the table, to see if you can, by any outward sign, discover the “gifted individual” on whose gifted head this torrent of burning eloquence has been poured. In this scrutiny, your eye quickly selects and rests on one indi-

vidual in particular, whom you observe in a state of suppressed excitement—of modest confusion, sitting with downcast look, twirling his glass between finger and thumb. He is trying to look unconscious, but it will not do ; every lineament of his face betrays the delightful emotion with which his entire poetic frame is thrilled.

Marking these symptoms of sweet suffering, you at once set the sufferer down as the genius whose fame is destined to gild the peaks of Teneriffe. You are right ; it is he, and no mistake.

The health of the gifted individual having been drunk, with a hip, hip, hurra, and a three times three—the acme, the very utmost pinnacle of a small poet's ambition,—he gets up slowly to his feet, for the burthen of his glories still bear heavily upon him, and, after a pause of a second or two, occasioned by a keen sensibility to the honours just done him, and during which he exhibits a vast deal of amiable confusion, he addresses the friends around him in a tone of great humility, with manner corresponding, in the following words :—

“Gentlemen, the honour which you have just now done me is one which I must, and certainly shall, remember with pride and satisfaction to the latest hour of my mortal existence—till my sun of life shall have sunk down into the ocean of eternity. (Immense cheering.)

“It is an honour, gentlemen, that I do not know in what terms to acknowledge—it confuses, it overwhelms me. (A touching pause here.)

“Gentlemen, I need not say that my very worthy and highly talented friend here, who led the way in conferring upon me that imperishable and never-to-be-forgotten honour, which summoned me to my feet as with the sound of a trumpet, has overrated any little poetical talents I possess. The poetical pro-

pensity I indeed own to ; it burns in my bosom like a consuming fire ; it has hurried my rapt soul into the boundless spaces of imagination ; it has thrown the sublimity of darkness over every feeling of my heart. Oh ! to have described it I should have poured liquid flames through my lines—I should have set my verse on fire with the intensity of thought and the burning brilliancy of imagery. But all my attempts have fallen far, oh how far ! short of my glowing aspirations ! for,

As the bright sun, in glorious firmament high,
Shines on a world where men are born to die ;
So my dark soul, in deepest depths immured,
Sighs for the past, nor deems its hopes secured.

Yes, gentlemen, such is the picture I would draw of my own state and feelings, but adequately to describe these, nor tongue nor pen is equal.

“ Gentlemen, I have already expressed, or rather endeavoured to express, the deep sense I entertain of the honour you have this night done me ; an honour which, under any circumstances, I would have deemed inestimable ; but when I reflect, gentlemen, by whom that honour was proposed, how much is its value enhanced ! When I reflect that that honour was proposed by a gentleman who has cultivated poetry’s sister-art, the art of painting, with a success and zeal that has placed him, by universal consent—by universal acclaim, I may say—in the foremost ranks of his profession ; that has placed him on a pinnacle of fame, from which he can proudly contemplate the puny efforts of inferior genius, and defy the malice of detractors,—I say, gentlemen, when I reflect on this, I am confounded, overwhelmed—lost in the bright blaze of the effulgence that surrounds me !

“Who, gentlemen, who that has seen—and who has not seen?—the splendid productions of the pencil of my illustrious friend, Mr Wiggins? Who has not been struck dumb with the superlative beauties they exhibit? Who, gentlemen, has failed to recognise in these productions the savage sublimity of a Salvator Rosa, the calm colouring of a Claude Lorraine, the tender touches of a Teniers, the rosy redolence of a Rubens, the mighty magic of a Michael Angelo, and the winning waggery of a Wilkie?”

“Yes, gentlemen, in the divine achievements in art of my gifted friend may be discerned, in glorious combination, all the excellencies of all the masters of both ancient and modern times.

“My illustrious friend, I perceive, blushes under these outpourings of an admiring spirit, but an applauding world confirms the commendation which I have so feebly expressed.

“Gentlemen, I propose the health of one of the greatest painters of the day—I propose the health of Mr Wiggins.”

Such, then, is a specimen of the working of the social conspiracy; and that that specimen exhibits little or no exaggeration, we have our own experience to attest. We have witnessed its counterpart in fifty instances, and we are pretty sure, if the reader will tax his memory, he could add probably as many more.

This system of mutual *buttering* or *larding* at social parties is pretty extensively practised amongst small poets; but the thing is done, after all, much more heartily and cordially when the aspirants for immortality are in different lines, as in the case of our illustration; for there is amongst the fraternity of small songsters a deep-seated hatred of and contempt for each other, that prevents them going the “whole hog” in each other’s praise; they cannot do it for

their lives, not even on the condition of having it returned. The system, then, works much better, much more freely, when in the hands of parties whose pretensions rest on wholly different grounds; there being here no rivalry, they lay it on each other with an unsparing and fearless liberality.

We at this moment know a pair of small geniuses who have established, and successfully carried on for several years, a regular copartnery in the trade of larding each other at social parties.

These two worthies hunt in couples, and carry on business entirely on their own accounts; for we never knew of them praising anybody but themselves. Their system is to get invited, as often as they can possibly manage it, to the same parties. Indeed neither, if it can at all be helped, will go to any social meeting without the other. When an invitation, therefore, does not extend to both, the invited partner either suggests his brother genius to the inviter, or boldly takes him along with him, without an invitation, trusting to the urbanity of his host for a welcome.

The usual mode of proceeding of these two hunters after notoriety, when they have got planted at the same table, is as follows:

The one gets to his feet, and in a speech very much resembling that of the painter's, elsewhere given, proposes the health of the other. The latter returns the compliment, and generally with an ample measure of interest; and thus have these two small geniuses bowled to each other's hands for the last half-dozen years, the process being invariably, and in every instance, precisely such as we have described it.

CITY LOCALITIES.

THE distinction of classes which obtains in society, naturally enough pervades and influences its distribution throughout towns and cities; the various quarters and districts of which present distinct features and characteristics, peculiar, and, in a sense, appropriate to the different classes by which they are inhabited.

Thus, every city and town has one or more aristocratic quarters, and one or more middle and lower class quarters; with a large sprinkling of the last and worst description of urban, we might say of human habitations.

Now, all this is perfectly natural and perfectly intelligible. But, in the various cities and towns in which we have happened to live, we have observed a residential classification for which it is not so easy to account—a quarter peopled almost exclusively by unfortunate persons who have broken down in the world, but who still retain, or rather aim at retaining, a certain status in society.

How these ill-starred wights come to congregate in this way, and to appropriate to themselves a particular quarter of the town, does not appear very obvious, unless we can suppose them drawn together by sympathy, which, however, we do not believe. Some more plausible reasons than this, however, may be assigned for this curious association, and to some of them we will casually refer in the course of our dissertation.

The houses in the quarter of the town alluded to are of a half genteelish cast; but, like their occupants, have an equivocal sort of air about them

that renders it difficult to determine precisely by what description of persons they are inhabited,—a difficulty, this, considerably increased by certain incongruities, sundry symptoms of a pervading poverty, and a general appearance of dilapidation and misrule, all and severally expressed by the exhibition of shabby, dirty-looking people at the windows, unscoured name-plates, or the more unsightly marks which their removal has left, and dirty staircases.

The houses themselves, too, have an uncomfortable, unsubstantial look about them, at least we have thought so. But this may be imaginary, and may possibly proceed from a previous knowledge of the broken circumstances of their occupants. The locality of the unfortunates, as we may call the quarter of the city of which we are speaking, is always a remote one,—rather a kind of suburb, generally, than a part of the town-proper. In this circumstance, the shrewd reader will see one of the reasons why it is chosen by the class who inhabit it. It is out of harm's way;—out of the reach of duns and other such troublesome visitors; it being extremely difficult, as those who have tried it will bear witness, to ferret out any particular gentleman who may have found it advisable to seek its quiet retreats. This difficulty arises from the immense number of small obscure cross streets,—so obscure that they are wholly unknown to the civilized world in the city,—by which such localities are always thickly intersected, and into which it seems to have been purposely cut up, in order to puzzle and distract unwelcome intruders. But, be this as it may, its inhabitants know it to be one of its most valuable properties, and prize it accordingly.

We have already, in part, described the particular class of people by whom the locality in question is

inhabited ; but we have a word or two more to say of them.

As formerly mentioned, they are all, or nearly all, to a man, persons in reduced, if not absolutely desperate circumstances ; and most of them not, perhaps, of positively bad, but of equivocal character ;—small bankrupts, who are under a suspicion of having rather *done* their creditors ;—broken-down shopkeepers ;—dissipated and discharged clerks ; with a sprinkling of more creditable sort of people in the shape of small annuitants, small proprietors, and elderly half-pay officers with large families. There are, besides, a few mysterious sort of folks, of strange and doubtful appearance,—queer-looking men, in old short coats and drab hats, of whom nobody knows any thing, neither whence they came, nor how they live.

In the city in which we reside just now, and which it may be as well, under the present circumstances, not to name, there is a well known quarter of the kind that forms the subject of this paper, and which, as we must give it a designation of some kind or other, we shall call Swindleton. It is exactly such a place, and inhabited by such a people, as we have described,—odd, equivocal-looking characters.

Now, if you want a broken-down citizen, who is also of rather questionable reputation, and who has suddenly disappeared from the principal thoroughfares, and more public places of the city, go to Swindleton, and there you are sure to find him burrowed in some one or other of its interminable streets ;—at least there he is sure to be, whether you find him or not,—that being, as already said, a task of no small difficulty, indeed next to hopeless.

Only think, then, good reader, taking all the circumstances we have mentioned into consideration, of the folly, the absurdity of going to Swindleton with an account against any particular individual of

its worthy community, with any hope of receiving payment of the same!

The idea is ridiculous, positively ridiculous, as every one knows who knows anything of the character of the place. Those who do, never dream of putting themselves to the trouble of hunting out a debtor who has once taken up his abode there;—the very circumstance of his removing to Swindleton satisfies him that the debt is desperate,—that it is all up. An account paid by a Swindletonian!—Absurd. Such a thing was never heard of.

Greenhorns are sometimes taken in by the large, flashy brass plates by which the doors of this famous locality are, for the most part, liberally adorned, and persevere in calling and calling again and again, and thus give themselves a world of unnecessary trouble. Shrewder observers are not so bitten. They note circumstances, many of them trifling, but sufficiently expressive of the real state of matters, and, forming a “concatenation accordingly,” draw inferences that save them a vast deal of fruitless labour in the way of dunning.

Swindleton is well provided with shops, for it is an exclusive sort of community;—but, with the exception of one or two principal sort of establishments, they all partake of the general character of the place. They are all shabby, poverty-stricken, equivocal-looking places with dirty windows, and exhibiting a miserable display of miserable-looking commodities. In many cases it is impossible to make out what they deal in.

Most of these shops are kept by people who, doing no good there, could yet do no good anywhere else; the last expiring efforts of unfortunate shopkeepers who had opened in splendour in the city,—had been unsuccessful,—and had gradually declined from shop to shop, lessening in credit and substance with every

remove, till they finally betook them to Swindleton. It is a last appearance ;—the last feeble flickering of the flame of shopkeeping ambition. They are here just on the eve of “going out.” They are burnt down to the socket. As shopkeepers, their utter extinction is at hand ; for no man ever reappeared in the trading community as a trader, who as such made his exit at Swindleton.

THE POOR MILLINER'S SHOP.

HAVE any of our readers ever been in the habit of looking on shops with a philosophic eye ? Have they ever looked upon them otherwise than as common-place conveniences, where the wants of social life may be supplied ? Or have they ever perceived that shops have a character about them, and that their outward appearance, and inner too, often express, if read aright, a vast deal that is not uninteresting to contemplate ?

It is not, however, in the gayer and wealthier parts of the city, that shops present any of those features or characteristics in which may be found the intelligence to which we allude. In these places, wealth, or its semblance, has levelled all distinction, effaced all peculiarity of expression, and given to all one common outline, one general character, diversified only by the vagaries of taste.

It is not, then, amongst these that we are to look for those unsophisticated sort of shops in which character and circumstance are developed. These are to be found in the suburbs only, or in those dull and unfrequented streets, which either have been deserted

by the tide of population, or through which this tide has not yet begun to flow, and where, consequently, rents are comparatively low.

The leading and distinguishing feature of the particular class of shops to which we would direct the attention of the reader, is a marked indication of straitened circumstances, not to say absolute poverty, on the part of their occupants. A poor, squalid, ill-stocked shop, we have always thought one of the most piteous-looking things in the world,—one of the most melancholy forms in which the mighty struggle for a livelihood, in which we are all engaged, can possibly exhibit itself.

We do not know how it is with others, but we never pass one of these meagrely furnished and customerless shops, without a painful feeling of sympathy for their occupants. It possibly may be carrying sentimentalism a little too far, but we do think there is something eminently calculated to excite compassion, in the miserable efforts to attract public attention and patronage which such shops as those we speak of exhibit. Something piteous in the extreme it is, we think, to mark the wretched attempts at display which they present; sometimes exhibiting itself in what is meant for a tempting array of the little stock which it contains, not worth, probably, ten shillings altogether; sometimes in an effort at tasteful decoration, intended at once to captivate the eye of the passer-by, and to hide or divert attention from the hollowness within. It is a miserable shift,—one of the most miserable, we think, by which the limited in means endeavour to make or eke out a livelihood.

But what wretched-looking shop is this? More wretched, more squalid yet, than any of the wretched and squalid shops in its dull and lifeless neighbourhood; the poorest of the poor; showing that in the

lowest depth there is a lower still. Ay, that, good reader, is the shop, the specimen of that particular class to which it was our purpose especially to direct your attention when we began this article, and to which we meant it to be all but exclusively devoted. That is a milliner's shop ; the shop of a poor milliner and dress-maker ; the most piteous of all the piteous efforts in the shop way that can possibly be seen.

Let us contemplate it for a moment. In the first place, it is evident that the shop is such a one as hardly anybody would take ; it is badly situated, in a poor, dull, and little frequented neighbourhood ; is much out of repair, and exhibits, altogether, the appearance of having been unlet for years. Everything about it gives token of this ; it has a damp smell within, and the paint with which it was at one time freshened up is dirty and faded, both outside and in. For years no tenant could be found for the shop ; its forbidding aspect and unpromising situation repelled all seekers. At length, however, it was taken. The lowness of the rent induced a poor girl to try her humble fortunes in it as a dress-maker, and it is by her it is now occupied. It is a most piteous exhibition.

One solitary candle burns in a tin candlestick on the counter, and feebly lights the dingy, poverty-stricken shop. On the naked and all but wholly unoccupied shelves stand two or three band-boxes, placed widely apart, in order to make a show, but containing nothing ; they are empty. On the counter are two little wooden pillars, or stands, on which are mounted two caps of neat workmanship, but of humble character. In the window are scattered up and down a few balls of thread of various colours, some papers of pins and needles, a few bolts of tape, two or three feeble-looking faded gum-flowers, and a small assortment of the cheapest description of female head-gear ;

and this comprises the whole stock in trade, and, in all probability, the whole worldly wealth of the poor girl who calls herself mistress of the shop.

Behind the counter, and so situated as to be unseen by the casual passer-by, is seated the poor milliner herself,—a modest, trimly-dressed, and pleasant-looking girl; she is employed in sewing. She is constantly sewing, but she works listlessly; for her hopes from the shop, from her little adventure in business, have not been realized, and the disappointment has crushed her spirits. It has paralysed her energies, and damped the ardour of her exertions.

Is it any wonder it should? Think of the dreary, the weary days she spends in that miserable shop, still hoping for custom, and no custom coming; sitting from morning to night, and no soul entering the door, not even to ask the prices of her little merchandise. Conceive the heart-sickening hopelessness with which she opens that shop in the morning, and the soul-withering despondency with which she shuts it at night; for she has not drawn during the day one single penny, and has no hope that to-morrow will bring her better fortune.

No, poor girl! it is not to your miserable repository that they will go who want such articles as you deal in. That custom, of which the smallest share would make you happy, cheerful, and comfortable, is reserved for the Mantalinis of your profession,—for the gay and splendid establishments of the *marchandes des modes*. They will not deign even to look, in passing, at your miserable shop; or, if they do, it is but to sneer or laugh at your humble pretensions to the character and calling you profess.

What a wretched life must yours be!—what a life of that deferred hope which maketh the heart sick! It is to be traced in your sad look; it is to be marked in the slow and languid way in which you raise your

head when a more than usually audible footstep is heard at your door. You look up, indeed, but it is at once seen that you have no hope of its being a customer; for a long and dismal experience has taught you that none will come to you to order or to buy. You have long since learnt that from your shop you have nothing to expect.

Yet, when the poor girl took that shop,—when she had fairly entered into possession, and had procured her name and calling to be painted on the wall close by the door, (for she could not pay for a sign-board, nor for gilded letters,)—her hopes were high, and a feeling of independence came over her that rendered her cheerful and happy. She had no doubt that her shop, added to her own industry, would yield her a comfortable living. Vain hopes! delusive prospects!

The city reader will, we think, at once recognize the description of shop we speak of, and will, in all likelihood, know of one or two such in his own neighbourhood.—at any rate, in some other quarter of the town. He will have marked them before, and will probably have contemplated them in a similar spirit with that in which we have attempted to describe them.

TOPERS.

THE definition of the word "Toper," given by Dr Johnson, is not at all to my mind. A toper, says the illustrious lexicographer, is "a hard drinker, a sot, a drunkard." I am afraid that the Doctor, in writing thus, was more solicitous of throwing a moral obloquy on the word than of discriminating its exact

sense. A toper is neither a hard drinker nor a sot. These words present the idea of a man who sits almost constantly at his liquor, and whose senses are completely and habitually lost in the base delights of intoxication. Now, a toper, as I understand the word, never altogether loses sight of something like sobriety, never quite relinquishes the appearance of a decent steady man of the world. He may sometimes be a little muddled. His gait, as he proceeds homeward, may have a strange unnatural erectness and stiffness about it, as if he were just sensible that he might be suspected, and was anxious to show how groundless was the suspicion. His tongue may occasionally be put a little about in pronouncing such words as intolerable, incomprehensible, incontrovertible, indestructible, &c. &c. But he would be alarmed at the bare mention of the word drunkard. No, he regrets there should be such people; some folk, he candidly allows, carry these matters a great deal too far. For his part, he can take a share of what is going like other people; but there is a moderation in all things, he remarks, leaving you to understand that he is a thorough devotee to the golden mean, if not to positive abstinence. And, in sober truth, the toper is as he says. He is a man who keeps a perfectly fair outside with the world and with his own conscience. So far from being characterized by the dull and dismal abstraction of the sot, he is rather a smart man, talks boldly, loudly, and long—is disputatious and patriotic—has an animated look. His address to a waiter or a landlord is clever, impressive, and business-like. He is in constant motion, too; a pot here and a glass there—here a sip and there a swill—variety being in his eyes the grand charm of life. He will “taste” in ten different places in a day, and still be a conversable man. It is indeed the grand object of the toper to enjoy himself and his liquor,

and at the same time to carry on the usual business of life. I grant that the toper may decline into the sot; but, so long as he is a toper, he cannot be described by the opprobrious epithet bestowed on him in the Dictionary.

Every little town, and every little district in large towns, has its own little knot of topers. They are generally traders in middle life—family men, who have long been in business, and whose early years were spent in a prosperous activity, so that they are now pretty secure against all the calamities that usually flow from intemperance. A strange redness is sometimes observed about the points of their noses; and a few may be in the secret. But, upon the whole, they keep up a fair face with the world, and are never spoken of as men in any danger on the score of drunken habits. The world just supposes they have feathered their nests, and thinks no more about them. Under all this fair exterior, the toper contrives to imbibe a vast quantity of liquor. He does not get honestly tipsy at once. He dissipates his potations over a large space of time; and, though he has perhaps taken as much in the four-and-twenty hours as would make him twice drunk, yet he hardly ever shows even a slight degree of elevation—at least in the early part of the day. Such a thing has been known as his being found in a considerably varnished state, leaning against a gate; but yet advancing life brings with it so many stupifying influences, that it was not set down to liquor. He has been joked with about the vinous Aurora just dawning on his nose; but he has always turned it off with that quiet smile which forms perhaps the best answer to all unpleasant charges. In truth, the toper does not acknowledge, even to himself, that he is anything out of the way as to liquor. He feels many curious sensations in various regions of his person, but he never himself

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attributes them, nor will allow any one else to attribute them, to their real cause. He, in fact, often professes to be greatly at a loss to conceive what that cause is ;—what it can possibly be. Poor innocent ! He does not know that it is grog. Not he. No suspicion of it. O no. Our toper, however, is, after all, a worthy sort of fellow. He is good-natured, civil, and obliging ; above all things, no quarreller. All brawling and noise he detests. He loves to sit and tipple peaceably. Besides a cordial detestation of quarrels, which tend so much to break up the peaceful enjoyment of a tumbler and a chat, the toper entertains a hatred almost as intense for processions, mobs, spectacles, and so forth. These break up companies nearly as effectually, though in a different way. If one happens to be going on near the place where he is sitting with a few friends, he gets quite angry, talks contemptuously of the idle curiosity which takes people away to see such fooleries ; and, as “ star after star departs,” sends after them a look that might almost impale them. Perhaps, too, the attraction, whatever it is, has interrupted him in the middle of a long story, and in such a case he cannot find language to express his indignation at the interruption, and at the silliness of those who are the cause of it. He endeavours to prevail upon his friends to sit still and hear him out. But it will not do. Off they go, one after another, till he is at last left by himself, when he either sits down doggedly to finish his dose, or swallows it with a growl, and reluctantly goes after them. This, however, it must be observed, is a case where the toper has happened to get amongst others than his own corps. These would never flinch from him in this way. They would stand to him and to their colours in despite of any thing which could possibly happen outside, and would patiently hear out

his story though it were three gills long. But those who are now around him are not his men. They are faithless, as has been shown. They are not staunch men. He cannot depend upon them. They will desert him at the most critical periods, and for the most trifling things. These men he of course abominates.

Topers are decidedly gregarious. There is a sweet and secret sympathy that draws them together. There is a bond of fellowship between them of the most endearing description, and which nothing but death can break. They observe, however, a nice delicacy on this point, and never name it to each other. On the contrary, they endeavour to conceal it even from themselves, and gloss it over to the world by saying of each other to neutral parties, that Mr So-and-so is a good, honest, decent fellow. These are the qualities they would make you believe which unite them. Not a word, not a whisper, of the real grounds of this attachment and good opinion. No hint the most distant, that their mutual love emanates from the gill-stoup.

Topers, as has been said, are always found in snug little droves or gangs, of perhaps about six or eight in each, embracing a neighbourhood of rather limited extent, for a distant residence would be destructive to good fellowship. The meetings of the community of topers require no formal notice before taking place. They have been established for years, and are perfectly well understood. They are reduced to a system which in most cases will be found to run thus: They meet about half-past six A. M.; for, be it observed, contrary to all reasonable expectation, your toper is an early riser. A great deal of business may be done in the morning, and in a very quiet way. Besides having all the relish of a stolen pleasure, too, the *morning*, as they call their matutinal indulgence, is useful, if not absolutely necessary, to allay some-

thing which they delicately term the acidity of the stomach, and give them an appetite for breakfast. At this meeting there is nothing lively either said or done. They are all rather glum, and what little dull conversation passes is generally on the subject of each other's complaints and ailments, for all of them acknowledge that they feel rather queer-wise. Some of them did not rest well over night; others were disturbed with ugly dreams; a few had strange pains in the loins. They then compare accounts, and find that their ailments after all very much resemble each other, and this forms an additional tie of sympathy among them. They next kindly prescribe for each other, and then break up. Not a word is said about when they shall meet again. No appointment whatever is made—it is unnecessary. The when and the where are already well known to all the parties; the former is twelve o'clock precisely, and the latter Lucky Brown's.

At twelve o'clock, accordingly, they are again all assembled. They come stepping in one after the other from different quarters—this circumstance to be afterwards dilated upon—and proceed to business. They are now all in much better spirits than they were in the morning. Some rub their brows as if to wipe away the perspiration, declaring it to be extraordinary hot weather this—hardly ever remember the glass stand so high for such a length of time—really feel quite knocked up. Another mutters something about having been busy these two hours, superintending the packing some goods for the country, and is almost choked with dust—hardly able to speak till he gets a mouthful of liquid to irrigate the arid desert of his throat. A fourth sidles in a word about having had no appetite this morning at breakfast, and (touching the bell) will see if he can get a bite of something tasty—otherwise will not be able

to stand out till dinner time. After each has thus put in his excuse, which, as a matter of course, no one heeds, as the whole is known to be a mutual deception, then the general conversation commences, interspersed with jokes and witty observations on some standing subject of ridicule. Possibly it is an excellent story about Bob's new hat, which delights all but Bob himself, and promises to keep the conclave in good humour and banter for a month to come ; for, be it known. Messieurs the Topers are never without a favourite sly joke at the expense of an unhappy brother, which affords them infinite diversion every time they meet, and which is so good, that it never wears out, but is merely replaced by another.

As the matin refecton had a poetical name, so this has a scientific one. It is called by the club a *meridian*. At this meridian there is tolerably smart drinking—probably an imperial gill to each man's share ; but occasionally, when they happen to get into very funny trim, it exceeds this quantity considerably. After about an hour's guzzling and talking, they again part, but all now a little by the head. Dinner follows—two o'clock. There is nothing unreasonable in taking a tumbler after dinner—nothing, certainly. The corps think so, too, and accordingly again meet at four, or about half-past, when they take another social dip together. They are all now very lively. They banter each other with great spirit, especially Bob and his new hat ; talk over the news of the day ; criticise a neighbour's new sign ; probably take a bet of a couple bottles of ale, to be settled next day, that the name, which is *Cowper*, should have been spelt with two o's, instead of an o and a w ; tell long stories ; discuss, as a matter of course, the affairs of the nation ; and settle it, *nem. con.*, that steam, *after all*, is an amazing invention.

By the time all this business has been got through,

it is wearing on to six o'clock, the hour at which their workmen drop work, an occasion when they like always to be present ; for there is a "method in their madness," and they do not by any means altogether lose sight of the main chance. They, therefore, now again break up ; but it is on the express, though unexpressed, understanding, that each man hurries back again to his post as quickly as he possibly can. Having, therefore, seen every thing safely arranged at their respective places of business, and given the keys to one of the "prentice boys" to take home, they once more assemble, and are now fairly in for it for the night. They are now excessively merry ; wit, such as it is, plays like a continuous stream of lightning around the social board, and is followed, as it should be, by continuous peals of laughter, loud, long, and hearty, but extremely diversified in tone. One is bold, clear, and hearty ; another short and husky ; another shrill and giggling ; another, again, is hoarse, rough, and inharmonious. Song now succeeds ; and if it happen to be a melancholy one, which is sometimes the case, for toppers occasionally get pathetic in their cups, you shall see as curious an exhibition of that peculiar expression of face which has got the very appropriate name of drunken gravity, as could be desired—a sort of maudlin sentimentality—even a tear may be detected glistening in the lack-lustre eye of the *daised* toper, as the simple verses recall the days that are past. He is then in that state which the Scotch happily enough call "greetin' fou." The long-closed sluices of his tenderer feelings, seared as they are by worldly practice, are thawed by the melting power of "strong drink," and now begin to flow in a thick and muddy stream.

The prevailing temper of the meeting, nevertheless, is that of noisy good fellowship ; and a peep in upon them when they are in full glee, by some such acci-

dent as the door being left ajar, is worth any money. There you shall see, as the showmen have it, a most interesting display of jovial red faces, grinning with delight, or open-mouthed in paroxysms of laughter, while a gentle but significant cloud of smoke from their respective tumblers curls up from the board around which they are seated, loading the air with so much of the spirit of the liquor, that they may almost be said to breathe as well as tippie whisky. This scene of joy closes, without anything further remarkable occurring, about half-past ten ; for here, again, there is method. Your toper, as he rises betimes, so does he also go home betimes. He is in bed regularly by eleven o'clock. He knows full well that his enjoyments could not last any time were he to give himself up to late hours. His impressive, but somewhat unsteady step, therefore, is always heard in the street some time between ten and eleven. Just before entering his house, he says a civil word or two to the watchman ; probably converses with him for a few minutes. This he is prompted to by three different impulses. The first is a plenitude of good humour, proceeding from the comfortable state in which he finds himself ; the second is a desire to show the said watchman, that, though habitually rather late in going home—a fact which he knows the watchman is perfectly aware of—he is not by any means a drinker ; and, lastly, he does it by way of experiment on his own condition, an experiment which never fails to satisfy himself, at least, that he is “quite correct.” The watchman, indeed, is of a different opinion ; but of this, of course, he is not cognisant ; and, therefore, his equanimity is in no way disturbed by it.

The circle of topers, though seeing no harm themselves in their little friendly meetings, are perfectly aware that that illiberal, prying, officious thing, the world, is of another way of thinking on the subject,

and would consider their frequent and unseasonable tipplings, if aware of them, as highly discreditable. Knowing this, and being a little sensitive on the score of their failing, they conduct their proceedings with great caution, circumspection, and a vast deal of ingenuity. They, in the first place, for obvious reasons, carefully select such houses of resort as are situated in quiet, retired corners, and that have one or more sly approaches from behind. This is an indispensable requisite. If they have more than one, so much the better; but one they must have at all events: indeed, we are not sure that there is not a regular survey made upon the house, either by all the members of the corps individually, or by an authorised deputation, to ascertain its properties and capabilities, before it is adopted. Whether this be so or not, it is at any rate certain that the houses are always judiciously, nay, admirably chosen in this, as well as in all other respects. Front doors are their abhorrence. They never enter them, except after nightfall.

One important consideration in the selection of a tippling-house is the discretion and other circumstances of the people who keep it. If the landlord be not a perfectly smooth, judicious person, who can see things as if he did not see them, and answer questions in the way *in which they ought to be answered*, he will not do for the toppers; neither will he answer if any of his children go to the same school with any of the toper's children, for then "the wife" is very apt to hear stories at home, which it were as well she did not hear. Mr and Mrs Whitelees must be persons above the common as to sense and shrewdness. They must think twice before they speak. Every inquiry that comes respecting any of the members from his own home, must be answered in a prudent way. Even when a person apparently be-

longing to the set comes in, asking, "If there's *any* of *them* here to-night?" Whitelees must pause to consider to what persons the pronoun refers; an enigma which he can only solve by means of an extensive knowledge of convivial acquaintanceships—seeing that a *name* must never be breathed. Nor must mine host ever appear as if he expected a visit from the club. He must take their five hundredth advent with a look as novel as he put on when they first dropped in upon him ten years ago. Neither, of course, must he ever say to any person inquiring for a member when he is not in the house, that he will *positively* be there at any given hour; that would look like forethought in drinking—an idea which the toppers never once admit into their heads, and which they imagine themselves entirely free of. The reply to such an inquiry must be, that there is a *chance* of such person being there at the time mentioned, as he *sometimes* looks in about that time, *in passing*; and this, notwithstanding that the host may have as good reason to expect the visit, as he has to expect that he will that day take his dinner. All these rules must be observed by the landlord without the necessity of his ever being admonished of them. He must have taken up the whole by intuition at the first, and carefully regarded them ever since by mere exercise of his own prudence. The toper neither lays down the law nor sees to its practice; nor would he ever take any notice if the system were infringed upon. He would only withdraw, like an offended ghost, and never more be seen in that quarter of the town; the landlord would only read his punishment in the silent abstraction of custom from his tap.

The gang never proceed to the place of meeting in greater numbers together than two, and even this they avoid as much as possible. They always prefer

going singly ; for going in greater force attracts notice, and gives rise to speculation. If, therefore, two or three of them should happen to meet in the street a little before the appointed hour, they invariably part after a minute's conversation ; and to an onlooker who is not in the secret, the parting seems a *bona fide* one. It is cool, dry, and careless, and you would no more dream that these same gentlemen were to meet again in less than five minutes, than you would dream of finding the Pope of Rome at your fireside when you went home. One takes down one street, another takes up another, and a third plunges into an alley within ten yards of you. The parting is, in short, to all appearance complete, time of meeting again indefinite, and toying incredible. But, in a few minutes after, how nicely they may be seen all making for one common centre ! How beautifully they converge from the different points of the compass ; every close, lane, and street giving up its member, until the whole have united in one compact, concentrated mass ! Open that room door, No. 3, and you have them all, every man of them, like as many rats in a trap.

FINE FELLOWS.

THE Fine Fellow, albeit he is a fine fellow, is not precisely the sort of person described as a good man, an excellent man, a worthy man, &c. &c.

There is nothing, indeed, at opposites with these qualities in his character. Quite the reverse. There is much in accordance with them, yet is he, in fact, an entirely different kind of personage. He exhibits

characteristics peculiarly his own, and thus belongs to a particular class ;—a class strictly confined within the limits of the term by which it is distinguished, namely, the class of Fine Fellows.

Good men, excellent men, worthy men, &c. &c., are grave, stayed, steady persons. Not so the Fine Fellow. He is a rattling, roystering, jovial soul ; exceedingly good-natured indeed, and obliging, but with rather strong propensities towards social enjoyments.

He loves good dinners, good guzzles, and all sorts of good things in the way of eating and drinking.

The Fine Fellow has, in truth, rather a sort of leaning towards dissipation. Perhaps this is fully strong a word, and, on reflection, we think it is. We shall, then, merely say, that he is rather fond of society of a certain description.

He is to be met with at all sorts of merry doings, and on these occasions is "Cock of the Company." He sings a capital song, keeps the party in a roar of laughter with his droll sayings, and is, altogether, the life and soul of the meeting.

The Fine Fellow is tremendously noisy, however, in his hilarity. He shouts, and roars, and talks, and laughs incessantly throughout the whole evening ; his extraordinary exuberance of spirits keeping him in a perfect whirlwind of glee.

In person, the Fine Fellow is somewhat robustious, with a round, florid, pleasant, smiling countenance ; and, pretty often, a considerable show of whisker.

In manner, he is frank and joyous, and is thus, altogether, a very prepossessing sort of personage.

The Fine Fellow is always chosen to fill the chair at social meetings. On such occasions you rarely find him in a subordinate situation. But if he should happen to be so placed, say in the earlier part of the evening, he is almost certain of promotion before its close.

If the chair is vacated by the original occupant, after a few hours, as often happens, the Fine Fellow is sure of it. He is, in such case, immediately hurried into it by eager and universal acclamation.

It is the Fine Fellow who, after the chairman has retired on the occasion of a public entertainment, "rallies round him a few choice spirits, and keeps up the glory till cock crow."

The Fine Fellow suffers sadly for all this in the mornings. But a glass of soda water, or a basin of soup, puts all to rights again, and by the evening, he is as fresh as a daisy, and as ready as ever to take charge of the happiness of any social party that may choose to put itself under his jovial patronage.

The Fine Fellow is in immense requisition. He is invited every where, invited by every body, and he refuses none. He could not find it in his heart to refuse any body.

This sort of life kills him at last. No constitution merely human could stand it. But he leaves behind him the reputation of having been a Fine Fellow.

But while the Fine Fellow is carrying on the glory in this way, it may not be amiss to inquire how he is getting on in the important matter of worldly circumstances.

We are afraid we shall not find things here in the palmy state we could wish them to be for the sake of so fine a fellow.

We shall find, we fear, that he is making rapid leeway in the world, and that precisely in proportion to his popularity is the pace of his retrogression.

This is a pity ;—a great pity, indeed, for he is a Fine Fellow ; frank, good-hearted, and honourable. But, alas, it is too true !

The Fine Fellow's career, in truth, is but a brief one. It is not in the nature of things it should be otherwise. Debts and difficulties thicken around him,

and a shattered constitution adds its pains and penalties to poverty and embarrassment, and so terminates the career of the Fine Fellow.

Ay, so it terminates.

Have we not often seen him wandering about the streets, like an unquiet spirit, shabby in his clothing, broken-down in body and mind ; moving himself slowly and painfully along, forgotten or shunned by his former acquaintances ?

Have we not seen him thus, and have we not seen the same person some few years before the "gayest of the gay ;" rejoicing in health and strength, respectably attired, vigorous and active ? Smiling faces greeting him, and eager hands extended towards him at every step as he walked along. Alas ! what a contrast, poor, unfortunate victim of a fatal popularity !

Beware, then, dear reader, do beware, then, of Fine Fellows ; for they not only go themselves in the end to the mischief, but often take half a dozen along with them.

MODERN MARTYRDOM.

MARTYRDOM is a very different thing now-a-days from what it used to be. Long ago it was rather a serious sort of business. There were then persecution, torture, and death, in the case. They manage these things in a much better and much more pleasant way now. Martyrdom in those days, whether political or religious, so far from having anything terrible in it, is one of the most agreeable things imaginable. At the very worst, it consists of a little comfortable confinement, in a snug, well aired, well

furnished room in a jail, with books and newspapers to read, and a capital dinner to sit down to. This is the awful doom of the modern martyr, who is, moreover, cheered, sustained, and comforted in his sufferings by the sympathy of his party, whose hearts are bleeding for him, and whose utmost indignation is roused against his persecutors.

In fact, if you did not know the truth, you would imagine from the outcry raised in behalf of the suffering martyr that he was chained to a rock like Prometheus, or buried in some loathsome dungeon fifty feet below the surface of the ground, with a jug of water and a crust of bread wherewith to sustain sinking nature. But you do know the truth, and knowing it, you know that the persecuted martyr, who is very probably a stout jolly fellow, is as snug and comfortable as a man can be ;—looking well, a capital appetite, and plenty to eat and drink. In fact, leading a merry life of it. There he is, you see, the modern martyr, sitting on a sofa in a handsome *robe de chambre*. A warm house cap on his head ; probably a fur one. A pair of comfortable slippers on his feet, a book in his hand, and a cigar in his mouth, very likely a glass of ale or wine on the table beside him ; or, if it be after dinner, probably a rummer of gin twist, for modern martyrs look well after the creature comforts of life. Perhaps the case is a few sympathizing friends to spend the evening with him, and condole with him over a bottle of good old port.

The best of the joke is, that the modern martyr, notwithstanding the very material difference between his sufferings and those of his brethren of old, does not bate an iota of pretension on that account, nor deem himself a whit less entitled to public sympathy. He insists on an equal measure of consideration and compassion, and in doing so is far more noisy and

clamant than ever real martyr was ;—for your modern martyr is none of your meek, patient sufferers. Not he. He roars like a bull, kicks up a tremendous din, and is incessantly calling on the world to witness what he is enduring—to see what horrid enormities are being practised upon him. He will not, in fact, allow the world either to look at or think of anything but him and his sufferings ; firmly believing that the world could look at nothing half so interesting or half so horrifying.

The modern martyr is, in short, one of the most troublesome and noisy persons imaginable. Were we at the head of the Government, we would as soon eat our night-cap as make a martyr of anybody. At any rate, we would certainly never cage him ; for that only makes him ten times worse ; makes him roar out ten times louder ; makes him, in short, infinitely more noisy and more unmanageable.

The contemplation of a modern martyr enacting his part, and a good deal of tact and genius it takes to do it well, is amusing enough. Amusing it is to see how important and dignified he looks ;—to see the virtuous indignation that sparkles in his eye ;—to mark the demand which the general expression of his countenance makes on your sympathy for the shocking treatment he is undergoing, and on your admiration at the heroic fortitude with which he is enduring it—that is, enduring his comfortable room and gin twist. And, more amusing than all, to see how coolly and complacently, and with what a grave face, he appropriates the compliments, condolences, and congratulations, all mingled together, with which his friends regale him, on his return to them after his career of martyrdom is over, although knowing well in his heart that as to suffering, and in so far as he is concerned, it is, to use a phrase not more popular than elegant, “All in his eye and Betty Martin.”

The acting here is generally excellent, and does great credit to the ingenious martyr.

It is, in truth, not only a very pleasant, but often a very profitable, thing to be a martyr ; for, besides being much petted and made of by the world, the world not unfrequently slips a trifle into the martyr's pocket by way of solatium. So satisfied, indeed, are we of the benefits of martyrdom ; the solid and substantial benefits, we mean, over and above the popularity, that we wish to goodness any man or set of men would take it into their heads to make martyrs of us by persecuting us for conscience sake, or for any other sake, political or religious. We should consider it the making of us. But nobody will meddle with us. Nobody will persecute us, and without persecution there can be no martyrdom, as every martyr knows, and knows well ; for there is nothing he so much covets, and nothing, on the other hand, he so much dreads, as indifference, and the liberty to do what he pleases. To be let alone is death to his hopes and ambition, and he abhors it accordingly.

We know, however, how the thing can be done, and how it is done every day.

You first begin by resisting to the death the operation of some law obnoxious to a party, and, it may be, to yourself, but this is not necessary, and thus provoke the persecution requisite to insure the martyrdom you aim at. The law, thus resisted, of course, takes you by the collar. You shout murder, tyranny, oppression, persecution, and to attract attention, resist manfully by kicking and struggling. The law, nevertheless, having a powerful arm, drags you along in despite of your efforts. A sympathizing and indignant mob gathers around you ;—the very thing you wanted ;—and away you all go together in a bundle towards the jail ; you calling pathetically on heaven and earth to witness the injustice done you, and the mob

lustily chorusing your affecting appeals by groaning, and hooting, and yelling. The jail reached, the law thrusts you in and locks the door on you, and your business is done. You are a martyr, and the world knows it ;—you took care that it should ; for, if the world did not know it, there would be no fun in the thing, and, it may be added, no profit either, which is the main chance.

If you be a tradesman or shopkeeper, your martyrdom will make your fortune. There could not be a better spec ; for a sympathizing public will rush in crowds to your shop, the moment it hears of your being persecuted, and will buy up any trash you may put into its hands.

People who do not reflect, think that it is ruin to you to be clapt into jail for a month or two. But you know better. You know that, with an active wife or other friend to look after your concern, a capital stroke of business will be done while you are taking your gin twist calmly and comfortably in jail.

If you had no business, and went into prison as poor as a rat, and, probably, as thin as a whipping post too, you will come out as fat as a pig, from the good feeding that your friends and admirers will put it in your power to command, and with a good round sum in your fob ; the proceeds of a penny subscription, got up by these said considerate friends.

Capital spec martyrdom, either political or religious, as the thing is managed now-a-days. No wonder it is sought after by so many, and sought after with such eagerness !

ILL-USED PEOPLE.

THERE is an immense number of these in the world, so many, indeed, that we rather think every body is ill-used. This we know, at any rate, that we never yet met with man or woman, any way advanced in years, who was not at the moment, or who had not been at some time or other, most abominably used; sometimes by villanous individuals, relatives or others, who had selfishly preferred their own interests to that of the complainant; at other times, and this most frequently perhaps, by the world. Oh that world! What a cruel and unfeeling monster it is! What an amazing number of deserving people it maltreats—uses in a most rascally manner; and that, too, not only without cause, but in the face of the strongest claims on its generosity and kindness. It is really shocking!

It is, however, worthy of remark, that it is in the upper ranks of life, and generally amongst those who appear to be in the most comfortable circumstances, (but this, of course, must be a mistake,) that the greatest number of ill-used people are to be found, and the worst used too.

Amongst the working classes, we, somehow or other, do not find so many of them; at any rate, not so many who complain of the world's ill usage. But this must proceed, we think, either from their more blunt perceptions of what is due to them, or from a consciousness of their own demerits, which last gives them no right to expect better treatment.

It is rather curious, that all persons in the employment of Government, especially all whose salaries exceed say L.150 or L.200 a year, which is about the grumbling point, complaints below this being rare,

are most infamously used. In the case of these unfortunates there is hardly any exception. We never met with one. And, be the singular fact observed, the higher up the parties are, the worse used are they. This is invariably the case. The subordinates and inferiors, like the working classes, say little about their ill treatment; but the unhappy individuals who occupy the higher stations are loud in their complaints, and not without good reason; for high as they are, and well paid as they are, they ought to be still higher and still better paid.

The grievances of these people are truly distressing, and their lamentations most affecting to hear. They would melt any heart that is not altogether hardened against human suffering.

You see one of these unfortunates, a highly respectable and very gentlemanly-looking man, with powdered head probably, seated in his barouche; leaning back on its cushioned lining, his arms folded across his breast; a look of care, and of dignity, as becomes his station, on his chubby countenance, and you say, as he is whirled past you on the dusty road which you are painfully trudging along, "My word, there goes a comfortable-looking chap. (Yes, thus irreverently you speak of the great man, you uncultivated boor.) Surely *that* fellow (irreverence again) is in receipt of his full value. He, of course, has a comfortable, nay, a splendid house. Sits down daily to a sumptuous dinner and a choice bottle of wine. Surely, surely," you repeat, "*this* gentleman's deserts, at any rate, have met their full measure of reward."

Why, my good sir, you never was more mistaken in your life. That worthy, excellent man, has only L.2000 a-year! A situation, a Government situation of L.2000 a year, and, if merit is to go for any thing, he ought to have had at least ten, and to have filled a much more dignified and more important situation.

This is his own opinion, and it is the opinion, too, of all his friends, who make it subject of discussion and lamentation over their wine every time they dine with him. He himself does not say much in these cases. He looks rather diffident and modest, but it is evident he feels that the sympathy of his friends is not misplaced. He has been, in short, a shockingly ill-used man. It would break your heart to hear him detail his grievances ;—to hear him speak of the toil he undergoes ; of the disappointments in the matter of promotion he has met with ; of the reasonable hopes on that subject which he has had mercilessly destroyed ; of the faithless promises that have been made him ; and, above all, of the services he has rendered to an ungrateful country. Why, the whole revenue of the kingdom, though paid over to him individually for his own special use, would not be too much for the services he has performed ! “ But it is an ungrateful world,” sighs this ill-used man, and submits with the dignity of a philosopher, and the fortitude of a stoic, to the martyrdom of a barouche and two thousand a year !

It is at once distressing and amazing to think of the amount of merit and important service, on the part of the employés of Government, that goes altogether unrewarded—nay, altogether unnoticed. But, after all, it perhaps could not well be otherwise, seeing that *every* man in the public service, without any exception, is worth ten times more than he gets, and has rendered it services, which, if justly estimated, it would ruin the country to remunerate. It would, in truth, at once pain and astonish you to hear any one of these gentlemen tell what he has done. How faithful in the discharge of his duty he has been ! how active, how diligent ; and how he has been worked ! No galley-slave was ever half so toiled as he. Now, the pain of the thing is to think that all

this merit should go unrewarded ; the astonishment that the public should not have been aware of it !

We would, however, caution the reader against a mistake which he is very apt to fall into, if he should ever happen to be placed in a situation to hear one of these gentlemen detailing his grievances, and the history of his services. He may imagine that the person he is listening to is the most deserving, and the worst used man in the public employment. Now, this would be a grievous error, and a gross injustice to others ; for, go to the next man, and the next, and next again, and you will find them all still more and more deserving, and still worse and worse used.

Amongst those classes most particularly ill-used by the world are authors,—men of genius. They write books, books all alive and kicking, with cleverness—books filled with wit and wisdom. Yet the world, what a monster ! calls them trash—ay, downright trash, and will not give them sixpence for them. The consequence is, they starve. The world starves them. Is not this shocking ?

What splendid stations in life these geniuses would have filled, had they been treated according to their deserts,—had they met with the success they deserved ! They should have been riding in their carriages. They should have been wallowing in wealth ; and they should have been objects of respect and reverence to their fellow-men. But, mark the difference. Mark their reward ; their ill-usage. They are allowed to go about in thread-bare coats, and not overly clean linen, without a penny in their pockets, without a dinner to eat, and are called asses into the bargain. Pretty treatment this for men of genius ! Truly, truly, the world has much to answer for. But these gentlemen can comfort themselves with the reflection, *that posterity will do them justice !*

Another class of very ill-used people is the race of

tipplers ;—those who have tumbled themselves out of society, out of cash, and out of credit. These, to a man, have been all shamefully used. Fortune used them ill. The world used them ill. Their relations used them ill. Their acquaintances used them ill. In short, every thing and every body has used them ill ; and it is to this ill-usage solely, and not to any fault of their own, it is owing that they are now in such reduced circumstances. It was, moreover, this ill-usage, and by no means any fancy for the liquor itself, that first drove them to drinking, and still keeps their mouths at the bottle.

But these persons drink, after all, on Christian principles. They drink to soften their resentments, to mollify their just indignation with a rascally world, and to induce a forgetfulness of their wrongs.

You call him a tippler, but hear his own state of the case, and you will find that his true character is that of a martyr ;—a poor, patient, suffering martyr, —a martyr to the injustice and dishonesty of the world. Hear his own tale, and you will no longer wonder that he flies to drown his sorrows in the grog-can. You will see, in fact, as he himself sees clearly, that his reasons for doing so are good and just, and that, in truth, he could do no otherwise than he does. Were he to keep sober, his woes would kill him in a week.

THE WIDOW.

HAVE any of our city readers ever observed in the streets a very old woman dressed in a faded black gown—very much faded and decayed—and wearing on her head a miserable black bonnet, edged with a deep crape fringe, sadly browned by wear and expos-

ure—her whole attire, in short, bespeaking the utmost wretchedness ; yet, when coupled with her look and manner, impressing you, somehow or other, with the idea that she had seen better days ? You have ; but inquire if we mean the same person. No, this is not likely, but there are many old women of the description just given, to be met with every day in the streets of every city. She is a widow, a poor old widow ; and, oh ! what a miserable struggle has she had with the world since the death of her husband, which happened many years ago.

He was in a respectable way, but left nothing behind him. While he lived, all was well. They were comfortable—something more, though not affluent. But his death, which was sudden, brought a miserable change. That event at once rendered her nearly destitute.

For some time after his death, she endeavoured to earn a livelihood by keeping lodgers ; for her house was well furnished, but rents and taxes were high, and, by bad payers, she lost largely. The heartless villains had swindled her not only out of the rents of her rooms, but had involved her deeply in debt to butchers, bakers, and grocers ; for she had supplied the tables of many of them by her own credit.

Even had all been well paid, and her apartments all occupied, it would have afforded her little more than a bare living. As it was, it was ruin—utter ruin. Rents, debts, and taxes—the second not contracted on her own account, but in the way above alluded to—gradually stripped her of her furniture, and compelled her every succeeding year to take a lower and a lower rented house, to suit her gradually lessening means, until one wretched apartment—that which she now occupies—has become her home.

For some time the unsolicited benevolence of friends helped to keep her from absolute want, but

these gradually died out, one after the other, or removed to a distance, and every day the desolation of her destitute widowhood became more and more desperate, and every day spread more and more widely around her, until no green spot was left—until there were none to succour her.

Yet it might not, nay, it would not have been so, had her two boys been spared to her. They would have seen to her comfort. They would have kindly tended their mother in her old age. They would have toiled that she might be at ease. They, had it been necessary, would have wanted, that she might not want; for they were both warm-hearted lads, gentle, and affectionate. But it was ordained otherwise. They both died;—the one while yet a boy, the other just as he attained manhood—just as an increased remuneration for his services had opened up to him the delightful prospect of being able to support his mother in that ease and comfort in which it had long been the nearest and dearest wish of his heart to place her.

There was yet another child, a little girl. A bright-haired, bright-eyed creature, but she died in infancy.

The poor widow has few relics of former times left to her. But she has one, one that she would not part with for worlds. In the corner of a trunk—the only one she has—there is a small shoe, carefully wrapped up and pinned in an old piece of printed cotton cloth. There is a little soil still adhering to the sole of the tiny shoe. It has been there for thirty years—ever since it was last worn by its little owner. The widow would not have it rubbed off for any consideration that could be offered her. The shoe was her little Mary's.

Such, then, is the history and circumstances of the widow in the faded black gown and decayed bonnet.

She is lonely, humbled in spirit—feeble, and frail in body. A helpless, harmless being, whose appearance alone, though nothing were known of her story, would excite the compassion of any one possessing the smallest portion of human sympathy. The expression of that venerable face, how meek in the humiliating sense of an abject poverty! How timid in the consciousness of unprotected helplessness! How innocent in the feebleness of age!

That form, now so withered, and so bent with the weight of years, was once straight and comely to look upon. That step, now so slow and unsteady, was once light and sprightly as the “lambkins on the lea.” Once on a day she tripped it lightly in the dance. Once on a day her smile was deemed worth the winning. Youth and health were then on her blooming cheek. Joy and happiness in her beaming eye. Alas, what a change! So pass away all temporal things.

God knows how she lives now; for she has no earthly means of subsistence, and she asks no charity. She asks nothing. She never did. What she ever obtained was voluntarily given, not solicited. She is upon no charitable list. She is not under the eye of any of the dispensers of public benevolence. She is unknown to them; for her meek, unobtrusive nature, and the recollection of her former respectability, will not allow of her making her case known, nor of urging her claims on any of those funds which charity has set apart for the relief of the destitute. She could not do it. It is not in her nature. She suffers in silence,—patiently and uncomplainingly suffers, in the lonely obscurity of her poverty-stricken home.

There was a time when the poor widow used to call upon old acquaintances who had known her in

better days. On these occasions there was in her manner something that could not be marked without exciting a strong feeling of compassion. It was a mingling of the familiarity of acquaintanceship with the distance and timidity of dependence—of lingering impressions of equality with a humiliating sense of a disqualifying poverty. How modest, on these occasions, was her knock at the door! How timid her courtesy at entering,—how gentle and diffident her smile! How stealthily and noiseless her step into the parlour or dining-room, and how eagerly was the most distant chair in the apartment sought, and how hurriedly occupied, as if to render her presence as little obtrusive as possible!

Some little thing was, on such occasions, always given her; for we are now speaking of a particular case, of a particular individual. But, to save her feelings as much as possible, care was always taken that it should bear the appearance of an independent gift, and have in it as little as possible of the character of charity. If it was tea, it was part of a present from a friend, which she was requested "just to try." If it was a bit of cloth for a wrapper, it was a superfluous piece that no use could be found for. The poor widow saw through the well-meant untruths, as a slight and momentary blush but too often told us; but she took the gift as it was given, and expressed, with a modest courtesy—not in words, for she said nothing—the gratitude she felt.

We have said there was a time when the poor widow made such calls as these. There was, although these calls were always rare, and only at long, very long intervals; for her modesty shrunk at the idea of being deemed troublesome. She dreaded it beyond all things—but changes have taken place, great changes. She is not now so able to go about as for-

merly, and circumstances have occurred in many of those families which she used to visit that deter her from continuing her calls.

Reader, this is our old widow in the faded black gown and crape-edged bonnet. She asks, as we have told you, no charity ; but, if nobody be by, or no one likely to observe you, do slip a piece of money into her hand when you meet her. It will be returned you a thousand-fold. But you want no such inducement, we know, to do a charitable thing. Do this, and you will see, and not see it without emotion, we are sure, how her feeble old hand will clutch the donation. Clutch it unconsciously ; for it is grasped under the sudden excitement of unexpected relief, and not because of its value as money. Little accustomed to such gifts, she will then look at you with a bewildered look of inquiry, as if to say, "What is the meaning of this ?" mingled with an expression of heartfelt gratitude. But you will not lengthen her pain, for there is a painful feeling intermingled withal, by remaining an instant. You will relieve her by hurrying away as quickly as you can.

THE PUBLIC-SPIRITED MAN.

It is not easy to define this gentleman with perfect precision—we mean with reference to the particular line of conduct which procures him the flattering distinction pointed at in the title of our paper. Generally, however, a public-spirited man is one who neglects his own affairs to attend to those of the community ; who does not care a farthing how his own particular business goes, provided he can only keep

that of the public in proper order. To accomplish this desirable object, he runs about from morning to night, going through an immense amount of labour and fatigue. The public-spirited man, in short, is one who is seized with a fancy for looking after the public interests, and who, without being asked, devotes himself, soul and body, to the management of its affairs. As a reward for all this trouble and zeal in its behalf, the public, well pleased to have found somebody to take the burden of looking after its affairs from its shoulders, calls him a public-spirited man. When he works on a great scale, and his labours are principally in the political line, it calls him a patriot; but with this species of genius we do not intend to meddle on the present occasion.

It is said that what is everybody's business is nobody's; and this may be true where there is no public-spirited man—but where there is, it is his. He appropriates the neglected common of the public weal, and is made extremely welcome to do so; for nobody else will be at the trouble of looking after it. Here, with his coat off and his neck bare, he toils throughout the livelong day, encouraged by the applauding smiles of those for whose benefit he is labouring, and that too without fee or reward; and who, the while, stand around him with folded arms, looking complacently on the dreadful drudgery the poor simpleton is undergoing for their sakes, and hugging themselves in the comfortable idea that they are getting their work done for nothing.

The advantage to a community of having a public-spirited man, or fag, (as he may be called,) is very great. As he takes all the drudgery of the common interest on his own shoulders, it allows of every man looking after his own affairs, without troubling himself about those of the public. Kept perfectly easy by, and relying on, the vigilance of their public-

spirited man, every one remains comfortably behind his own counter, turning the penny for his own particular benefit.

In the country, the character of a public-spirited man is pretty easily earned. Patching up an old bridge with a few stones, or two or three pieces of timber, or mending a bit of old road, will secure it. But it is a different sort of thing in a town. There, the labours of the public-spirited man are tremendous ; the field of operations being infinitely more various, and, if not taken in a strictly literal sense, more extensive. There are, in short, a thousand things expected of the public-spirited man of the town, of which his rural brother knows nothing.

The former has the common good of a dense and varied community to superintend and protect, throughout all its endless details and ramifications. He has the streets and common sewers to keep clean, the gas-lights to look after, the supply of water to attend to, markets to regulate, soup-kitchens to establish in times of scarcity, police and fiscal regulations to look after, iniquitous local taxes to abolish ; old, unjust, or absurd local laws and customs to abrogate or amend ; improvements to suggest and to see executed, with a thousand other things of equal importance and interest.

One would think the public-spirited man might find all this rather oppressive and irksome, seeing that he gets nothing for it, and that his own particular business is the while, in all probability, going rapidly astern ; but such is far from being the case. Having a soul above all selfish consideration, he delights in it. It is his element, and he is never so happy as when over head and ears in the business of the community, no matter of what nature. All is alike to him ; but the more complicated and unintelligible, the better.

We would not wantonly depreciate the character of the public-spirited man ; but we cannot help thinking that this public spirit of his as often arises from a restless nature, as from any sincere regard for the common weal ; that it is, in short, but another development of that perversity of disposition which induces a man to take an interest in all matters excepting his own.

The public-spirited man would, it is very probable, like much to interfere in the affairs of his neighbours ; but not being permitted to do this, he dabbles in those of the community. However, be this as it may, the public-spirited man, notwithstanding his popularity, by no means lies on a bed of roses. Very far from it ; for although most of those things which he has a principal hand in bringing about are satisfactory to the community in general, yet there is hardly one of them that does not offend, or probably injure, the interests of somebody or other. He cannot please every one ; and the consequence is, that he has always a host of enemies, who take every opportunity of worrying and abusing him. It might be imagined that the public—that is, the majority who approve of his doings—would support him against his foes ; but they much prefer leaving him to fight his own battles.

The character of a public-spirited man being voluntarily assumed, and its duties gratuitously discharged, he generally has, at the outset of his career, the privilege of picking and choosing the objects on which to exercise his public spirit ; and while this state of matters continues, it is all very well with the public-spirited man. But mark the end of it ; and mark it, too, all ye who feel within ye the stirrings of ambition to shine as public-spirited men. The community, seeing how able and willing he is to labour in its behalf, gets gradually into a habit of ex-

pecting him to do everything. Besides the duties already enumerated—namely, looking after the common sewers and gas-lights, &c. &c.—it expects him to remove all nuisances, and generally to remedy all local grievances, of whatever kind they may be. It expects, nay calls on him, to head all sorts of deputations on all sorts of subjects; to take the lead in all sorts of public movements for all sorts of purposes; and though last, not least, expects him to head all sorts of subscription-lists for all sorts of public objects, and thus contrives to mulct him handsomely, besides getting his labour for nothing; for, as he is at the top of the list, he cannot but come down with something respectable. The community, in fact, in the height of its satisfaction with the disinterested activity of its public-spirited man, ends by working him to death, and, in nine cases out of ten, by ruining him into the bargain—as he generally dies a beggar.

It is curious to mark how cunningly the good folks of the community urge on their public-spirited man to his work, when he either flags or gets restive on their hands. As they do not give him anything for his trouble, they, of course, cannot command him, but they hint him on in the most delicate and ingenious way imaginable; and if this will not do, they come over him with a little respectful solicitation.

Suppose there is a particular job to be done which would greatly benefit the community, but which no one will take the trouble of looking after, all eyes, in such case, are immediately directed towards the public-spirited man. His personal friends or acquaintances meet him with smiling faces, and shaking him by the hand with more than usual cordiality, throw out some delicate hints, or it may be jocular remarks, regarding the grievance desired to be remedied; concluding, generally, with some expressions of wonder that he does not take the matter up.

Possibly, deputations from some corporate bodies also wait on him, and after soft-soaping him a little about his public spirit, hope that he will lend them the aid of his well-known activity and influence in managing the affair. It is needless to add, that having once got him fairly in for the job, they invariably cut and run themselves, and leave him to get out of the scrape as he best can.

The newspapers, too, of the place, very cordially join in keeping the public-spirited man to his duty : they usually manage it by paragraphs running thus :—

“**MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT.**—As some labourers were returning from their work late last night by the Quarry-road, one of them, of the name of Michael M'Grady, fell over the precipitous bank at the turn near Mr Dickson's house, and is seriously injured by the fall. We have often called attention to the disgraceful state of the road at this particular point, but without effect. But it is an old saying, ‘What is everybody's business,’ &c. &c.

“*We wonder our public-spirited townsman, Mr Kilderkin, does not take up this matter.* It would add another laurel to the civic crown which already decorates his brow.

“*We hope he will take the hint.*”

Thus goaded on, poor simple Kilderkin *does* take the hint, and is in a twinkling over head and ears in a furious war with the Quarry-road trustees, as we learn by another paragraph which appears shortly after in the same paper from which we have just quoted, and which runs thus :—

“We are sorry to learn that the Quarry-road trustees have raised an action of damages against our public-spirited townsman, Mr Kilderkin, for certain proceedings adopted by that gentleman, with a view to compel them to repair the road near Mr Dickson's house, and which proceedings the trustees hold to be

illegal. For ourselves, feeling satisfied that whatever steps Mr Kilderkin may have taken in this matter he could have had only the public interest in view—that public-spirited gentleman's motto ever being, 'Pro bono publico,'—we shall extremely regret if he be cast in the present case."

So long, however, as there is only one public-spirited man in a given locality, both the man and the locality get on very well ; but, as often happens, when *two* public-spirited men appear upon the same stage at the same time, the result is anything but advantageous to the community ; for, when public-spirited man meets public-spirited man, then comes the tug of war, as on no single point can they ever agree,—no two of a trade can, it is said ; and it holds good of public-spirited men as well as others.

Instead, therefore, of attending to the public interest, they study only how they can thwart each other. To this amiable purpose they devote their whole energies, and the consequence is that nothing is done. Nor is this all. They divide the community between them, and keep it in a state of civil war. At the head of each party stands that party's public-spirited man, looking and breathing defiance of the public-spirited man of the opposite party.

By-and-by, one of the public-spirited men proposes a great public measure ; probably it is a suggestion to remove the depôt for the city manure, of which all the city complains, to another locality which he points out.

The public-spirited man of the other party agrees, because he cannot deny it, in the propriety of removing the said defect, but scouts the idea of its being taken to the site suggested by his great rival, declaring the said site to be incomparably worse in every respect than that which it at present occupies. The several parties of the public-spirited champions

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take up the quarrel of their respective leaders ; a general war is the consequence, and the depôt for the public manure, which is suffocating half the town, remains where it is.

THE TACTICIAN.

This is a singularly ingenious gentleman ;—a gentleman who, having no means of his own, contrives to live, and to live very comfortably, too, on his friends and acquaintances. Ay, for twenty years has he so lived, and, admirable management, without exhausting the patience of his entertainers. For twenty years he has not known what it was to want a dinner, or to have a sixpence to pay for one.

Is there not genius here, dear reader, and of a high order too ? We rather think there is. Your true tactician is generally a man in the wane of life—one who has seen a good deal of the world, without gaining much by it—who has lost the taste for active industrious exertion, without flagging a jot in his love of the good things usually purchased thereby—a man unconnected with family or kindred, but of unbounded acquaintance. To what profession he may have belonged is not of much consequence ; it is only necessary that he should have once been in some profession, so as to establish the circle of acquaintance in which he moves, and upon which he operates. He must have been in a condition to give, and must actually have given, two or three dinners in his day ; and although his friends would, in the ordinary course of things, have long since forgotten these—and no wonder, for it may have been

full fifteen years since any one of them had their legs beneath his mahogany—it is now his business to remind them of them, and to take care that they shall not, even in spite of themselves, be ungrateful for his ancient hospitality. It must not be for a moment thought, however, that the tactician's position in the world is a sinecure, or that no accomplishments on his part are necessary to a successful practice of his art. To imagine this, would be to imagine a very absurd thing. He must be constantly on the alert to make the most of circumstances as they occur; for where he has dined to-day, he can have no hope of dining to-morrow, nay, perhaps, not for a week or a fortnight: yet to-morrow must be provided for. He must, therefore, be perpetually thinking *what* is next to be done, and *how* it is to be done; laying plans, combining circumstances, and calculating on events. Is this life a sinecure? I should think not. Although he pays nothing for his living in the coin of the pocket, he pays handsomely for it in that of the brain.

With regard to the tactician's accomplishments, again, these must be multifarious, and of the most attractive description. He must be an invincible listener. He must have a ready knack of saying little agreeable things to the females of those families he is in the habit of quartering upon. He must never take offence at any thing that may be said or done to him by any member of any of the said families. On the contrary, if the boys should pin half a sheet of paper to his back, or tie his skirts to his chair, he must appear the most delighted of the whole party when the discovery of their ingenuity has been made. The tactician must also at all times be ready to rise or sit, as he sees—and he sees all these things with an almost supernatural promptitude and distinctness of vision—will be most agreeable to his host. He must, moreover, be a man of sense, intelligent, and

well-informed ; possessing a store of anecdote and tale, suited to all occasions and circumstances ; refined, coarse, sentimental, humorous, and pathetic. He must, moreover, sing a good song—this is a perfectly indispensable qualification—and he must sing it, too, the moment he is bid. Above all, he must have the same tastes, predilections, and prejudices with his host, so far as matters of importance are concerned. He may take the liberty of differing with him on subjects of little moment ; but he must conduct his opposition with great skill and prudence, for it is an exceedingly nice operation. He must know exactly when to stop. The least error here would be fatal. But when very dexterously managed, a little opposition rather does good than harm ; and the experienced tactician knows this, and practises accordingly.

It is not absolutely necessary that the tactician should be travelled, but it is a mighty advantage to him if he is. It furnishes him with a world of amusing talk. He could live on a visit to Paris alone, and without any tear or wear of his ingenuity, for a couple of twelvemonths ; and Constantinople or Grand Cairo would most likely be to him equivalent to an annuity for life. It is the charm of the tactician's conversation, either in recounting what he has seen or what he has heard or read, that gives him so much purchase upon his friends. He keeps the company in easy and amusing gossip, tells laughable stories when there is an appearance of dulness spreading round the table ; and by this sort of knack in enlivening a party, he brings himself within a trifle of fixing on you a belief that he is a great acquisition at the dinner table, and that you, the entertainer, are the obliged party rather than he. There is another feature in his tactics that should not be omitted. He plays a good hand at whist, though never any way solicitous to adjourn for that

purpose. Whist, however, is a favourite game with him. He likes it because it is one of the departments of his revenue ; and he likes it still more if he plays on the same side with his host. Yet he does not admire deep play ; and in this respect the lady of the house fully accords with him. Penny points, or so, are the limits to which he willingly extends the game ; and as he is, by excess of practice, an adept in this kind of performance, he generally carries off from sixpence to eighteenpence at a down-sitting, either of which sums forms, of course, a most valuable acquisition to his exchequer.

The superior ingenuity of the tactician completely baffles the penetration of his entertainers. Every time he appears at their table, no matter how often it be, it seems to them the result of mere chance, or they are even so far imposed upon as to imagine that his company was of their own seeking. It was no such thing, if they only knew the truth. His appearance was neither the result of chance, nor was it by any means a thing they desired. " His dining with you to-day, my good sir, for instance, was the triumphant issue of the deep-laid schemes of a week. You simple man, you, don't you recollect meeting the tactician on Monday last ? " " I do ; but what of that ? " " Why, did you not tell him that you had bought a horse ? " " I certainly did. " " Did he not then draw you in to say something very favourable of your purchase ? " " Why, I dare say he did. " " When he had done this, did he not dexterously introduce some conversation regarding your mutual friend Mr Dawson's horse, which he praised ; and were you not tempted, on hearing him praise the said horse, to say that you were much mistaken if your little brown mare would not beat it to sticks at a trot ? " " Yes, I assuredly did say so ; and it was that conversation that led to the run we had together

the other day." "Exactly so, and to the dinner that followed." "Yes, I believe so." "Well, my good sir, don't you perceive in all this the transcendent genius of the tactician? He it was who brought about the match. He it was who proposed that it should be for a dinner and a dozen. He it was, you well know, who acted as umpire on the occasion; and he it was, as you equally well know, who acted as croupier at the dinner which followed."

Your tactician, although he bets none himself, is a great encourager of this practice in others. On these occasions he endeavours to accomplish two things—first, that he be appointed umpire, and next, that the stake be of such a description as he can partake of. He says, that to bet for money is ungentlemanlike, and that the parties had better make it a "dinner and a drink." To what side fortune may incline is a matter of no moment to him; for let who likes lose, he is sure always to be a gainer.

Amongst the least complex and simpler of the tactician's operations is the waylaying you. Even this, however, requires some genius, and well does the tactician know it. The least appearance of premeditation or design on his part would be fatal to his hopes. This operation, therefore, requires to be managed with great delicacy and skill. Before describing his proceedings in these cases, however, it is proper to premise that the tactician's victims on such occasions must all be gentlemen whose residences are, as the advertisements say, about "ten minutes' walk from town;"—an indispensable circumstance this, as it presents facilities for the tactician's operations, without which he could do no good, and of which a town residence is entirely destitute; since, in the latter case, you might go home by fifty different ways, and might come from any one of a thousand different points of the city. Now, in the former case, the chance

is, that there is only one way that can ultimately lead you to your own door, and, of course, let you have been in what quarter of the town you please, this way you must eventually take. Well, then, we shall suppose your dinner hour to be four o'clock ; you are a punctual man—the tactician knows this. You leave your shop or counting-house exactly at ten minutes to four—well does the tactician know this also, and he proceeds accordingly. He starts in the same direction at a quarter past three precisely, stretches away into the country for a mile or so ; returns at a quick and hurried pace, if it be a warm day, hat in hand, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, and exhibiting every symptom of haste and business ; and finally encounters you at exactly ten and a half paces from your own door, for he calculates his manœuvres with as much nicety and precision as a military engineer would do the springing of a mine. The meeting is of course wholly unexpected on your part, and, to all appearance, it is equally so on his ; and this, as has been already elsewhere hinted, is one of the most delicate and difficult operations in the whole of the tactician's practice. There must be no hesitation in his address, no confusion in his manner, no sheepishness in his looks. His salutation must be hale, hearty, and resolute. He must, in short, do the thing clean and boldly. Well, then, we suppose that the parties have come in contact. "Ha! Mr Wardle—where have you been?" says the poor, simple, unsuspecting victim of the tactician's designs, addressing him in a friendly and affable tone. "Been! my dear sir," replies the latter—and he stops short for an instant, not caring to come to particulars on this point ; "been! my dear sir ; I declare I am perfectly knocked up;" and he wipes his forehead with the air of a man in the last stage of exhaustion. He next inquires what o'clock it is, and is exceedingly surprised

to find that it is within two minutes of four. He had no idea it was so far in the day. Things, however, are beginning to look dangerous, for the victim has not yet said a syllable about the tactician's "stepping in," and there is not a moment to be lost. The latter, therefore, has now immediate recourse to his last, but surest expedient. He commences a particular and apparently anxious inquiry regarding every individual member of the family. "All well, all well, thank you," says the delighted husband and papa; "but don't take my word for it, Mr Wardle; just step in and see." The business is done, you perceive, good reader. The tactician shys a little, very cautiously, however, but finally walks in, gets a comfortable dinner, and drinks for at least three hours. We say, drinks three hours, for there is no reckoning his libations by tumblers or any other means. Properly, the tactician drinks but one tumbler; but this he protracts and extends in such a manner, that it is virtually as good as four. There is always something wrong about the tactician's tumbler. It is either too weak in the spirit, or in the water, or in the sugar; and he is accordingly every minute fingering the materials for new supplies of those various articles—and yet no one ever sees him taking any thing. Either the movements are so quick, that, like the spokes of a spinning-wheel, they altogether escape observation, or he contrives, by means of a perpetual flow of talk, to take off attention. He can time the taking of these supplies with uncommon dexterity. He waters at the least interesting part of his anecdote; sugars when the interest is advancing; and exactly at the instant when his host is roaring at the sting of the joke, dashes in as much alcohol as will keep him diluting for half an hour to come.

A dinner obtained under the circumstances above described is not valuable for its own sake alone. The

tactician has learnt, in the course of some small talk with the hostess, that there is to be a dinner party in the house on Thursday next. He takes no particular notice of the circumstance at the instant, but he turns it to excellent account afterwards. He calls at his host's shop the day before the dinner is to take place, and asks him when he saw Shaw, a mutual acquaintance, who, he knows, is to be one of the intended party, and inquires whether he thinks he has any chance of seeing him soon, as he is extremely desirous to meet with him. Here, again, the simple man is taken in. He candidly tells him that his friend is to dine with him to-morrow, and kindly adds, that if he will be one of the party, he will then have an opportunity of seeing him. Done again, you see, good reader. A bargain is struck; the tactician is triumphant. But still this is not all; for out of this dinner he contrives to knock three or four more, so that, in place of eating himself out of a living, as might be feared, and as, indeed, would certainly be the fate of an inferior practitioner, he is constantly increasing his resources, and that, too, by the very process which one would think the best calculated for exhausting them. His field of operations, in fact, is daily widening, and he can now, at an advanced period of his career, command a dozen dinners for one that he could achieve at its commencement.

Amongst the smaller observances which enter into the general rule of the tactician's conduct, is an uniform urbanity of manner towards the servants in those houses which he is in the habit of visiting; and to this part of his tactics the reader's admiration is most specially requested, because it is really worthy of it. It produces what is so much desired in Europe by politicians—a nice balance of power. It prevents all co-operation between maid and mistress to the prejudice of the tactician, and secures to him at all times

a ready access, at least to the outworks of the domicile ; and he well knows, if these be once gained, the rest is comparatively easy. Possession is nine points of the law, nine out of ten. The counterscarp once taken, the garrison must fall. It is, in short, a master-stroke of policy, and is founded, it is presumed, on a similar principle with that which guided Mr Pitt, when, by the erection of barracks, he aimed at separating the military from the civilians.

It will not impart a very incorrect idea, or rather, positively, it will impart a very correct general idea, of the tactician's system, to say that it very much resembles that ingenious piece of mechanism called an orrery. His machinery appears to the eye equally complicated, but then it produces also the most beautiful, regular, and harmonious motions. Let him but turn the handle which commands the whole, and you will see, not, to be sure, Jupiter, Mars, or Venus, but breakfasts, dinners, and suppers, revolving round him in smooth, delightful, splendid, endless succession ; no one jostling another, and an exquisitely harmonious arrangement in the whole, though an unprepared eye would have expected to see nothing but confusion.

Having now had a glimpse of the tactician in his active capacity, in full pursuit of his calling, we may take, what very few can obtain, a peep of him at home. The house in which he resides is kept by a decent widow who lets lodgings, and who gives him an apartment on moderate terms. She is a timid, and has frequently been an ill-used woman, it being untelling the number of lodgers who used to elope without coming to a settlement with her for their accommodation. But *now* she is greatly assisted in discriminating and investigating by her respectable tenant, Mr Wardle, who looks to her rights, makes out her bills, and proceeds on any important mission which

she may require to set on foot. By thus making himself a necessary evil, or a necessary good—it is all one—in the household, he is not called upon to lay out much on his domestic arrangements. At home, he is the pink of temperance and regularity ; for his slender income barely pays his landlady and his washerwoman. As for the matter of breakfast, it is a meal he is careless about. In his opinion, it is a stupid meal, hardly worth heeding, and may be put over by a single cup of coffee, and a morsel of bread without any butter. Breakfast, such as it is, being swallowed, he walks out precisely at a quarter to ten, and is generally seen or heard no more till half-past eleven in the evening, when he returns pretty well saturated, but not absolutely tipsy. His presence at the door on these occasions is indicated by a protracted shuffling and scraping about the key-hole with his check-key ; for although by no means drunk, he is somewhat unsteadied by the six or eight hours' drinking he has had, and has considerable difficulty in finding the aperture. This, however, he at length accomplishes, and enters with a firm heavy tread, flushed face, and a general air at once of bustle and precision. Having gained his bed-room, he throws himself down in a chair, and, before beginning to undress, fixes his eye as steadily as he can upon the flame of the candle, and, with a serious face, commences thinking over the proceedings of the day ; his train of thought he winds up by taking a bird's-eye view of the intended proceedings of to-morrow. The latter have been all already adjusted, but he just runs them over in his mind to see that all is right and tight. This done, after a minute and tedious process of careful deliberate fitting, adjusting, depositing, placing, displacing, and replacing, &c., for every thing he does in dressing and undressing is done by rule, even to the tying of his night-cap, he tumbles into bed, and, as he

has eaten rather a heavy supper, is immediately assailed by his own peculiar nightmare, an entire roasted ox, which he conceives is placed upon his breast, and pressing him to death.

Amongst his pleasanter dreams is his being at Bob Anderson's at dinner, on whose hospitable board appears his favourite dish, a roasted hare ; for, be it observed, your tactician, although he can put up occasionally with any sort of fare, be it ever so plain, is yet a bit of an epicure, and has an especial relish for good things. This habit he acquires—it is not perhaps natural to him—from his peculiar way of living, which necessarily presents him with great variety of aliment, and thus induces a certain degree of nicety of choice and discrimination of taste.

The tactician is necessarily extremely particular about, and careful of, his wearing apparel, for he must maintain a genteel appearance ; and yet the only hope he can ever indulge in of getting a new coat, is its being thrown up to him by an earthquake or some other convulsion of nature ; no other *earthly* means present themselves of obtaining this indispensable garment ; and as earthquakes happen but very rarely in this quarter of the world, he must, as a matter of course, be particularly anxious about the well-being of the one he has. This care and anxiety about his clothes generally extends, in an especial manner, to his linen, of which he makes out a neat inventory every time he gives them to the washerwoman, and as regularly checks them by the said inventory on their return. As he has only three shirts, and half a dozen neckcloths, this process does not take up much of his time, and it prevents his small stock being made less by any nefarious practice on the part of his washerwoman.

Notwithstanding all that has been said, however, we have hitherto spoken only of one description of

tactician. Now, there are two—the active and the passive. He whom we have attempted to describe is the active tactician. He requires to work for his living. The other leads a much idler life, and yet lives nearly equally well. This he accomplishes by erecting an entire and regular system at the outset of his career ; which system consists in his arranging a complete set of dining hours for each day in the week, and a set of breakfast and supper ones on the same principle. Here, it will be seen, there can be no great variety, no great choice, but then there is certainty ; and the passive tactician, who is generally a quiet unambitious person, prefers it on that account. Although, however, he is saved, by this course, from all trouble in plotting and planning, and from all risk of being without a dinner ; although, in short, he incurs no farther trouble during the rest of his life, after he has once erected his system and set it properly a-going, yet it requires no small share of tact and nerve to get this system erected. While forming it, he has a great many disagreeables to encounter, in the shape of sulky looks, denials, and evasions. Against all these he must bear up manfully, and must repeat his attacks again and again in the face of all sorts of dampers and discouragements. By this fortitude and perseverance, he gradually wears out all opposition, and finally succeeds in converting himself into a regular member of the family. All idea of resisting his encroachments, or attempting to dislodge him by sinister expedients, are ultimately abandoned in despair. The unhappy family quietly resigns itself to its fate. The tactician is in peaceable possession, and has taken such a hold as nothing but open violence could overcome. Every Thursday Mr W. is now expected to dinner ; and every Thursday Mr W. regularly gratifies this amiable expectation.

The individuals of this class have generally neat,

though not remarkably new clothes. They have seen better days, and established several claims of very ancient acquaintance. They are what is called pleasant in conversation, and, even with all the humiliation of their mode of life, command some respect for their misfortunes or their general character. There is nothing that these gentlemen so much dread and detest as any change in the order of things which they have established, such as a proposal on the part of any one of their entertainers to alter their dinner day—say from Tuesday to Wednesday. This change in itself would be of no moment to them; for one day is as good as another; but then it would affect the whole system. The latter would require to be altered from top to bottom, and in such an operation there would be considerable risk of the whole coming down together, like a castle of cards, and falling in ruins about the ears of the hapless architect. He might, in short, as well begin to erect a new system altogether, as attempt to introduce such a change as this. The callings, the notices, the warnings, the hints, the explanations, the coaxing, the wheedling, which such a proposal, if insisted upon, would entail upon the tactician, would be at least equal to any thing he had to encounter at the outset of his career, while to the whole falls to be added the constant risk of his suffering an entire defeat in some uncomplying quarter or another.

We could enlarge a good deal upon this character, but we are tacticians ourselves, though in a different way, and always desire to stop before exhausting the patience of the reader.

THE TOWN'S MAN OF BUSINESS.

THE description of person whom we mean to designate in our title, and of whom we are about to say a word or two in this paper, is not, we pray you to observe, gentle reader, a lawyer or professional man. Not he. Nothing of the kind.

He is merely a sort of public-spirited individual, who voluntarily, but we cannot, as will be hereafter shown, altogether say gratuitously, takes a leading part in all public ceremonials, especially those of a festive character, wherever there is anything in the shape of eating or drinking going. But more of this presently.

The gentleman of whom we speak, although constituting himself a principal personage on such occasions as those alluded to, and though occupying a very prominent and conspicuous position on such occasions, must not be confounded with the popular man, who is generally a man of considerable status, of some influence in the place, and, for the most part, in respectable circumstances.

Now, *our* man, notwithstanding his prominence, has no public influence whatever, nor are his circumstances by any means in a palmy state. The truth is, he is as poor as a church mouse, and hence it is that he descends to the sort of drudgery on public occasions which has suggested the name by which we distinguish him. The popular man *would not* do what he does. He would not condescend to it.

The town's man of business, however, was once in a good way,—once a person of some consideration in the town, and hence it is that his services, although not officially or publicly recognised, have the sanction of individual and private good-will, and hence, also,

the familiarity with the influential persons of the town which secures both himself and his proceedings in the necessary degree of countenance.

As regards personal characteristics, the town's man of business is generally a stout, jolly, elderly gentleman, with a bold front,—particularly addicted to good living—a first-rate trencher man, and second to none at a tumbler. It is, in fact, his propensities in this way that have been the principal cause of his downcoming in the world. He led a jolly life of it while he had it. Many a good dinner he gave, and many a good dinner he got.

Our hero, in short, is a *bon vivant*, and it is the tastes, habits, and predilections of that character that urge him on to all these exertions he makes in his capacity of town's man of business. He delights in a public dinner. His teeth water at the prospect of it, but he cannot afford to pay for admission. What, then, is to be done? How is he to get a share of this dinner? Why, he must work for it, and so he does.

The sort of duties he imposes on himself, or undertakes with this view, are the marshalling of processions, clerking at all sorts of exhibitions of public games, horse racing, &c. &c., acting as a kind of whipper-in and factotum during contested elections, and generally looking after the details of all sorts of public ceremonies in the town, *that are to end in a dinner*. Mark that, good reader. Do mark it very particularly, if you please,—that are to end in a dinner. For herein, as already hinted, lies the whole secret of our hero's activity—the great moving principle by which he is actuated, and by which his energies are guided.

If there is to be no dinner, that is, if there is to be a public turn-out of any kind and no dinner to follow, then you see and hear nothing of the town's man of business. He takes no part, indeed, no in-

terest whatever in the proceedings ; and, if present at all, is not to be distinguished from the most indifferent and apathetic of the onlookers. His energies seem paralysed, and there is not a grain of life or spirit about him. He will not, in such case, take the trouble of seconding a resolution, or of even emitting a "hear, hear," or "no, no." In fact, he will do nothing ;—not a hand's turn.

But, if there *is* to be a dinner, then you see a very different man. The prospect of a feed moves him *as* the sound of the trumpet moves the old war-horse. It moves every dormant energy within him,—diffuses a smiling radiance over his countenance, and inspires him with an activity of which, if you saw him when there is no dinner in the wind, you would not believe him capable.

See him on the forenoon of a day on which there is to be some public turn-out, and which is to terminate in a guzzle. What a busy man he is ! What a look of importance on his business-like face ! See, there he is, running about with a truncheon, or a roll of papers in his hand. Very good. But what is he doing ? Why, we do not know that exactly ; but it is evident he is over head and ears in business, and that he has got a job to his heart's content.

In imagination, he hears (most delightful of all sounds) the clatter of the knives and forks of the impending feed. A phantom flavour of roast beef plays like a zephyr about his nostrils. His soul is fired ;—his whole man excited. He is absolutely inspired. He knows no fatigue. His activity and alacrity are an example to *all* men of business. The day is hot. He is elderly, and he is fat. He is perspiring. He oft raises his hat to wipe his bald crown and forehead, yet he dreams not of giving in. He perseveres in the discharge of his arduous duties, for rich is the

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reward. A glorious dinner. It is a field-day with the town's man of business.

How the town's man of business disposes of himself in the intervals between these field-days,—intervals, alas ! too long, is not so well known ; for he then disappears, as it were, altogether from the public eye, and is no more seen or heard of until a rumour has gone forth of another public turn-out and dinner, when he suddenly emerges from his obscurity, and again appears upon the field. And it is truly wonderful how early he becomes aware of an approaching feed. He smells it afar off,—much farther than any body else can. He seems, in truth, to be possessed of some mysterious intuitive perceptions in matters of this kind ; for he can tell at once, and long before it happens, whether any impending event will yield a dinner or not. If the symptoms by which he is guided in drawing his conclusions on this subject indicate a feed, he takes the field instantly. If they do not, he remains quietly in his obscurity—does not stir a step.

Our friend has, of course, no notion of public meetings that begin and end in mere speaking,—that are not finished off with a guzzle. For these sort of things he has the most profound contempt, and firmly believes that they never can come to any good. He considers them as mere idle displays ; his creed being, that no great object can ever be carried without a dinner, and that, the greater that object is, the greater the number of dinners required for its accomplishment. He mortally abominates, too, the mid-day glass of wine with which an economical magistracy will sometimes shove off a celebration. He says it is a mean, shabby way of doing the thing. Why not a procession and a dinner ? At all events, why not a dinner ? He would undertake to get up one

at five shillings a head. A mere trifle, a bagatelle.

We have said that it is not well known how the town's man of business disposes of himself during the intervals of public occasions. Neither is it, generally speaking, but *we* have seen a good deal of him in these intervals, and have found that much of this time is spent in tipling and speechifying in certain favourite public-houses. On these occasions, he is cock of the company; for he is an energetic sort of character, roars powerfully, and is a thundering hand at a speech; particularly on questions of a political nature.

There are, of course, periods that are much richer in public dinners than others,—periods when the town's man of business makes a much better thing of it than others.

The time of the war was a very good time for him; every victory being a dinner dead. So certain, that this was, in fact, the way he estimated them. He looked on the triumphs of the British arms just as so many guzzles, and valued them accordingly.

But times of great internal political agitation,—such as the era of the Reform Bill,—are, on the whole, fully better, as they generally, one way or another, produce fully more dinners,—there being many of what may be called guzzling points in the progress of such events. There is what may be called the dinner of suggestion; the dinner of consultation; the dinner of preparation (for the struggle;) the dinner of encouragement; and, finally, the dinner of triumph, if successful, or of defiance, if otherwise.

But, of all public occasions there is none so prolific in good living, and, by consequence, none so highly prized by our active friend as a contested election. It is a busy and a brilliant season with him.

Attaching himself to one of the candidates, he be-

comes decidedly the most active and efficient man in his train. He sticks by him, morning, noon, and night ; clerks for him ; makes out lists of electors ; ascertains the political principles of parties ; finds out who is, and who is not, likely to give his principal his vote ; marshals and heads canvassing parties ; climbs *up* stairs and dives *down* stairs in quest of voters ; appears on the hustings with his principal and party ; makes speeches, and is always on the alert to whip off his hat at the proper time, and cheer the speakers on the side of his adopted candidate. He is, in short, a most useful man on such occasions, and certainly does go through an immense deal of work. But, then, there is a world of capital eating and drinking. Provender *ad libitum*, and liquor ditto, lunches, dinners, and suppers, following each other in gorgeous succession, day after day. There is the beauty of the thing, day after day. It is a prolonged affair. What is one solitary dinner, be it ever so good, to this ? Nothing. Add, too, a slight touch of coin, which, it is not unlikely, may be going on the occasion, over and above.

A view of our active friend bustling about on a public day, baton in hand, marshalling a procession, or paper and pencil displayed, clerking at some great cricket match, is an edifying enough sight ; but, if you would see him in his glory ;—if you would see him in the highest state of beatification, you must see him in the act of enjoying the great, the sweet reward of all his labours ;—in the act of enjoying that towards which his every movement has been directed, his every thought been turned. You must see him at the dinner table. Lo ! there he is ; what a personification of everything that is luxurious and comfortable in human feeling ! Mark his portly figure ; see the calm, quiet smile of ineffable satisfaction that is playing over his jolly countenance ;

mark the look of subdued rapture with which he is surveying the ample and well spread board ; see how luxuriously he ever and anon snuffs the rich aromas of the stews and ragouts that are steaming around him. All the perfumes of all the flowers of Araby the Blest were to him nothing to this.

See how courteously he inclines towards, hear how blandly he speaks to, his right and left hand neighbours, under the dulcifying influences of the scene before him. His entire man, his whole carnal nature, is melted, subdued, softened, by the balmy breath of the steaming provender. He is in an earthly Elysium.

Dinner over, and the bottle having begun to circulate, his face, always rosy, gradually assumes a deeper tint, a more intense red. Redder and redder yet it becomes ; it is now absolutely red-hot. Its owner is rapidly approaching the speechifying point : It arrives. He gets up on his legs, and encouraged by two or three gruff " hear, hears," pronounced in tones of unnatural energy by two or three tipsy gentlemen, delivers an oration of extraordinary power and eloquence. He is cheered vociferously ; and finally sits down amidst thunders of applause.

The table gradually thins. But is our friend amongst the deserters ? Is he indeed ? Not he, truly. He scorns flinchers and finching. So far from having retired, he is now shining with a greater lustre than ever, and from a loftier position too. The higher powers having withdrawn one after the other, he is now in the chair ; a staunch band of loyal subjects around him, who have sworn to drink with him to the last, and by both precept and example is carrying on the jollity of the evening with undiminished glee.

Getting up every five minutes to his legs, he craves toast after toast. " Bumpers, gentlemen, bumpers," (*his toasts are all bumpers.*) Now he roars out a

speech, and now electrifies his jolly companions with a song.

But, alas ! though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Even the gallant band that surrounded our hero drop off one after the other ; for human nature can stand it no longer, till he alone remains, like the last rose of summer, an affecting memento of the season of jollity that has passed away.

On such occasions, the town's man of business is invariably the last, the very last, man to quit the field. How he quits it, in what condition, the two waiters who thrust his hat on, not *his* hat, for that is not to be found, but *a* hat on his head, and who, at the express command of "mine host," each take him by an arm and *trail* him home, best can tell.

COUNTRY PEOPLE IN TOWN.

COUNTRY people come to town as seldom as they possibly can. They do not like it. They have in general a great aversion to towns. They allow that there are some curious things to be seen in them ; but, on the whole, they entertain a decided dislike to them, and look rather with a sort of contempt, mingled perhaps with an indefinable kind of suspicion, on their inhabitants. Their leading idea regarding a town is, that it is a huge concentration of riches, roguery, and cleverness. Of course, in this view of the case we exclude the regular weekly visitor of town markets ; for this person in course of time gets up to trap. He knows exactly how the land lies, and combines in his own person the look, manner, and tact of the citizen, with the rusticity of appearance and seeming simplicity of the countryman. He, how-

ever, never thoroughly realises the one, nor entirely loses the other, and therefore always remains rather a heterogeneous sort of animal. His dress, more particularly than any thing else perhaps, marks and maintains this distinction. It is in that that you most readily trace his rustic origin. It is that that most palpably betrays his rural habits and propensities. His clothes may be of a sufficiently gentlemanly quality, and they may be perfectly well made too ; but still there is a something about them, and the man who wears them, that smacks of the bucolic, either in his top-boots, his very ample and showy yellow waistcoat, or his knee breeches. But though his coat, as we have said, may be on the whole pretty well made, it will yet be very often found rather if any thing too long in the skirts, and in some cases too short. They never seem to be fortunate enough to fall in with a tailor who can hit the happy medium. If these signs should be thought equivocal, there is at any rate no mistaking the little stumpy spur, the riding switch, and the hale, fresh, swarthy countenance. Of these gentlemen, however, it is not our intention to speak ; every body knows them : we mean to confine ourselves entirely to the genuine unsophisticated specimen of the countryman, and that of the humbler orders too ; for your gentleman farmer, or wealthy country resident, of whatever calling or of none, as he has been educated in town, and has been often there for months together in the winter season, presents us with no distinctive traits worth marking. He is one of ourselves.

The honest man whom we would point out is a decent, well-doing, but rather small farmer ; a highly reputable person, but with no pretensions to the character of a gentleman in the ordinary acceptance of that term. This decent man belongs to the class which we have said entertain a great aversion to

towns ; that is, to going to town. There are very few things, indeed, that will induce him to adventure on that step. Nothing less than the business of renewing a lease will do it, or a lawsuit, or a legacy, or settling a son or daughter at school, or something of that kind. He has been invited scores of times by flying visitors and others who have partaken of his good things under his own hospitable roof, to come to town and spend a day or two with them ; and these persons, one and all, have declared that nothing could give them greater happiness than to see him at their houses. He thanks them for their courtesy, but never avails himself of their generous offers ; indeed, he quietly suspects that such invitations are mere matters of course, and that they are given in the full belief, or at least sincere hope, that they will never be taken advantage of. When thanking his guests, therefore, for their friendly proposals, a shrewd observer might detect a faint smile of incredulity playing about his upper lip, intimating that he takes their kind words at something pretty near their proper value.

However, *some* things will bring him to town ; there is no doubt of it, for, lo ! see, there he is. You perceive that sedate, decent-looking, middle-aged man there, on the opposite side of the street, with the blue coat, wide drab trousers, ditto gaiters, and yellow waistcoat, (the first of a make and form which we would beg to call the cut-rustical, from its exhibiting nearly all the antipodes of what is denominated a fashionable coat ;) and amongst the rest, a certain amplitude, which gives it the appearance of having been specially ordered not so much to supply the wants of the wearer, as with the patriotic view of encouraging the woollen trade of the country. The hat, you perceive, is a good one, and tolerably new, but not a fine one ; it is extremely rough. The nap is long, and waves

with every puff of wind like a field of rye-grass, or stands upon end as if the wool had been stuck on in handfuls.

The honest man, as was said before, is about middle age ; but he is stoutly made, you see ; a little bent or so ; but this does not much detract from the general vigorousness expressed by his whole form. That form is not by any means an elegant one, but it is firm and sturdy, and warrants a capability of enduring a great deal of bodily fatigue, and at the same time bespeaks a familiarity with hard labour. His countenance, you see, wears the hue of health, and is strongly expressive at once of sagacity and simplicity. He has come to town with his second son, to have him bound apprentice to a writer ; and he only came last night, so that we have caught him fresh, and in fine condition for observation ; for he has not been in town for sixteen years before, not since the lad whom he is now ushering into the world was born ; every thing, therefore, is strange and new to him. You mark him out at once from the crowd which is passing and repassing him, by the peculiarity of his appearance, air, and manner. He looks, you see, as if he did not belong to them, and as if he felt he had nothing to do with them. He remains isolated, distinct, separate, unincorporated. He does not amalgamate with the stream of humanity into which he is plunged, but continues to retain his own particular identity. Observe the look of bewilderment with which he contemplates every thing and every body as he saunters along with his hands united behind his back, and his stick carelessly dangling down to his heels. Watch him for a moment—see, he pauses every now and then, and looks round him with the view evidently of arranging and reducing to order the crowd of new ideas which have huddled themselves into his mind, and of which, in their present state, he can make little

or nothing ; and to endeavour coolly and soberly to comprehend and form a just estimate of all that is passing around him. Having made some approximation to this, he again walks on until he has laid in a new stock, when he again stops, and subjects them to the same operation ; and thus he finally accomplishes the entire length of a street.

Mark, now, he has gone to take a peep into that toyshop window ; indeed, he looks for a longer or shorter time into almost every shop window he passes ; but the toyshop, and one or two others to be afterwards mentioned, have particular attractions for him, and he studies it long and closely. He first claps his eye upon a regiment of wooden dragoons, all as fine and showy as paint, and gold-leaf, and bits of tin, can make them. He thinks them trifling things indeed, but he admires the neatness and ingenuity of the workmanship, and contemplates the little warriors with a look, if you could only but see it, of gentle and kindly approbation. His eye is next taken by a grotesque little figure with an immense mouth and a double row of teeth that a shark might envy, a pair of formidable mustachios, and a most impressive nose. The little fellow seems to be laughing heartily, for his mouth is wide open ; and our honest friend, caught by sympathy, looks at him and laughs too. He cannot resist it. But, on reflection, he begins to wonder why they gave his little wooden friend such a prodigious mouth and such dreadful tusks. He does not know what we know, nor would he ever find it out unless informed, that the said wooden gentleman is a nut-cracker ! He next runs his eye over a vast variety of neat, showy, but indescribable things, of all sorts, sizes, and colours ; and, altogether bewildered about them, remarks within himself, in broad Scotch, " Well, what is made up for the penny ! " At length, highly tickled with the show, he deter-

mines on patronising the owner of so much ingenuity and neat handicraft. Having staved his way into the shop, he fills his pockets with whistles, pewter watches, dolls, and miniature coaches, for the children at home. There is a drum, which he would willingly purchase for Bobby, but he does not know how to have it conveyed to his lodgings, and he is afraid people would laugh at him if he carried it himself through the streets. He therefore foregoes this purchase, and in lieu of it buys a whip with a whistle at the end of it.

Our friend is next attracted by the gorgeous display of a jeweller's window, and is lost in amazement at the immense amount of wealth which it exhibits. Bread-baskets of solid silver! He can scarce believe his eyes. Jugs, salvers, &c. &c., some of the last nearly of the diameter of one of his own cart-wheels—all of the same precious metal. It is really wonderful. He did not believe there was as much silver in Great Britain as is contained in that single window. See the look of reverential awe and respect with which he is contemplating the boundless treasure so temptingly displayed before him. What is passing through his mind just now, think you? Why, he is contrasting these massive silver table-spoons with the homely horn articles of the same denomination that appear on his own humble board, and that splendid silver tureen, with dividing-spoon corresponding, to his own white, cracked crockery reservoir, with its wooden ladle. See, now, he is puzzled by something. What can it be? Oh, that fish-knife! Yes, yes; it is the fish-knife that is bothering him. He cannot make out at all what it is intended for, although it strikes him to be very like a mason's trowel. It is a very pretty-looking thing, no doubt; solid silver, ivory handle, and finely ornamented blade. But what can it be for?—ay, there's the rub. Is it for cutting meat? No, no; it

would never do for that. It has no edge, and the blade is too broad and too short. It is, in fact, every way unfitted for this duty. Lifting potatoes? No, it has no edge; they would roll off. But mashed potatoes? Yes, it might do for that; but a common spoon would do equally well. It does not signify; the thing's not worth thinking more about. He has lived fifty years in the world, and never found the want of such a thing as that; nor is he likely to do, although he should live fifty years longer.

Our honest unsophisticated friend is next brought up by a haberdasher's shop, a very rich and well-stored one. Here, again, he is lost in amazement; but it is only at the variety and delicacy of the different fabrics that meet his view; there is no respect mingled with his feeling, as in the former case. He thinks them all trash and trumpery together, although pretty enough in their way. For his own part, he would not give sixpence for all that is in the shop. But the sight of this repository of female attire reminds him of a promise he had made to his wife to purchase a shawl for her. In he goes, therefore, and demands a shawl. "Yes, sir; of what description?" Here's a poser. He knows nothing about shawls. He cannot tell one from another, scarcely even by the colour; and positively cannot distinguish between one at half a crown and one at five guineas; and as to taste in such matters, he has none in the world, not a vestige of it; or if he has any, it is a very equivocal one. But his wife ought to have told him before he left home what sort of a shawl she wanted. So she did; nay, she not only did this, but gave him a very particular description of it. She described the flowers, figures, and borders, with such minuteness, that none but an absolute ass could have gone wrong. Yet exactly such an ass was our friend in this affair, though very little of it in other matters. He has forgotten

every word his wife said to him on the subject ; indeed, he never comprehended it at all, although he said he did at the time, and I believe really thought he did. The consequence of his negligence, however, you see, is now perfectly visible in the blank and much-at-a-loss sort of look with which the honest man replies to the poser of the shopman. But see ; the latter, with the ready tact of his calling, perceives the dilemma of his customer. He sees at once where the difficulty lies, and instantly covers the counter with shawls, that he may choose for himself. This, though well meant, and indeed all that the shopman can do in the circumstances, does not much mend the matter, for he cannot make a choice. The variety puzzles him beyond measure, and he is now, if any thing, worse off than before. But he feels that there is an urgent necessity for his making *some* choice ; and he accordingly fixes at last on a vulgar, staring, glaring thing, blazing with red and yellow, and having a fringe a foot deep. It is as unlike as possible to the one his wife wants ; we know that, and he will know it too when he gets home ; indeed, he has even now some qualms on the subject ; but the deed is done, the shawl is packed up, and the money paid. See, there he is walking out of the shop with his purchase under his arm, carefully wrapped in a sheet of brown paper.

Our friend next glances at a pastry-shop, but it is only for an instant, for on all that it contains he looks with the most ineffable contempt. He sees nothing in it that a man could make a meal of. He contrasts the kickshaws of the pastry-cook with his own substantial fare at home, and pities the taste which can solace itself with such trash.

The splendours of a printshop now attract his notice, and with the exhibition here he is very much delighted. The caricatures in particular amuse him

exceedingly. He does not, indeed, understand them ; he sees nothing of their drift ; but still they appear vastly funny. Here is a great man robed as a judge, holding a pig by the tail, while a military officer with a cocked hat—a general, perhaps—is belabouring it with an immense cudgel, and crying to his neighbour, “Hold fast, Dicky.” There, again, is a bench of justices all playing on the fiddle, and bawling to each other to “keep time.” Such witticisms as these tickle our honest friend wonderfully, and he thinks they must be very clever fellows who do such things.

While no doubt surprised with the wealth and the vast deal of business transacted in the city, our rural friend is by no means so stupid as not to perceive that there is also no small share of misery and poverty wherever he turns his eyes. He sees human beings, male and female, clothed in rags, and obviously at the lowest stage of destitution. He also remarks, that there is an extraordinary struggle for a subsistence going on, every man elbowing his neighbour, and pushing along heedless of every thing but his own advantage. The singular means resorted to for a livelihood likewise come under his attention at every corner. He sees men going about with huge boards, like shields, hung on their back and front, and so acting the part of walking placards—all for a bit of bread. This, and the like of this, smites him as a melancholy memorial of the suffering and poverty which pervade the ramifications of city life.

The honest man has now seen about enough of the town ; he is perfectly sick of it ; he is sick of the continual bustle in which he has been jogged and knocked about like a pair of old boots ; he is sick of the constant racket and noise of the streets ; he is sick and tired of walking them, for the smooth pavement blisters his feet, which no amount of travelling in the country would ever do ; he is sick of the glare of the

shops, too ; they have lost all their attractions ; in short, he is sick of every thing, and longs for his green fields again—his stables and his barns. After being cheated by a ring-dropper, and rather done in one or two bargains which we have not enumerated, and seen two or three of the lions of the town, and been one night at the theatre, of which he grew tired before the conclusion of the first act, he at length mounts on the top of the Go-it stage-coach, and in six hours thereafter finds himself, dolls, watches, whips, and all, at his own door again, and thanks his stars that he is once more at home.

ROARERS.

WOULD the reader believe it, that there are a number of people who get handsomely through the world—nay, get through it with great *eclât*, by *roaring*, and by nothing on earth else ; merely by shouting everything they have got to say at the top of their voices—in short, by *roaring* !

We know several persons who have literally roared themselves into respectability, consideration, and influence, without the aid of any other single qualification, moral or physical, than a superb pair of lungs and a thundering voice. The roarer, or brayer, (as he might with equal propriety be called,) is, indeed, invariably an ass—a downright ass ; and of this fact he is quite conscious himself, for his roaring is a result of that consciousness ; its object being to conceal in foam, and fury, and noise, the shallowness of the stream that runs beneath. It is, in short, an

imposition—an effort to betray you into the belief of a consequence which the roarer could secure by no other means : and a very successful imposition it is ; for the world has an instinctive respect for those who keep calling boldly and vigorously on its notice, and not only instantly attends to them, but does so with the greatest deference and humility possible. Modest merit and its claims it thrusts aside, without any ceremony, that it may hurry to the roarer to know what are his wishes, and to gratify them if it can ; for the world thinks that nobody speaks out but those who have good grounds for doing so ; this it takes for granted, and herein lies the great secret of the roarer's success.

The roarer is generally a person of large size, and somewhat corpulent. We have, indeed, seen small and middle-sized roarers, but they do not get on so well as their bulkier brethren ; their roaring is not so impressive, even though the voice be as good. The roarer, then, to be entirely successful, requires to be a majestic sort of animal. When he is so, he carries all before him ; he can roar his way anywhere. Capital thing to get a roarer with you to a crowded theatre, or any other crowded assembly ; he will roar both you and himself into a comfortable situation in a twinkling, be the crowd ever so dense. Were you so placed with him, you would see with what ready deference the people would make way for him ; how anxiously they would squeeze themselves aside, in order to let him get on ; how promptly they would form a lane for him to pass through, and how majestically he would go roaring up the lane so formed, to the point he aimed at—the most desirable, of course. You, in the meantime, follow comfortably in his wake ; taking care, however, to keep close to him ; for the crowd, having no respect for you, will shut up rapidly behind him.

The roarer's roaring is almost incessant. He commences roaring the moment he gets up of a morning, and continues roaring until he lies down again. He roars for his shaving water, he roars for his boots, he roars for his breakfast, he goes roaring out of the door, he goes roaring up the street ; he roars through the business of the day ; and, finally, returns roaring to his den. His low growl may be heard even during the night.

The roarer's voice is always good—that is, always loud and sonorous, which, we suppose, arises from the constant exercise of his lungs ; or, it may be, that the discovery of his possessing good lungs suggested the idea of betaking himself to roaring ; thus giving to his voice the character of a cause rather than an effect. Be this, however, as it may, the roarer, as we have said, has invariably a stupendous voice, and we may add, is always in excellent wind ; his roar is powerful.

The roarer never argues, never reasons : he has no occasion ; his roar accomplishes his purposes much more effectually and summarily. He will roar down any antagonist, however subtle, however expert, in two seconds ; and that, too, without knowing anything at all of the subject in discussion. What necessity, then, for the roarer giving himself the trouble of studying anything but his own interest, or of employing, where he is opposed, the tedious process of reasoning ? None whatever ; and he never does.

It may be wondered how the world should allow itself to be imposed upon by the roarers ; how it should not insist on his passing for exactly what he is worth, and nothing more. But this wonder would cease in a great measure, if you only observed closely the influence and effects of his roaring. If you did so, you would find it to be, after all, a very imposing

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sort of thing : you would find it so as regarded its impression even on yourself.

Suppose, for instance, you entered into conversation with a roarer. Well, you will not have done so for half a minute, even though the consciousness be strong within you that he is an ass, until you shall have felt a very painful sense of inferiority, proceeding from the feebleness of your own tones, as contrasted with the overwhelming din of his foaming cataract. In such case, your wretched attempts at speaking, your feeble monotonous utterance, sinks—and you feel it—into sheer inanity, before the magnificence of the roarer's roar. It is in vain you call to 'your aid the consciousness that you are speaking sound sense, and that he is speaking nonsense. It is in vain you fall back on the conviction that you can *think* a thousand times better than he. Can you roar as loud? No, you cannot; and therefore must you succumb. The truth is, you get humiliated in the presence of the roarer; you get ashamed of yourself, and sneak away, while he stands fast, and triumphantly roars after you. You feel a sense of insignificance creeping over you, which is anything but flattering to your vanity; and this in despite of your having the most profound contempt for the abilities of the roarer. Sheer physical superiority of lungs carries the day; the roarer roars you into a nonentity.

See, now, how the roarer gets on; see how coaches stop for him the moment he opens his tremendous roar, while you of the feeble voice are toiling after it unheeded and in vain. Nobody pays the smallest attention to you; and if ever you get on or into the coach at all, it must be by your overtaking it, not by its stopping for you.

See, too, with what ease the roarer makes his way

into the centre of a crowd in the street, when he wants to know what it is all about ; while you, with equal curiosity, are bob-bobbing on the outside, in a vain attempt to get a peep at what is going on within. He roars—the crowd opens ; he roars again, and he is in the very centre of the thick and the throng ; those who compose it forming a respectful circle around him, and allowing him to gratify his curiosity at leisure and undisturbed.

Mark how instantaneously he commands attention ; —mark with what deference he is heard whenever he opens his mouth, although it is only to roar ; for he never speaks above half-a-dozen words at a time. He never attempts speeches nor anything of the sort, for he has neither ideas nor language for such efforts. He accomplishes everything by short abrupt roars, employing just as many words as will bring the roar out effectively, and no more.

Mark the effect the roarer produces in a shop when he enters it. See how all fly at the first roar to serve him ; leaving you and the other low, quiet-speaking drivellers who happen to be there at the same time, to cool your heels till the wants of the roarer are supplied.

You enter a crowded shop. You see it is crowded, and meekly and modestly await some of the shopmen's leisure, without saying a word. You then steal quietly up to an unoccupied spot, and, stretching across the counter, half whisper the name of the article you desire, and, having at length obtained it, sneak out as softly as you came in. Now, how does the roarer manage matters ? Why, he bounces into the shop with a roar like a Bengal tiger's ; perfectly heedless how many claimants may be before him. The shopmen all pause, and look at the roarer. The waiting customers do the same thing. All eyes are fixed on him. He roars again. The shopmen fly to

serve him. He roars a third time, and the article he wants is put into his possession. He pays for it with a roar, pockets it with a roar, and finally goes roaring out of the shop; carrying off in triumph the thing he came for, and that in half-a-minute's space, while you and the other feeble-voiced dawdlers are contentedly remaining penned up, like so many sheep in a fold, awaiting your turns.

Thus does the roarer get on, then. Thus does he carry all before him, and thus does he roar his way through the world; commanding immediate attention wherever he goes, and procuring instantly whatever he may desire. The world stands in awe of him. It steps aside to let him pass, and treats him with deference and respect wherever it meets him.

Reader, if you have a good pair of lungs, we would advise you to betake yourself to roaring immediately. You will find your interest in it. Roar morning, noon, and night, roar everywhere, roar to everybody, roar on all occasions. Answer all objections with a roar. Urge all claims with a roar. Refuse all requests with a roar. Make all demands with a roar. In short, let all your sayings and doings be intimated in one universal roar, and, you may depend upon it, you will find that there is nothing carries a man so triumphantly through the world as good, sound, sonorous roaring. It makes you somebody at once, and renders all other claims to consideration wholly unnecessary.

THE OLD FIRM.

THERE is something about old-established places of business, both as regards their outward appearance

and the abstract reflections which they suggest, that has always much interested us. Every thing about them presents indications of a protracted existence—of long endurance ; and speaks of times gone by, in a language which, if read aright, is, we think, not a little touching ; albeit neither the objects themselves nor their associations are of a kind that might be thought calculated to excite such feelings.

The Old Firm is always respectable—highly so. Its honour is unstained. It has maintained it unsullied through a long period of years, and through the most trying times. Its credit is unlimited. It is known over the four quarters of the globe, and on its integrity and punctuality men repose with the utmost confidence. No man who has a just claim on the Old Firm ever left its premises unsatisfied. No man was ever obliged to make a second demand on it for what it might be owing him. It never knew in its own practice what shuffling or evasion was. It detains no claimant an instant, but has always prided itself on the promptitude of its payments, and the equity and punctuality of all its dealings. The Old Firm, in short, is everything that is honourable and upright. It never took advantage of an oversight ; it never availed itself, in its transactions, of the necessities of those it dealt with ; it never harassed the unfortunate, nor ever pressed the straitened when good intention was manifest. It is a noble old house—a brave old house—though it be but a house of trade.

The Old Firm is generally located in some old building, situated in some old court or alley, which was once in the very centre of the throng and bustle of the city, but is so no longer. It is now an all but entirely deserted place—silent and lifeless. The spirit of traffic has long since withdrawn to another and a newer quarter of the town. There is now, too,

grass growing in the old court-yard—a few tufts here and there in the interstices of the stones with which it is paved ; for the Old Firm has become languid in its old age, and does not push business now as it was wont to do, nor keep that stir about its premises which it did in the days of its youthful vigour. There is, indeed, still some appearance of business about it, but very little ; nothing to what there used to be.

There is an old decayed sign-board over the doorway of the old place of business. It was once on a day a flashy sort of thing—at least it was thought so then—but it is now so faded, you can hardly trace a single letter of the names or words inscribed on it. It has not been touched for the last forty years. About that time it was renewed, having been on duty for thirty years before. Every thing about the old concern is dark and dingy, and old-looking. The windows are coated over with dust ; the doors battered and greasy-looking—full of indentations and other indications of long tear and wear. They have not been touched with a paint-brush for half a century ; nor, indeed, has any part of the premises. They are all precisely as they were when the old concern was in its youthful vigour, and that is many a long year since.

The idea of touching up and making things look smart, is one that never for a moment enters the head of any one about the establishment. It is never dreamed of, and any proposal to that effect would at once be scouted as “ nonsense ” by all the old hands, both masters and men. They would not submit to the disturbance—to the breaking up of old arrangements—the demolishing of old use and wont conveniences which a process of renovation would occasion—on any account whatever. Where would old John the porter hang his ropes (his old greasy ropes) if the wall against which they hang, and against which they have hung, ay, and on the same nail too, for the last

twenty years, was to be new painted? Where, indeed? John, *we* know, might find fifty other places for his ropes, and much more convenient places, too, but John himself does not think so, and that is enough. To attempt to paint *that* wall, therefore, is "nonsense," and John says it is, and all the other ancients of the establishments agree with him, from a fellow-feeling; because, if they have not ropes to hang on any particular wall, they have other favourite dispositions of things that would be wholly deranged or demolished by any attempt at reformation. With them all, therefore, such an idea is "nonsense," downright "nonsense," and not to be thought of.

Where would old Jobson, the old clerk, put his old ledgers and old cash-books, if the old crazy press in the old counting-house was removed to give more room, and admit more light and air? Answer that! Why, could not old Jobson get a new press or other receptacle for his old books, and have it placed, too, in a much more convenient situation than where it now is? No; a new press, indeed, he might get, but all London could not produce one that would answer the purpose half so well as the old one. It holds precisely the number of books it is required to hold; and, better than that, it holds them disposed and arranged after the particular way in which Mr Jobson likes to have them. Now, no new press could be made to do that. Again, as to situation, you might change it certainly, but could you do it for the better? Could you find any other half so convenient as the one it is in? You could not; for Mr Jobson has only to turn round when seated at his desk, to lay his hand in an instant on whatever book he wants. All idea, therefore, of either renovation or reformation in or about the old premises is unquestionably "nonsense."

There is, moreover, about every one of the old hands connected with the old concern, a natural innate ab-

horrence of change, independent of peculiar or personal consideration, and a profound contempt for, if not a positive hatred of, everything of a merely ornamental description. All kind of show and flash is their aversion. Brass plates, green or red cloth-covered doors, dashing signs, and all the other sorts of elegancies of a similar description with which the modern place of business is sought to be made attractive, they, one and all, detest and despise from the bottom of their hearts.

We have incidentally mentioned old John, the porter, and his ropes, but old John is worthy of a little special notice. He is now a very old man. See, there he is; an honest-looking old fellow. He has been upwards of thirty years in the employment of the Old Firm, and recollects the father of the present head of it, who is himself far advanced in years; the former had just retired from business in favour of the latter when John was engaged, so that they may be said to have fought the world's battle together, side by side.

John is as honest as steel, and devoted to his master's interest; he has, in short, but one fault—he dearly loves “a drop of summat.” He always did, but John carries his liquor discreetly. You could hardly ever know it on him, and it never prevented him doing his duty. His master, when he suspected John of having been indulging, and yet was not quite sure of the fact, used to ask John, laughingly, to pronounce the word “tolerable;” if he came out with it distinctly, he was acquitted; if the attempt was a failure, which in nine cases out of ten it was—a signal failure—John of course stood convicted.

The period of old John's services has given rise to a curious, but by no means unamiable, familiarity between him and his master. They converse together in the most free and easy way imaginable; John de-

livering his opinions with the most entire unconstraint, and his master, if not adopting them, at least listening to them with the utmost patience and humility.

John respects his master—respects him above all other men, but this is a secret feeling ; it is confined to his own bosom, and is not made manifest by any outward indications. It does not at all appear in their daily intercourse, which is conducted on a footing seemingly of the most entire equality.

“ Well, John, what is going on to-day ? ” says the old gentleman, with an affable smile, when making his daily call at the counting-house about mid-day, for he does not now come so early as he used to do, nor stay so long.

“ Not much, indeed, sir,” replies John, with a regretful air, as if deploring the decay of business. “ Nothing doing,” he adds, in a still more melancholy tone. His master observes it.

“ Poo, poo ! it don’t signify, John, we can do very well without. We’ve toiled hard in our day, and may take it easy now, John.”

John is not now so able to work as he was ; nor is he required to do so. In truth, he does nothing—not a hand’s turn, but he thinks himself the main pillar of the old concern, for all that. He thinks it could not possibly get on without him. John, therefore, has a very comfortable opinion of his own importance ; and it is very amusing to mark the air of gravity and consequence with which, spectacles on nose, he examines papers presented at the house in the absence of the principals and clerks, although he can hardly make out a word of their contents, for John can do little more than sign his own name. This, however, does not hinder him from giving the bearers of such documents very decided opinions regarding the matters they refer to.

John spends the greater part of the evenings, pre-

vious to shutting-up time, in the counting-house, where, seated in a green arm-chair before the fire in the winter season, and close by a particular window in summer-time, he and old Jobson, the old clerk, carry on long prosy conversations. They speak for hours on end ; telling each other long-winded stories about old partners and clerks of the firm, all dead many years since, and about old transactions that occurred in the business of the house half a century before. These stories they have told one another every evening for the last twenty or thirty years, but they do not find them a whit the worse, or a bit the less amusing on that account. The old boys chuckle and laugh over them each night with as much cordiality and glee as if the one had never told, and the other had never listened to them before, and as if, too, they were not what they in truth are, the dullest, most stupid, and most pointless things imaginable. Not one of them having either head, tail, or body, beginning, middle, or end ; but they are capital stories for all that.

He is a curious old boy, Jobson ; he is head clerk of the old concern, and has held that situation for forty years. He came into the office a boy, and gradually rose to his present elevated position. Old Mr Jobson is by no means a bright genius, but he is steady, sober, punctual, and methodical, and an unerring calculator ; he commits no mistakes—he never did ; he, indeed, takes a good while to everything he does, but he never blunders ;—he was never known to be wrong in anything. There is, certainly, a tradition in the counting-house that Mr Jobson once carried eleven instead of twelve from the pence to the shilling column, but it is not well authenticated.

Particular and methodical in everything, Mr Jobson has a small bit of blue cotton rag hanging at one

of the corners of his desk for wiping his pens upon. He would as soon want his coat as want this rag—he could not get on without it; yet there is hardly a week that it is not cut away by some of the young scamps in the office. The loss of a thing so useful, and therefore so dear to the heart of Mr Jobson, annoys him greatly, and he has a thousand times threatened to report the circumstance of its felonious abstraction to the head of the house, and to bring the offender to condign punishment. But this threat he has never yet carried into effect. In the end, he quietly replaces the lost bit of blue rag by another bit of blue rag, invariably giving public notice, however, on such occasions, that the next who purloins it will be visited with his utmost wrath.

Mr Jobson, too, cuts his pens in a particular way—both the feather and the barrel. He would know his own pens amongst a thousand, and can write with no other. Mr Jobson also carefully wipes his pens before putting them past, and few things provoke him more than finding that any one has been taking liberties with them in his absence.

Mr Jobson keeps all his writing materials in the most perfect order. In the right-hand pocket of his portfolio he keeps an assortment of slips and scraps of clean paper—the cuttings of sheets that have been too long—the surplus bits of short accounts, &c. &c., for jotting on. The left-hand pocket, again, is stored with entire sheets; and he has contrived—and not a little proud is he of the contrivance—two other pockets or depositaries for half and quarter sheets; so that he is prepared, at a moment's notice, with paper adapted to any size of document that may be demanded. Mr Jobson is a great economist in all things, but very particularly of paper. He never uses an inch more than is absolutely necessary, and hoards with great care all the cuttings and parings of reduced

sheets. It is these that he has stored so carefully in the right-hand pocket of his portfolio.

Mr Jobson was once very near contriving a thing for moistening wafers without putting them into the mouth, but it did not answer so well as he expected, and he was therefore obliged to return to the old method.

Our worthy old book-keeper has several "favourite aversions" of an official character. He abhors metal pens, and all sorts of fancy-coloured waxes, fancy-coloured inks, and fancy-coloured papers. He loathes the very sight of them. Conceive, then, what effect it would have on Mr Jobson's nerves to address a letter to the firm on pink or green paper, written with blue ink, and sealed with bronze-coloured or yellow wax. Oh! how it would sicken his soul. He would hold the unhappy writer in deadly enmity as long as he lived; he would never forgive him; he could not.

Since we are in the counting-house, at any rate, let us take a look at these huge dingy old ledgers, with their inch-thick boards and enormous clasps of brass. Not the books now in use in the counting-house, but the superannuated ledgers—the ledgers of other years; those that have been long since filled up and shelved, and have lain undisturbed for a quarter of a century; some of them much longer;—those that record transactions over which a long series of years have rolled. We want to philosophise a little, and depend upon it there is much even in an old ledger to excite such a spirit. Let us turn up one of these, and you will find it so;—see, all the dates are of the last century; some of them as far back as its second quarter.

Where now are the individuals—where the firms—whose names stand at the head of these openings? They have all long ceased to exist—all passed away

from the face of the earth. No man living knows of, or ever heard of, such people ; yet they were great in a way, in their day :—they were well known upon 'Change ;—they carried on extensive businesses, and toiled hard for the acquisition of world's wealth. Where now are all their anxieties, and hopes, and fears ? Where their speculations, their correspondence, their bills, their transactions, their debtors, and creditors ? All, all passed away, as if they had never been ! Where now the commodities entered to the debits of these accounts ? Where those chests of tea ? Where those who drank of them ? Where those pieces of silks ? Where the gay belles who flaunted in them, when fashioned into gown and pelisse ?

These old ledgers are now rarely moved from their resting-places. Mr Jobson now and then fishes out one from its depositary, and amuses an idle hour of an afternoon by turning it over, and glancing at the long past transactions it records, and reading the remarks in red ink which different hands have from time to time interpolated in the accounts. No one else ever touches them.

In all that vast record of sums payable and receivable by and to the Old Firm, there stands not one sixpence against the latter ; but look what enormous sums are due to it ;—sums that will now never be recovered, for those who owed them are all dead, unknown, and forgotten. There are unsettled debts in that old ledger that would amount to a handsome fortune. It is all lost ! all gone ! It is not in this philosophic spirit, however, that old Jobson looks over these accounts. He contemplates them with a business eye, and shrugs his shoulders at the loss of so much good money. What would he not give, although it would not put a penny in his pocket, to be squaring off these accounts "by cash," with his little thick ruler, and precise and neatly drawn red lines. His

fingers are absolutely itching to be at the delightful job.

For several years back, the principal and oldest partner of the Old Firm has been gradually relaxing in the closeness of his attendance at the counting-house ; he rarely comes now till about mid-day, and seldom stops longer than a couple of hours ; just long enough to look over the letters, and to answer those of a particular nature, Mr Jobson replying to the others. He is a mild, gentlemanly-looking old man, and generally rides to and from his house to his place of business on a favourite little dun pony. Sometimes he takes the carriage, but very seldom—only in rough weather. He prefers the pony infinitely.

He is a worthy man, and has done a vast number of generous things in the course of his life. Both old Mr Jobson and old John, the porter, can tell you of hundreds of instances of his benevolence and kindness of heart ; of sums of money he has given away ; of debts he has cancelled ; of credits he has given to deserving young beginners. They can tell you of hundreds of instances of these, but there are twice as many more that are known only to the old gentleman himself and those whom he has benefited.

It is grieving to think, that not a change can be made, large or small, without our experiencing *loss*. Our "OLD FIRM" may be far behind the age ; it may have its weaknesses, its follies, and its prejudices—but, alas ! few of the active, pushing, dashing "New Firms" of modern days, can stand a comparison with our kind, considerate, generous "Old Firm."

THE NEW CONCERN.

THE New Concern is always opened in one of the newest and most elegant streets in the city, and the particular building in which it is situated is generally the most elegant in it—the flower of the flock.

The outer-door, which is a folding one, is a splendid affair. It is covered with crimson cloth, and studded round with clustering, glittering brass nails. It has a couple of massive brass handles, of the newest and most elegant pattern; and in the centre two large oval panes of thick plate glass, set in frames of brass-work. That door alone cost thirty guineas. Projecting over the doorway is a gorgeous lamp, about the size of a porter hogshead, magnificently dim with coloured glass, and surmounted by a Chinese pagoda, some eight or ten feet high, shining with burnished gold. Set down that lamp, if you please, at fifty guineas—it cannot have cost a sixpence less.

Pretty well for the *outside* of the New Concern; now for the *in*. No falling-off here—everything in keeping. Shining mahogany desks, and polished brass rails, in all directions; splendid writing tables, chairs and carpets conforming; handsome new ledgers, cash-books, and journals, all still rejoicing in virgin purity, scattered up and down the desks. Why, this is a place to do business in, to be sure; mints of money here, no doubt—flourishing concern!—capital business!

At the shining, brass-railed desks are seated three or four clerks, all smart fellows; dandies, in their own way, of the first water. Shirt-collars up to the cheek-bone, and stiff as deal-boards; blue silk cravats, secured in front by splendid gold brooches; massive silver guard-chains; clusters of gold seals at

their watches, like so many bunches of grapes ; rings on fingers ; hands white and delicate. Dashing fellows these ! lads who know a trifle or two !—capital hands at doing over a purchaser, and, if he is anything soft, at legerdemaining him in the figuring way.

No wonder they should be sharp ; they are in an excellent school ; they have first-rate teachers. Here comes one of them—Mr Diamond, of the firm of Diamond, Khut, Diamond, and Co., the firm whose premises we have been describing. Hear how his boots creak as he crosses the floor ! See with what a lordly air he treads the counting-house boards ! How he bawls out to his clerks ! Why, he must be a great man this ! worth a plum at least ; for see how large he looks, and how splendidly he is attired !

At first glance, he certainly looks like a gentleman ; and so do his clerks : but a little closer observation detects a certain sharper-like expression in the countenances of both the former and the latter, that at once dispels the illusion. They have, both masters and men, a sort of “ up-to-trap,” a “ do-him-over ” kind of look, that cannot be contemplated without alarm.

Notwithstanding the splendours of various kinds that everywhere meet the eye in and about the New Concern, there yet prevails over all a certain hardness and coldness, that impresses you unpleasantly ; giving rise, somehow or other, to an idea that all is not right—that, in short, the whole is a bit of splendid quackery. And, in truth, you are not far wrong ; for there are some queer stories abroad about the New Concern, relating to certain transactions of a very equivocal nature.

The New Concern, in fact, notwithstanding all its flash, its red folding doors, its Chinese lamp, its mahogany desks, and brass railings—notwithstanding

the bold bearing and magnificent style of living of the partners, and the superlative dandyism of its clerks—is looked upon with a suspicious eye. Nobody, indeed, ventures to say much about it, but everybody seems to dread having anything to do with it. There is, in short, a pretty general notion abroad, that “there’s something rotten in the state of Denmark ;” that the concern is all bubble and squeak—all top, and no bottom. It is a marvel to every one how the New Concern was got up ; still greater is the marvel how it contrives to get on ; for the first partner was a bankrupt but a year before, the second had nothing, and the third a trifle less.

Yet here they are, all living like princes. The partners have, each of them, splendid domestic establishments ; they keep curricles, and give elegant entertainments. The clerks, again, go it in a similar way, although on a reduced scale. They hire gigs and saddle-horses on Sundays, give snug feeds at their lodgings, frequent the theatres, drink brandy-and-water, and play billiards. In short, the whole concern, from top to bottom, have a glorious life of it, if it would only last.

The New Concern pays nobody. There is no such a thing as getting sixpence out of its hands ; yet it has such a way of putting off claimants—it does it with such a lordly air, that it manages to get borne with for an amazing length of time—much longer than an honest firm in difficulties would be endured.

If ever, good reader, you should have the misfortune—which your better stars avert!—to have a claim upon the New Concern, you will find yourself regularly *trotted* through the following process, and end, after all, in being paid with the figure of 9 with the tail rubbed off.

You call, present your account, and demand payment. One of the clerks, after looking at the docu-

ment, (which he does with as serious an air as if it was really intended to be paid,) informs you that he will give notice of the demand to Mr Diamond, and requests you will call in eight days.

In eight days you call accordingly, and are told by the same clerk that he quite forgot to mention the thing to Mr Diamond, but will do so without fail to-day, and you may look in in the beginning of the week. You do so, but find the clerk you spoke with on the two former occasions has "just gone out," and the other clerks know nothing at all about the matter. One of them, however, assures you that he will mention the matter to his brother clerk when he returns.

Here, then—that is, at this stage of the business—you have not only made no advance towards your object, but are, in reality, farther from it than ever. You are decidedly retrograding; for you have now only the promise of one clerk that he will mention the thing to another clerk;—whereas, at first, you had an assurance that your claim would be carried to headquarters at once.

Well, in a few days more you call again, when you find *both* of the clerks whom you spoke with before are absent, and those present know nothing, of course, about either you or your claim. They, however, promise to refresh the memories of their brethren on the subject.

You are thus, you see, still gradually receding from your object, and that, too, with every fresh effort to advance. You are, in fact, being shuffled from hand to hand, somewhat like the celebrated juvenile game of "hunt the slipper." You are ingeniously carried backward by a process that promises at last to land you with the porter instead of a partner.

During all this time you have repeatedly asked, whether you could not see one of the *gentlemen*, and

have been as repeatedly told that you could not—that none of them are in the way. In fact, by an odd sort of chance, none of them ever *are* in the way when anything is wanted of them, and never out of it when anything is to be given them.

At length, however, by one of those lucky chances that will sometimes happen, you one day catch Mr Diamond in the counting-house.

“Ah! yes,—hem—small account, I see, sir,” says Mr Diamond, holding the document at arm’s-length, as if too paltry an affair to deserve closer consideration. “Why was not this presented before, sir?”

“It has been presented at least twenty times, sir.”

“Ah! *I* never saw it before.”

“Perhaps not; but your clerks have, often enough.”

Mr Diamond turns indignantly to his clerks, and asks, “How is this?”

His clerks do not put their fingers to their noses, but they might—the case would warrant it; but they do not, however—they say they quite overlooked the thing. Mr Diamond looks very angry, and says it is most unbusiness-like, and begs he may never hear of such negligence again.

Having thus expressed his strong disapprobation of the conduct of his clerks, and warned them to be more attentive in future, he turns to you, and after some hemming and hawing, and cursory glancing at the account, says, “Well, now, about this little affair. Be so good as leave it with me, and I shall look into it. Call again this day week.”

Done over by Mr Diamond’s bold off-hand manner, and especially by his castigation of his clerks—which is particularly gratifying to you, for the rascals have led you a pretty dance,—you bow and simper, promise to call at the appointed time, and vanish from the premises.

At the appointed time you do call, and are informed that Mr Diamond has gone to the country, and will not be home for a fortnight, and has left no word about your account. He must have forgot it ; so the thing must stand over till he returns. Ay, friend ! and, as we suspect, a pretty considerable while longer.

Need we go farther with the case of the hapless creditor of the New Concern ? We need not—it would be merely a repetition of what has been already set forth, until the grand smash takes place, which lays the New Concern prostrate in the dust.

All the people about the New Concern—partners, porters, and clerks—possess a certain singular gift ; this is, an intuitive or instinctive knowledge of duns. They can tell a dun in a moment, even without any previous knowledge of his person ; they know him by head-mark ; they know him by the cut of his jib ; they know him by his footstep before he enters ; they know him by the way in which he turns the handle of the door ; they know him by the way he opens it, by the way he shuts it, by the very cock of his hat. They, in short, recognise him under circumstances and by means which would afford no other set of men the smallest light on the subject. Their faculty in this way, in truth, is every bit as remarkable, and, indeed, is very like that which the Indian exhibits in following out a trail ; it is marked by the same acuteness, and by the same rapidity and accuracy of combination.

The New Concern—Heaven knows how !—gets on swimmingly for a time ; but, alas ! it is only for a time ! A day of count and reckoning comes at last ; and when it does, it is a finisher. The New Concern, however, does not die out, or off, gradually, like other concerns. It goes off smack at once, like a brass field-piece, and leaves no trace behind—not

a vestige. Its career is brilliant, but short. Yesterday the New Concern was going on, full tilt ; to-day it is all up—doors locked, and birds flown.

For a day or two after the grand finale, several long-faced, melancholy-looking creditors may be seen, like unquiet spirits, flitting about the premises, unable to comprehend exactly what has happened, but evidently under a strong impression that there is something going or gone wrong. The suddenness of the catastrophe, however, puzzles them not a little. Yesterday they saw the New Concern in the full vigour of health and life ; to-day they find it, to all appearance, defunct—gone. They cannot understand it !

By-and-by, the creditors, armed with the authority of the law, burst into the deserted premises of the New Concern, to see if there is anything to be had. Fierce of aspect, they rush in, like hungry tigers, and glare on the emptiness within. There is nothing left for them but the brass rails and the pagoda lamp.

And where, pray, are the *gentlemen* themselves—Messrs Diamond, Khut, Diamond, and Co. ? where their clerks ? where all the live part of the concern—those who lived so splendidly on it while it lasted ? Who can tell ? Nobody ; they have vanished, and no man can say whither they have gone, or where they may be found.

THE TWO BLIND FIDDLERS.

WILLIE HODGE was a quiet, inoffensive man, moving in a very humble walk of life, but which he filled with great credit to himself, and with great satisfac-

tion to every body else. His calling was not, perhaps, a very dignified, but it was at least a very honest one. Willie was by profession an itinerant fiddler. He had the misfortune at an early age to lose his eye-sight by the small-pox; and as this calamity, aggravated as it was by poverty, precluded him from competing with the world in any of its more ordinary occupations, he turned his attention to music, as a means of earning a livelihood; and he could not, perhaps, even although he had had his eye-sight, have made a better choice, or one better suited to his genius; for he possessed a natural talent for the musical art, had a correct ear, and an excellent taste.

Thus qualified by nature for the profession which necessity had compelled him to adopt, Willie made rapid progress in the art of handling the bow, and soon became an expert and skilful fiddler. Having attained such a degree of proficiency as he thought might warrant him in making a public appearance, Willie, fiddle in hand, one quiet evening, sought a retired street, where he believed he should not be known, and there made his debut. It was a successful one. He bagged a brace of sixpences, six brace of penny-pieces, and somewhere about a score of halfpence. Willie went home rejoicing; and enthusiast as he was in his profession, he thought the music of the *clink* in his pocket that night far surpassed the finest tones of his fiddle. From this hour, Willie became a regular public performer, and soon after, a well-known and much admired public character. Besides his street practice, Willie enjoyed a fair share of private employment. He was very frequently engaged for weddings, balls, and other festive meetings, in the environs of Edinburgh; and it was on one of these occasions that Willie became acquainted with Dowie, a brother in trade and misfortune; Dowie was also blind, and a fiddler.

The acquaintance of these two worthies first began by Willie borrowing Jamie's rosin; which was given with a frankness and cordiality that at once won Willie's heart. Their intimacy, thus begun, soon ripened into a sincere and ardent friendship. They became inseparable companions, and finally went into partnership, playing together in the streets, and dividing the benevolence of the public between them. Their fiddles were not more in unison than were the sentiments and dispositions of the fiddlers. In all respects, the harmony between them was perfect, and was most pleasant to behold. If Willie got an invitation in his professional capacity to a merry-making, he was sure, if the thing was at all practicable, to lug in Jamie along with him; and Jamie, when he happened to be the person who was preferred, did the same kind office to Willie. In short, no friendship between two mortal men could be more disinterested or more intense. There was no rivalry, no feeling of jealousy, between them. Willie rejoiced at Jamie's jobs, and Jamie felt no less happiness in Willie's. They assisted each other, too, with the greatest readiness and cordiality, on occasions when remuneration for one only was allowed, without fee or reward beyond the stray tumblers of porter, or half tumblers of toddy, that were from time to time handed up to them, by way of increasing the energies of their elbows. It is true that on such occasions as those alluded to, the employed party invariably offered the other the half of his earnings; but equally true is it, that this offer was never accepted.

For many years this most exemplary friendship between Willie Hodge and Jamie Dowie continued with unabated fervour; nor, during all that time, had there ever been the slightest difference even of the most temporary nature between them. No quarrel, not an angry word. Some people thought it was

too good to last ; but those who thought so knew nothing of the intensity of their feelings—knew nothing of the more than brotherly love that existed between the two blind fiddlers, and the test of years should have satisfied them of the groundlessness of their fears. The occurrence must have been an extraordinary one indeed, that could have divided two such fond hearts. Certes, however, such an occurrence *might* present itself.

Although the street and the dancing-room were the chief marts to which Willie and Jamie brought their music, yet they did not always confine themselves to these fields of operation. They were both possessed of an adventurous and enterprising spirit, and given to occasional speculations in steam and track-boat excursions, when they sometimes picked up something considerable ; but, as Willie often said, " It was just a lottery, and couldna be depended on. I ha'e seen us," he would add, when speaking confidentially to a friend, " play from Port-Hopetoun to Lock 16 without turnin' a penny, and at anither time I've seen us bag half-a-croon before we got to Ratho." This state of the case, Jamie, when present, always corroborated. Both Jamie and Willie, therefore, gave a decided preference, on the whole, to the regular, steady business of the street, where the average of their earnings was at once pretty regular, and pretty fair in amount.

One little trait, amongst many, in the friendship of the two blind fiddlers, was their occasionally retiring after the labours of the evening, and taking a social gill together. No more, however—not a drop ; and even this only on occasions of unvented success.

We have said that there were those who doubted the uninterrupted duration of Willie's and Jamie's love, but we at the same time remarked, as the reader has seen, that these persons had no good grounds

to go upon for any such insinuation. We also admitted, however, that it was certainly quite possible that something might occur to disturb the harmony between them, perfect and long-continued as it had been. In truth, such a circumstance, sorry are we to say it, did occur. The demon of mischief, envious of their felicity, resolved to mar it, but, using no supernatural agency, he set about effecting his diabolical purpose by mere human agency. We will explain.

One night, as Willie and Jamie were performing together in a certain quiet street in the city, a person dressed like a gentleman, and in other respects, to all appearance, really such, came up to them, and after listening for a short time with evident satisfaction to their music, which was indeed very agreeable to hear, he requested them to play a particular air. They complied. The stranger bespoke another and another; and when they had played somewhere about half a dozen tunes, he plunged his hand into his pocket, making a jingling noise with the silver it contained. Then withdrawing his hand—"You play uncommonly well, my good fellows," he said, in a loud and kindly tone of voice; "there's half-a-crown for you." In the same instant both Willie's and Jamie's hands were at their hats in grateful and respectful acknowledgment of the generous donation. Nothing further passed at the moment. The donor departed, and the musicians resumed their occupation.

It is not known whether it was by accident or design—whether it was the natural emanation of a happy frame of mind, or proceeded from a sense of appropriateness; but the first tune Willie and his colleague played after the annunciation of "there's half-a-crown for you," was "Money in both Pockets;" and it was remarked that all the tunes they played subsequently that night were of a lively character.

The stranger, who had thus made the two street

minstrels so happy, had, in the meantime, as already noticed, departed ; but it was some little time before the fiddlers ascertained this, and not knowing but he was still present, they refrained from making any remarks to each other on the windfall which had just come their way. On becoming aware of his absence, however, which they shortly did by that sort of intuitive tact for which the blind are remarkable, Jamie sidled towards his colleague, and whispered in his ear, " Yon'll staun a gill the nicht, Willie, eh ? " Willie smiled, and daresaid it might. " A liberal gentleman yon," remarked Jamie. " Just uncommon," said Willie. " A gude judge o' music," rejoined the former. " Pays weel for't, at any rate," replied the latter. " What wad ye think, then, o' our drinkin' his health ? " inquired Jamie. " Nae objection in the world," replied his colleague ; and the two blind musicians slipped their fiddles into their green bags, and taking each other lovingly by the arm, they immediately proceeded to a certain tavern which they were in the habit of frequenting. " Weel, what shall it be ? " quoth Jamie. " Ou, I fancy just the auld thing o'er again, Jamie," replied Willie ; " a gill o' the best—real Glenlivet."

" Exactly, so be it," said his friend, and in a few seconds the liquor was before them.

Delighted with each other, and in high spirits with the good luck of the evening, Jamie proposed what he called a repetition of the dose, that is, another gill. Willie at once assented, and another gill was accordingly ordered, and in due time discussed ; the love and kindness of the parties for each other having in the meantime gradually advanced towards a climax.

Having finished the second gill, and some little desultory conversation after it, Willie proposed that they should " be moving." " It's full time," responded Jamie. " We've had a lang sederunt, but it's

been a happy ane. I'll pu' the bell, and ye'll settle the reckonin'."

Willie sniggered and laughed, having reasons of his own for believing that his friend was trying his hand at a joke, and said, "I'm thinkin' ye're better able to settle the reckonin' the nicht than I am, Jamie."

Jamie now smiled in turn, for he also had reasons for thinking that his colleague was jesting with him. "I dinna see how that can be, Willie," he said, "an' you wi' half-a-croon in your pouch." "*Me* half-a-croon in my pouch!" exclaimed Willie with considerable earnestness, perceiving something serious in the tone of his friend's last remark; "the deil a half-a-croon's in my pouch; but I'm thinkin'," he added, with a smile, "I could fin't in yours, Jamie." "My word, but ye wad be clever if ye could," said Jamie somewhat drily; a suspicion, for the first time, of his friend's perfect integrity crossing his mind.

"Ah, ye're a cunnin' shaver," said Willie, laughing. "But come, man, Jamie, settle, for it's gettin' late."

"Settle *you*, Willie," replied Jamie with decided impatience in his manner; "are na ye the purse-bearer? Ha'e na ye the half-croon?"

"*Me* the half-croon!" exclaimed Willie, in amazement. "What do you mean, Jamie? I suppose ye ken weel eneuch that I have na the half-croon, and as weel do ye ken, I'm thinkin', that ye ha'e't yoursell. It was to *you* he gied it."

"Are ye in earnest, Willie?" said Jamie, gravely and emphatically. "If no, it's a' weel eneuch between freens; but if ye are, and mean to deny that *you* got the half-croon, ye're no the man I took ye for, but nae better than ye should be—may be no sae gude."

"To be sure I do mean to deny that I got the half-croon," replied Willie, sternly, indignant at the hy-

pothetical insinuation unfavourable to his honesty which his colleague had just made. "*You* got the half-croon, and it's a dirty trick o' you to deny't. I wad na ha'e expected it o' ye, Jamie."

"What! wad ye mak a rogue o' me?" shouted Jamie fiercely, and at the same time seizing Willie roughly by the collar.

"Ye've made a rogue o' yoursel, man," roared out Willie, returning the hostile grasp of his late friend.

"*You* got the half-croon!"—" *You* got the half-croon!"—" It was *you* got the half-croon!"

"It was *you* got the half-croon," was fiercely banded from the one to the other for several seconds, while they stood in the belligerent attitude just described.

The choler of both being at length excited to fighting pitch by the provoking iteration of the obnoxious accusation, a deadly struggle ensued. At the first roll of the combatants, the table, with all its furniture of glasses, jugs, and bottles, was sent over with a tremendous crash. At the next, down went Willie with all his weight, and some additional impetus besides, from the nervous arm of Jamie, on his own fiddle, crushing it into a thousand pieces. It had been lying on the seat beside its owner, and down on it, as we have said, Willie had been vigorously planted by his antagonist. On ascertaining that it was *his* fiddle that had perished, Willie loosened his hold of the enemy, and, groping about for an instant, got hold of Jamie's violin, which, having drawn from its receptacle, he grasped by the neck, and in a twinkling battered it to pieces about the ears of its owner.

The bread-winners demolished, the combatants again closed in deadly strife, and hugged and tugged each other with the most relentless ferocity. At this moment two gentlemen who had witnessed the progress of the quarrel, and subsequent combat between

the two musicians, from an adjacent part of the room, stepped up to them, and after separating them, inquired what was the cause of quarrel.

"That—that—man—there," said Willie, breathless with agitation and exertion, and pointing to his colleague, "has cheated me o' half-a-croon, or at least o' fifteen pence." "It's a lie, gentlemen—it's a bare-faced lie," shouted Jamie in great wrath, and as breathless as his antagonist; "it's him that has cheated *me*. *He* got the half-croon."

"What half-crown?" said one of the gentlemen gravely.

The history of the half-crown was forthwith given by Jamie. "But are you perfectly sure that *either* of you got it?" inquired the gentleman.

The question at once took Willie and Jamie all aback. It was a poser. A new light on the subject instantly and suddenly fell upon them, and the possibility of the real facts of the case for the first time crossed their minds, but they did not immediately admit it.

"Why, I suppose there can be nae doot that ane o' us got the half-croon," said Jamie, rather sheepishly, and with an expression that plainly enough showed that he did now very much doubt it. "I heard the gentleman distinctly say, 'There's half-a-croon for ye,' so ane o' us maun ha'e got it, I should think."

"I should doubt it, however," replied the gentleman. "You are two honest-looking men, and would not, I am sure, cheat each other out of a paltry half-crown. I rather think you have been tricked—hoaxed—and that no half-crown was ever given to either of you."

This was the fact.

But the wicked wag who played the two blind fiddlers the mischievous prank just related, and who was the same person with him who had just addressed them, took care that they were no losers by the affair. He

replaced their broken fiddles by two new instruments of far superior value, besides giving to each a handsome solatium in the shape of hard cash. But there were two distinct determinations come to on this eventful evening by Willie Hodge and Jamie Dowie. These were, never again to doubt each other's honesty, and never again to take any one's mere word for half-a-crown or any other sum.

AMATEUR GIGMEN.

Is it not rather odd that there should be such a thing as a *passion* for gig-driving—that there should be people afflicted with a mania—an absolute mania—for driving about in two-wheeled vehicles? The victims of this propensity are not, perhaps, very numerous; but they are sufficiently so, we think, to warrant us in singling them out as a class, and taking a glance at them for the edification of our readers.

Before doing so, however, we request it to be observed, that the propensity which we would designate as “the gig-driving mania,” is not the composed orderly indulgence of those whose circumstances enable them to keep gigs of their own, nor of those whose business requires the convenience of such vehicles. This kind of gigging is all a matter-of-course sort of thing, and presents none of the peculiarities—none of the features nor characteristics—which distinguish the particular fancy which we would speak of, nor of the particular class who indulge it. The passion for gig-driving—the rampant passion with which we would deal on the present occasion, is to be found only, or at least in greatest intensity, amongst such persons as, say—clerks on tolerable

salaries, smart young master-tradesmen, &c. &c., who can only now and then indulge their vehicular fancies by hiring a gig on Sundays and other holidays.

We need hardly remark, that it is the performances of amateur gigmen that fill the newspaper columns of accidents with all those horrible stories about gigs run away with, and breaking the necks of their drivers, or the legs of those who are unfortunate enough to come in their way. It is the amateur gigman, and he alone, (at least in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred,) who is at the bottom, or rather who is the hero, of all those shocking occurrences which we find chronicled in such paragraphs as the following:—

“*Appalling Accident.*—Yesterday, as a gentleman in a gig was driving along Piccadilly, the horse suddenly became restive and unruly, and finally set off at a tremendous speed with his unfortunate driver, who, with looks and gestures of despair, kept pulling and tugging with might and main at the reins, but to no purpose. The furious animal held on his mad career, regardless of all efforts to restrain him. The sight was appalling in the extreme. At one moment the wheels of the gig were seen spinning high in the air; at another, coming in indirect but violent collision with carts and carriages. The vehicle itself seemed every moment on the eve of being dashed into ten thousand pieces. The alarm created was dreadful, women and children screaming and flying in all directions, and men hurrying and crowding into every open door that presented itself. For some time the gig kept the middle of the street, but at length got upon the flag-stones, when a tremendous crashing of windows and lamps began to mark the career of the infuriated animal. This frightful progress continued throughout two-thirds of the whole length of Piccadilly; and, doubtless, had the animal continued along the great western road, there would have been much

more mischief. But fortunately, it came at length to Hyde-Park Corner, where the catastrophe was wound up, by the capsizing of the gig, in consequence of one of the wheels having come in violent contact with the curb-stone. The unfortunate gentleman, who was at this instant pitched out of, or rather discharged from, the machine, with a force that sent him flying through the air, as if he had been blown up by a barrel of gunpowder, is much cut about the face and other parts of the body, and has had, besides, two ribs and an arm broken. But, we are sorry to add, this is not all. A woman and child have also been knocked down and run over by the gig, and now lie in St George's Hospital, in a dangerous state. It is further said, that a gentleman who endeavoured to stop the gig has been seriously injured. The gig itself is literally smashed to pieces, and the horse is so torn and lacerated, that it is believed he is now fit only to be handed over to the tender mercies of those benevolent individuals, the knackers. The damage done to property by this unhappy occurrence is reckoned at seventy or eighty pounds, which includes about ten yards of railing, shattered and laid prostrate by the wheels of the gig. What the doctor's bills in connection with the unfortunate accident may amount to cannot be estimated."

Such, then, is a specimen of the performances of the amateur gigman.

It may be a matter for wonder, seeing the frequency, nay, almost certainty, of such or similar results, that the gig-fancier should persevere in the indulgence of his driving propensity. So it is; but persevere he does, nevertheless. His mania is incurable, and neither broken legs nor arms will deter him from his favourite recreation. Nay, in truth, you would almost imagine that the more he is smashed, and dashed, and battered, the more attached he be-

comes to it ; for he no sooner recovers from the effects of a toss out or a break-down, than he is at it again. Amongst the first things he does, if he survives and gets round again, is to hire another gig, and treat himself to a day's driving.

We have elsewhere observed, that the amateur gigman's performances generally, if not always, take place on Sundays and holidays. These are his great field-days ; for, as already hinted, neither his time nor circumstances will admit of more frequent exhibitions.

If, then, you would see this sort of person at one of the most interesting periods of display as an amateur gigman, take a turn through the streets at an early hour on a Sunday morning—say about six or seven o'clock. If you do so, you will not have gone far before you will have descried a gig waiting at a door, standing conspicuous in the silent and deserted street. It is a yellow gig—a bright and flaming yellow, yoked to a half-famished wall-eyed horse. Here, then, is precisely the thing wanted, a yellow gig and a starved horse. They are in charge of an ostler, who is impatiently walking to and fro on the flagstones, waiting the arrival of some one, and from time to time eyeing, with a look of suspicion, the crazy harness to which, without the smallest compunction, he is about to trust the life of the fancy gigman, but to which he would not trust his own for a thousand pounds.

By-and-by the green door opposite which the gig is standing opens, and, wearing an air of dignified consequence, softened and rounded off by an expression of pleasant complacency, there sallies forth a gentleman in travelling array. It is our amateur gigman. It is he for whom the yellow gig and wall-eyed horse have been waiting. There he is, then, stiff and shining in his new surtout, a huge blue cloth

cloak, with red-lined cape, thrown with a careless ostentation over his right arm, and his external elegancies completed by a gorgeous white hat, "spick and span new," and glittering with a silvery brightness.

Without noticing the ostler, who has, however, touched his hat to him, and without looking either to the right or to the left, our amateur gigman advances towards his gig, but pauses midway to examine its appointments, which he does with the eye of a connoisseur. He then deposits his cloak in the vehicle, throwing it well back, and spreading it widely, in order to show an admiring world as much as possible of the red-lined cape. This done, he pulls out a green net purse, gives sixpence to the ostler, draws on his gloves with a *dem'me* sort of air, gets in, spends about fifteen minutes in adjusting himself in his seat, gathers up the reins with a knowing look, and, finally, gives the wall-eyed horse the hint to move off, when away tumbles and rumbles the yellow gig with a strange clattering wooden sound, that no respectable machine of a similar kind ever emits. Away it goes rolling, and rattling, and labouring, down the long deserted street, the white hat of the gallant chariot-eer pointing out his spirited course, but at length gradually disappearing in the murky distance. A feeble flash or two, and it is no more to be seen. Our amateur gigman has gone to pick up a friend or two, amateurs like himself, and then "hey for the high-way," a clear road, and no drawbridges.

We have recommended to the curious reader who may be desirous of seeing an amateur gigman in the most favourable circumstances, to go in quest of him on a Sunday morning. But he may have his curiosity gratified without being at that trouble; that is, without being at the trouble of hunting the streets for him. Let him, instead, just plant himself at any

given corner for ten minutes, and in half that time he may calculate on hearing the deep and universal silence of the early morning suddenly broken by the rattling of wheels, mingled with much uproarious laughter. In a minute more, he will see a yellow gig, crowded with white hats, approaching him. It is a whole gigful of fancy men going on a country excursion. Four great stout fellows crammed into one small yellow gig! The squeezing and jamming is dreadful, and the oppressed and tortured vehicle labours piteously under the enormous load. But these are economical amateurs who have clubbed a gig amongst them, and are content to submit to this high-pressure travelling, on account of the thrift of the thing.

It is a well-established and undeniable fact, that the amateur gigman rarely returns from a day's excursion without some accident or other befalling him; and, in the long-run, he meets with something serious—a run off, a pitch out, and a fractured skull, being the common *finale* to the amateur gigman's career. Before this happens, however, he usually runs through an interesting series of smaller accidents, such as breaking a leg or an arm, foundering a horse, snapping his gig-shafts, driving in a shop-window, or running over a few old women and children. Either, or more probably all, of these pleasing little incidents, are sure to enliven the career of the amateur gigman.

Sometimes, however, the amateur gigman's progress is fully as much distinguished for the mischief he does to others, as for that done to himself. We are personally acquainted with a gentleman of this description, who has acquired such celebrity for killing and maiming people, that he can get no one now to enter a gig with him, and is therefore obliged, contrary to his former practice, to take all his drives

solus, and, of course, to pay the whole gig hire himself.

This person, who is a hatter by trade, and a very *respectable* man, not only murders and maims, by running his gig against or over unfortunates who happen to come in his way, but has, also, the deaths of three or four of the companions of his excursions to answer for. He has killed two tailors, one shoemaker, and a fourth person, name and profession unknown. Yet, strange to say, he always escapes scot-free himself. He has had his gigs shattered to pieces; he has spread terror and dismay, death and destruction, around him, yet has never met with the slightest injury in his own person;—not a scratch. While his unfortunate companions have had their heads smashed like so many eggs, he has stood up, unscathed and unharmed, in the midst of the awful devastation. He, in fact, seems to have a life charmed against all that horse and gig can do; and hence, perhaps, it is, that notwithstanding the little casualties above alluded to, our friend's passion for gigs is nothing abated, but continues as rampant as ever.

So well known, however, is this renowned gigman for his pranks in gig-driving on all the roads leading from the city, and in and about all the villages in its neighbourhood, that children run screaming into their houses when they see him approaching in his gig, and although he should be yet at half a mile's distance. Mothers, too, on descrying him, hurry in the greatest terror to collect their young ones together, and to put them in a place of safety. As he passes, he is contemplated in silent awe by the little white-headed urchins, who, having been taught to hold him in the greatest dread, peep at him furtively from behind doors and walls. Yet, to look at this murderous gigist, you would never take him to be the very formidable personage he is. He is a pleasant and

cheerful-looking man, without the least trace of anything either sinister or sanguinary in the expression of his countenance. But beware, good reader, how you enter a gig with him, should he ever invite you to do so. As you value your life, do not allow him to cajole you into taking a share of one of those fatal machines with him. If you do, you are a gone man ; your life's not worth six inches of whipcord.

THE LITERARY SCHEMER.

THE literary schemer is a sort of loose fish who skims about without any positive aim or object,—or, perhaps, we should be more correct in saying, who has too many ; the fact being, that he generally has a new one every day. He either will not take to or cannot keep in the ordinary ways of the world, and will not submit to the restraints of a legitimate industry, but betakes himself to the oddest shifts and expedients imaginable to supply its place.

For persons of this stamp, any thing like steady regular employment has no charms. They would not take it, though it were offered them. They prefer infinitely that desultory sort of warfare with the world which leaves to the combatant the greatest independence of movement, enabling him to fly from shift to shift, and from expedient to expedient ; to try one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow, with the least control from both public and private opinion.

It is true that, as regards ways and means, the literary schemer is generally in a most unenviable condition. He is constantly in a state of desperate poverty. But there is an excitation in his irregular and

precarious way of life, and an incessant fluctuation of hopes and fears, all unknown to the dull plodders in the legitimate paths of industry, that peculiarly assorts with his errant nature, and without which, in truth, he could hardly exist. It keeps him eternally on the *qui vive*,—constantly on the alert to discover new modes of raising the wind; and this is his element. It is, moreover, an element for which nature seems to have specially adapted him; for if one shift in fifty succeeds, he is satisfied, and in one day's freedom from care, in consequence of this success, finds ample compensation for the anxieties of a month. He is thus happily constituted to encounter all the ills of that vagrant life to which his wandering nature prompts him.

The literary schemer is generally, we rather think, a person of sanguine temperament and elastic spirit. He had need to be so, indeed; for his struggle with the world is a desperate one, and his disappointments and rebuffs great and manifold. In truth, he but rarely succeeds in anything; yet does he stoutly maintain the fight, disputing every inch of ground, and retreating from one position only to take up another. There is generally a dash of cleverness about him, too, enough—would he direct it to legitimate purposes, and keep it under due restraint and discipline—to secure him a respectable position in the world, but not enough to enable him to reach either competence or distinction by any extraordinary or unusual route; and yet this, by some strange perversity of judgment, is what he aims at, and what he constantly hopes to accomplish.

The literary schemer is generally a man of some education, and a person of literary tastes and propensities, or something akin to them. He is somewhat uppish in years, haggard in look, and eminently shabby in the clothing department. Say, with

regard to the latter, a pair of threadbare drab gaiters, with metal buttons ; a rusty black coat, with greasy, shining collar ; battered black stock, much dilapidated about the edges ; waistcoat shut up to the throat, mysteriously secured—close inspection discovering that it is effected by an artful and ingenious use of pins instead of buttons ; questionable shoes, and an equivocal hat, complete the picture of the literary schemer ; and when we have added, that he is prone to indulge in strong drinks, we think that we have not left much about him, that is worthy of special notice, untouched upon.

Our friend dabbles much in literary speculations of an humble kind ; he is a great getter-up of shabby, miserable-looking periodicals. When one of these is in the wind, he prepares the public for its advent by a flaming prospectus, in which he promises everything that the heart of man can desire. On such occasions, his bill or placard generally runs somewhat in this way—

“ Stop and read ! The Ne Plus Ultra, a new Literary and Scientific Journal.

“ On the 1st of September next will be published, the First Number of a new weekly periodical, under the above title.

“ The Ne Plus Ultra will, it is hoped, supply what has long been a desideratum in periodical literature ; a work which should combine instruction with amusement, wisdom with wagery, and philosophy with fun ; that should, in short, put the public in possession of the emanations of the highest order of genius, at the lowest possible price.

“ All these desirable objects will be accomplished by the Ne Plus Ultra, which will, moreover, be always found to breathe a spirit of the purest and loftiest morality ; for if there be any one truth with

which the proprietors of that work are more deeply impressed than another, it is, that

‘Want of modesty is want of sense.’

The proprietors have only to add, that the editor whom they have engaged to conduct the new periodical is a gentleman of the most extensive literary and scientific attainments, and well known in the literary world as one of the ornaments of the age.

“The *Ne Plus Ultra* will be magnificently printed on the most superb paper, and no expense will be spared to render it, altogether, one of the most attractive things of the kind that ever claimed the patronage of a liberal and discerning public.

“N.B.—The first literary talent of the day is engaged to illuminate the columns of this splendid work.”

Having procured two or three hundred bills of this description to be thrown off, our literary adventurer now takes earnestly to work. He sets bill-stickers and deliverers a-flying in all directions, and at this stage of the business may be seen himself driving about the streets in hot haste; for, be it observed, this sort of personage is amazingly active and industrious; these form two of his characteristics. He knocks about at an astounding rate, and exhibits an indefatigability and perseverance, and a talent for conquering difficulties—especially those of a pecuniary nature—that in any other cause or pursuit would lead to brilliant results. As it is, they are all lost—all thrown away.

By-and-by the commotion of which we have been speaking ceases. The town is placarded; the bill-stickers and deliverers are at rest, and our journalist himself disappears; he is no longer to be seen flying about the streets with papers under his arm. A sud-

den and inexplicable silence ensues ; a pause of deep and mysterious repose. The day on which the famous journal was to appear arrives, and passes away, and no journal has come forth. What is the meaning of this, after all the trumpeting we have had ? What has gone wrong ? Has the *Ne Plus Ultra* perished ere it was born ? No, not quite ; but there have been difficulties in the way, arising from certain awkward insufficiencies in the monetary department. These, then, had to be got over ; so that our journalist, though invisible, has by no means been idle. Far from it ; he has been labouring most assiduously, though you have not seen him, and no light labour was it to make ingenuity and expedient supply the place and do the work of the circulating medium. He had, then, merely disappeared from the stage for a time, to adjust some of the secret machinery, that either would not work at all, or was not working well through lack of oil. His industry and activity had abated not a jot in this interval ; the only difference being, that they were confined to a sort of underground operations, not visible to the spectator's eye.

At length, however, the famous journal appears, —that is, if you can call four small quarto leaves of tea-paper, covered with illegible print, a journal,—the said print struggling most piteously to tell something or other, but struggling in vain ; for you can hardly make out two consecutive sentences throughout the whole paper. There is one column, however, in particular, that especially attracts your attention. You at first take it for Greek, but, on closer inspection, discover that it is merely a column turned upside down !

Such, then, is our friend's *Ne Plus Ultra*, which was to have been most magnificently printed on the most superb paper, edited by an ornament of the age,

(our friend himself, of course,) which was to be supported by the first talent of the day, and on which no expense was to be spared.

As to the contents of the paper, we need say little ; they are likely to be somewhat of this description :—say, a leading article on the Corn Laws, by the ornament of the age himself, who has long found bread an almost unattainable article ; a paper, from a scientific correspondent, on the Dry-rot and the virtues of Coal Tar ; an extract from Bruce's Travels in Abyssinia ; two or three choice specimens of prose and verse from the School Collection, and other sources equally erudite and rare ; the whole finished off with a string of Joe Millers, planted at the distance of three inches from each other, in order to get at the end of the sheet as quickly as possible, and at the smallest expense of typography.

We need hardly add, that the term of the *Ne Plus Ultra's* existence is three weeks precisely. On the second it gets sickly ; on the third expires without a groan.

It may be matter of wonder how our literary friend ever contrives to bring matters even this length ; and in truth it is matter for wonder, and great wonder too, seeing that he accomplishes everything without the smallest aid from the lawful coin of this realm, or of any other ; for not a sixpence has he in the world. All, then—and greatly is it to the credit of his ingenuity—is effected solely by dint of dextrous management and spirited manœuvring—talking over one here, worrying another there, soft-soaping a third, and *doing* a fourth.

As our friend, however, is never a loser, let the game be what it may, and this for the simple reason that he has nothing to lose, it is clear that the vacuums created by his literary *specs.* must be filled up by somebody else ; the loss must fall on some fortu-

nate pair or pairs of shoulders ; and of course so it does, as printers, publishers, and stationers, could more fully instruct.

One would think, however, that this could not last long ; that our literary adventurer must very soon be thrown on his beam-ends. But this is by no means the case ; he is unconquerable, and in a sense immortal ; for no sooner has one *spec.* gone down with him into the depths of ruin, than up again he is at the surface as lively and active as ever, and not a pin the worse for the adventure. There is, in truth, no killing him, no putting him down, or, at least, no keeping him there. He has the buoyancy of a cork, and will not be detained at the bottom by anything short of main force.

Sometimes, indeed, there are intervals in his career, during which he is invisible, and during which you see no printed announcement of any kind which you can trace to him, and you begin to think that your friend has been at last fairly floored by some overwhelming catastrophe. But the sudden appearance, some day, of a large blue or yellow placard on the corners of the streets, or it may be of a hand-bill lying on a bookseller's counter, or a prospectus in his window, and in which you at once recognise the hand of the indefatigable *litterateur*, affords you the gratifying assurance that he is all alive and kicking ; not only so, but in the act of running full tilt at some new object—some new literary *spec.*, or something akin thereto. Possibly it is a prospectus of some new system of infant education,—possibly a proposition to start a new Magazine,—possibly it is an announcement of a series of lectures on the leading sins of the age,—or it may be, proposals to organise a literary debating society for the cultivation of oratory and the belles lettres.

It is true, that none of these announcements ever

come to anything, for from not more than one in a thousand of our friend's different bills and prospectuses does anything ever result; but their appearance, after such an interval as we have been speaking of, is quite enough to satisfy you that he is still in the field, and in full possession of all his energies.

The great instruments by which our literary adventurer keeps things moving are bills, (post and hand,) placards, and prospectuses. With these he has a tremendous work; Heaven knows how he contrives to get them printed, for he never pays a farthing for one of them; neither printer, stationer, nor publisher, ever see a sixpence of his money. Yet get them printed he does, and that in amazing quantities; there being hardly a week that he does not let loose a shoal of them upon the town, pay for them who may. What they are all about it were endless and useless to tell; for, as already remarked, nothing ever results from them. In truth, we believe that he himself could not, on any given week, say what were the purposes and objects of his bills and prospectuses of the preceding one: they are so numerous and various, that it is next to impossible he should recollect anything at all about them.

This passion for bills and prospectuses—for with our friend it is absolutely a passion, a mania—necessarily brings him much in contact with the fraternity of bill-stickers. With this class he has an immense deal of intercourse, but he is not by any means in very good odour with them; for they know him to be fully better at employing than paying, as a great number of unsettled scores for jobs done but too amply testify.

In his intercourse with this class, then, he has also to manœuvre a good deal; this being requisite, in order to avoid old claimants and come at fresh men, who, knowing less about him, may be prevailed upon

to undertake his jobs. The former, however, are a source of sad annoyance to him ; for they are constantly on the look-out for him, and never fail to give him chase whenever they can clap eyes on him. In such case he has nothing for it but to take to his heels, and trust to the friendly aid of the nearest corner.

We have elsewhere said that there are intervals when our literary adventurer is invisible, and when there is no issue of bills or prospectuses to intimate his where or whereabouts : when, in fact, he appears to be in a state of entire quiescence. These are periods when he is at fault in the way of speculation ; for even his ingenuity cannot save him from getting into such predicament occasionally, when he is unable to devise anything new ; or it may be that he has been arrested by some more than usually formidable difficulty,—such as a universal determination among the printers not to throw off another bill for him ; not to move a peg until old scores are cleared off.

We have seen him on such occasions, and when we have, we have seen a greatly changed man. He is then grievously down in the mouth, sadly crest-fallen, and looking most intensely lugubrious ; all life, all spirit has deserted him ; there are then no bundles of papers under the arm, none of those mysterious parcels which he flies about with when there is a *spec.* in the wind ; no energy or activity in his motions. All this is gone : only suspended though, mark that—not extinct. Next time we see him, all is right again : the mysterious parcels re-appear, the active step and sanguine look are restored ; a new idea has been hit upon ; an accommodating printer has been found, bills and prospectuses are printing, and all is going on swimmingly once more.

It very often happens that the literary adventurer

is an elocutionist, a reciter of odes and ballads; and under this character you may frequently detect him in bills on the walls, announcing entertainments of this kind.

In such case, he hires some crazy old hall in some obscure part of the town, and with a couple of fiddlers and a pound of candles, gets up an entertainment at the moderate rate of twopence and threepence a head. By such expedients as this he has been frequently known to clear something considerably above half-a-crown,—that is, calculating, as may be very safely done, that neither candles, fiddlers, nor room, have been paid for.

On such occasions as this, our versatile genius sports a clean dickey—a clean shirt is beyond his reach—which he has borrowed for the nonce, and, with his hair carefully brushed forwards on either side of his dissipated-looking countenance, he presents himself to an admiring audience, and forthwith proceeds to electrify them with *Hohenlinden*, or the *Battle of the Baltic*.

A LEAN CHAPTER ON FAT MEN.

THERE is something very imposing, very impressive, very agreeable, in the presence of a jolly, fat gentleman in a light waistcoat; black is rather sombre, and, I think, scarcely does justice to the portly front on which it is distended. The light waistcoat, on the other hand, has the effect of bringing out the full breadth and capacity of the person to the verge of its farthest amplitude.

Fat men, and women too, are really *something* in

creation. There is bulk, solidity, and tangibility about them. They are obvious, palpable, striking objects. They stand out in conspicuous and full relief on the face of nature, and command respect, and attract notice, from the space they occupy. They are proverbially good-natured. Every lineament of their jovial countenances bespeaks amenity, and a mind at ease. They are no cynics. On the contrary, they seem to be delighted with the world, and all that is in it. Indeed, it would seem like a contradiction in nature, an anomaly, were they otherwise. The imagination cannot conceive such a thing as a discontented, snarling, moralising, fat man; yet I have known such a rarity in my time, though I allow he was an exception to the rule. It should also be remarked, that for fat men to be good-natured they must be well to do in the world. This is absolutely necessary. They must have ample means to keep up the tabernacle, both internally and externally, and of this the laws of nature would seem to have kindly taken cognisance. A shabby fallen off fat man is doubly a victim. Poor make-shift apparel has a most dismal appearance on a person in a state of collapse. There is not a bad point about it but is strongly brought out, and the want of the calyx of white cambric round the now lanky gills has an effect truly distressing. Scudding under bare poles with a threadbare stock may answer the dapper young gentleman, but is on no account suitable to the once jolly countenance of the man who had ever any pretensions to a "presence."

It is, I think, undeniable that fatness is frequently exceedingly advantageous in helping a man to fortune, seeing that it usually meets with a wonderful degree of general respect. But if leanness has no chance of success when placed in competition with obesity, the case is sadly reversed when fatness is

reduced to a condition allied to poverty. A victim of eight stones in weight may recover his station in society, but one weighing fifteen or sixteen is done for ever. Let him say what he likes, he meets with no sympathy. "What! such a big well-fed man to be ill off; it is impossible!" Thus he has not even the consolation of being pitied. I would recommend all fat men to be very careful of their means. If they allow themselves to deteriorate in circumstances, they may depend on seeing the world most resolutely turning its back upon them. I imagine that fat men are perfectly aware of this fact, for it is seldom that we find such individuals in a strait. In the course of my life I have met with just two instances of decided victimization of persons of this class, both of course arising out of some kind of indiscretion. When I first fell into the habit of remarking these two unfortunate men, they were in splendid bodily condition, and carried a noble head on the flag-stones; talked loud, laughed louder, and were always in admirable spirits. But in about seven years thereafter, oh! what a change! My very heart bled within me at the sight. Their clothes had become shabby, too; and the waistcoat, which in fatter times had been filled even to bursting, now hung, at least six inches too, too wide. It was truly pitiable to behold. Their shoulders, also, had lost all that breadth and massiveness which had many a time and oft excited my wonder and admiration as they strode on a pace or two before me in the streets. In short, their whole dress, now threadbare and dilapidated—additional source of painful feeling to the tender-hearted observer—hung about them in truly distressing superfluity, and most affecting, because unnecessary, amplitude, showing but too plainly the grievous abstraction of material that had taken place in consequence of their privations.

One of these unfortunate gentlemen, in particular, seemed to feel most keenly the sadness of the change that had taken place ; but it always appeared to me that he was fully more ashamed of the deterioration that had occurred in his person than in his circumstances. He was evidently greatly distressed by the unaccustomed lankness and attenuation which he felt conscious his altered form exhibited ; and I really did imagine that I had detected him, on more than one occasion, endeavouring, by bending himself backwards, to force an appearance of that projecting rotundity in front which had once been his pride and his glory, but which had long since deserted him ; endeavouring, in fact, to put on the semblance of those honours of which he could no longer boast the reality. Whether this was so or not, I know, that, after his fall, he greatly disliked being gazed at.

The other of the two persons of whom I speak had been a great gourmand in his day, and this circumstance rendered his case a particularly piteous one ; for few things, I think it will be allowed, can be more affecting than a starving epicure—than to see a poor fellow, who has been accustomed to good living, compelled, all of a sudden, to put up with the coarsest and most sorry fare, and that in scanty measure, too. It is from taking this view of the case that I, for one, always feel exceedingly for a cook or waiter out of place, or a decayed butcher or innkeeper. The contrast of circumstances in such cases is painfully striking. This was peculiarly observable in poor Lawrence, the second of the once jolly personages I allude to. In his high and palmy days he had pursued the profession of a commercial traveller, and was well known on “the road” for a period of twenty years. No one knew the “good houses” better than he ; no one ever sat at the top of the table with such an easy grace, or carved a joint with such an air of gratifica-

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tion. Alas, that such a pleasing talent should have assumed the character of a failing! Yet such was the case. On one occasion he was tempted to wait at Greenock for six weeks after he had transacted his business, for the arrival of a supply of turtle by the West India fleet. This was passed over by "the firm," but a hint was administered as to future delays of a similar nature. The failing was, however, too obdurate to give way before a hint. While subsequently on his western journey, he waited at a certain inn until he had eaten up a whole litter of pigs, whose uncommon plumpness, and singularly tempting appearance, had attracted his notice as he was about to mount his horse to depart. On seeing them, his raised foot dropped instinctively from the stirrup, his horse was sent back to the stable, and, re-entering the inn, he ordered one of the seductive-looking animals for dinner. Its excellence equalled his expectations, and he remained, as already said, until he had consumed the whole, at the moderate rate of a pig per diem. This unfortunate false step led to his immediate discharge, for "the partners" were most unluckily lean men, and did not possess a particle of sympathy for a friend on the score of gourmanderie. Henceforth he lived on little else than his recollections, which being by no means nutritious to the body, however much they might be a solace to the mind, he underwent a gradual *kryning* in the person, and survived for a number of years, a sad memento of the danger which fat men are under in giving way to their tastes.

FIRST-FOOTING.

THE practice of first-footing is rapidly taking its place amongst the things that were ; and, in a moral point of view, there is certainly little to regret in its being so. Yet we believe there are few who have lived long enough to remember of having shared in the spirit of that ancient custom, and have partaken, probably in the hey-day of youth, of its wild but joyous revelries, who, however sincerely they may in their wiser and maturer years rejoice in its abolition, can think of what they have felt and seen on these festive occasions without some melancholy feelings.

"Many, many happy new years to you all." Ah ! how vain the fond wish. Down, down into the grave have they all sunk, one after the other. The gladsome faces have passed away, and now present themselves to memory but in dim and indistinct distance, like the far-receding figures of the phantasmagoria.

We, ourselves, have not seen the custom of first-footing in all its glory. Its spirit was on the decay before we were old enough to partake of it. At least so we infer from having been always told by our elders, as far back as we can recollect, that it was nothing *now* to what they remembered it ;—that what we then saw was nothing to what they had seen, and, making every allowance for that natural tendency with the old to sink the present in comparison with the past, we believe that it was so.

If our youth, however, did not witness first-footing in its palmiest days, it certainly saw it in the first stages of its decay ; and a very distinct recollection we have of a not uninteresting circumstance illustrative of the waning spirit of the ancient practice.

Being on one occasion on a first-footing party at

the house of a friend, one of the young ladies of the family proposed accompanying us on an intended visit to an intimate mutual acquaintance.

The proposal was gladly acceded to, and we all sallied out. It was about half past twelve.

In passing a certain handsome self-contained house, the residence of an old widow lady, a little down the street, the young lady who was with us observed a servant girl standing at the door. She knew her, the girl having at one time been a servant in her own family.

"A good new year to you, Betty," said our fair companion, going up to the girl; we following and crowding around her with our "hot pints" and "bun;" for the spirit of the occasion levelled all distinctions of rank. "How is your old lady, Betty?" inquired our fair friend. "Oh! ma'm, the old lady is in state to-night," replied the girl, smiling.

"How, has she a party? Is she entertaining?"

"No, ma'm, she has no party, nor is she entertaining, although she has provided enough of all sorts of good things to entertain fifty, ay, a hundred and fifty, were they to come."

"Does she expect first-footers?"

"Not a soul, ma'm, but her grandson. She has no other living relation, and the few friends she has are not now in the way of first-footing."

"And all this preparation and expenditure for one visitor, Betty?"

"All, ma'm. It has been her practice for years. She gets up every thing in the finest style at this season; lavishing her money freely on all sorts of preparations for the occasion, although there are none to partake of them.

"She says she was accustomed to it in her younger years, and that she will observe the custom to the last;—that she could not be happy unless she did so, for it reminds her of bygone days."

Deeply interested in this account of the ancient devotee to a custom which we were at the moment obeying, but which we all felt was already fast passing away, we asked the girl whether she could not indulge us with a stolen peep of the old lady in her "state," as she called it.

"Nothing easier," she replied, "only make as little noise as possible, although the old lady is so deaf that it is not in the least likely that she will hear you."

On this, the good-natured girl leading the way, we all entered the house on tip-toe, in a string.

Having gone along the passage a little way, the former suddenly stopped, and, gently pushing up the door of the dining-room, made a signal to us to take a peep into the apartment, which we did, one after the other, as if it had been a raree show; and a more striking sight than then presented itself, taking all circumstances into account, I think I have not often seen.

The apartment was a very handsomely furnished one, although somewhat antique in style.

A large fire blazed in the grate. The old-fashioned sideboard was loaded with decanters filled with various liquors, and with piles of cakes and other dainties on china plates and silver salvers.

The table, which occupied the centre of the apartment, was similarly burdened. A silver jug, containing some warm compound, "hot pint," as we supposed, stood by the fire, and the whole room was in a blaze of light.

But these things did not long detain the attention; it was soon directed to and engrossed by the old lady herself, who sat alone in her "state," in a large easy arm-chair a little to the right of the fire-place. She seemed to be verging towards her eightieth year.

She was dressed in an old-fashioned black silk gown, and wore around her neck a deep frill of the

purest white. Her appearance, altogether, was exceedingly venerable and lady-like.

Her head was slightly palsied, and in its involuntary movements, as she sat gazing in deep abstraction on the fire, there was something extremely touching. It seemed to add to that feebleness and helplessness which form the most interesting and affecting characteristics of old age.

Fortunately the old lady was so seated that we had a full view of her, and could mark every lineament of her face, every movement of her features ; of the latter, however, there was but little. She sat as still as a statue, looking earnestly on the fire, and musing deeply.

What a crowd of recollections must have been passing through that aged head !—what visions of the past must have been rising up in melancholy array before her mind's eye !—The days of her youth long, long passed away ;—the friends of her early years gone down into the tomb ;—the scenes she had seen on occasions similar to that which she was now celebrating in solitary lonely splendour ;—the mirth, the joy, the happiness she had witnessed on these occasions ;—the merry faces she had seen around her, where were they now ?

How vain was the poor old lady's display !—how idle her preparations !—They could not summon the dead from the grave ;—they could not bring around her the kind and merry hearts that used to burst in upon her with wild and reckless glee, to wish her all happiness throughout the new-born year.

There was the stage, the lights, the decorations, but where were the actors ? There were none, it was but an empty show !

It seemed as if the poor old lady, by thus surrounding herself with the festive paraphernalia of the season, was endeavouring to cheat herself into a temporary

belief that time had brought no change, and that her preparations would surely bring some old friend to visit her on this important occasion. But her musing, melancholy countenance, showed that the attempt was not only vain, but that it rather tended to throw a sadder hue around her reminiscences of the past.

Having gratified our curiosity, we retired in the same silent manner in which we had intruded, leaving the old lady in her solitary state awaiting the coming of her grandson, her only visitor ; for the practice of first-footing having already become nearly obsolete amongst the better classes, she had no chance of having, nor did she expect any other.

THE REDUCED FAMILY.

GENTEEL, poor families, reduced to poverty by sudden and recent misfortunes, occupy the least enviable position of any of the numerous classes of which society is composed. We say *recent*—because otherwise they become so entirely incorporated and assimilated with the class on which they have been thrown back, that no distinguishing traits or features remain visible to awaken our sympathies.

The picture, then, which we would point out for contemplation and commiseration is that of such a family struggling to maintain an appearance before the eye of the world worthy of their former state, but sorely at variance with their present means. Such attempts as these may be called foolish, and by those who have more wisdom than feeling they may be considered as the offspring of vanity ; but *we* would not be disposed to give them so harsh a name. As we are no casuists ourselves, however, we leave the adjustment

of this point to those who are, and content ourselves with saying, that, for our own parts, we never look on such melancholy attempts as those we speak of, or think of the condition of those who make them, but with unmingled feelings of kindness and compassion.

Particularly do we sympathise with such a family when it contains one or more young adult females. Modest, accomplished girls they are, but, oh ! pitiful, most pitiful, is the contrast between their poverty-stricken home, their poor thin raiment thrown on their sylph-like forms, with an affecting aim at gentility, and the lady-like manners, the pure and beautiful style of language, and the elegant carriage of their fair but unfortunate wearers ! With the spirit of former days still strong within them, and still fondly clinging, with a hold which they must soon forego, to that status in society from which poverty would tear them, the reduced family contrive to continue to reside in a house of rather genteel appearance externally ; but few except themselves know the dreadful struggle they have to keep such a house as this over their heads, and fewer still know of the misery that is within it, or the wretched shifts to which its inmates are driven to make out a livelihood.

Although, however, the house is of rather a genteel appearance in itself, it is yet, very often, in a poor locality, and for their selection of such a residence there are two principal reasons. The first is, that houses so situated are generally lower rented. The second is, a consciousness of their inability to keep up appearances with an aristocratic neighbourhood in any of the essentials of respectable house-keeping ; for it would be impossible to conceal many small matters from the prying eyes of those who, being in comfortable circumstances themselves, quickly observe indications of an opposite state in others. The reduced family shun this humiliation, and seek a vi-

cinity where the elegancies, and refinements, and luxuries of genteel life are less known, and less regarded. But if the reduced family avoid one evil they encounter another, perhaps still less easy to bear. They cannot altogether conceal from the neighbourhood that poverty is in the house. In despite of all the family's efforts to maintain appearances, their condition becomes known, and often has the blush been called into poor Miss Louisa's pale but beautiful cheek, by the rude remarks spoken out that she might hear them as she passed. Modestly she trips, or rather steals along; for her steps are stealthy, her deportment meek; indicating a painful and oppressive sense of her changed condition and prospects. Poor Louisa's appearance is still genteel, and this of itself is enough to excite spleen; but there is yet another provocative. By toiling night and day with her needle, Louisa has contrived to purchase a new scarf, and this thrown gracefully around her has raised the hue and cry of envy and uncharitableness.

We have said that Louisa is subjected to all this. So she is, but she is not alone in this species of suffering. Her sisters are equally persecuted. The blight falls, and with equally withering effects, on Miss Harriet and Miss Sophia, and equally keenly do they feel it. Even little modest Anne, who would not harm the meanest thing that lives, is subjected to this torture, and often, also, has the blush been called into her little innocent cheek, and the tear into her gentle but brilliant eye, by vulgar, unfeeling slat-terns. Often, in her innocence and simplicity, has she expressed her wonder to her mother, while the tears were streaming down her cheeks, and her little heart was like to burst, (for she is yet too young to observe the caution of her elder sister,) why she should be treated in this way, and affectingly inquiring what she can have done to provoke it. On these oc-

casious her mother sighs heavily, kisses away the little girl's tears, and bids her pay no attention to the idle remarks of idle people; and adds, "My child, say nothing of this to your poor father; it would only grieve him."

The girls of this unfortunate family have all received the elements of a first-rate education; and, in the case of the two eldest, that education was completed before the misfortune befel them which reduced them to their present poverty. They, therefore, had looked confidently forward to such a settlement in the world as their superior accomplishments and their position in society entitled them to. Suitors they once had: many who fanned them with the soft breath of flattery, but one by one have they all departed, and departed, too, by the slow, torturing, humiliating process of gradually widening the intervals of their visits, and offering the most frivolous excuses, until they had rendered even this unnecessary by returning no more.

The girls sometimes meet these heartless fellows in the streets, and frequently in situations where the latter cannot avoid coming in contact with them; but they always endeavour to escape, and the ladies feel a momentary sense of humiliation; but pride comes to their aid, and they return the constrained and hollow salutation in a dignified manner. Still, these rencontres are painful to the sensitive minds of the poor girls, rendered doubly sensitive by their misfortunes.

It is an affecting sight to see these amiable, accomplished young ladies, now assembled around one little table in one mean-looking paltry apartment, labouring with the needle to earn their bread, nay, not only their own bread, but that of their parents, and their younger sisters and brothers. There is an air of sad cheerfulness seated on their countenances. Gentle, mild, and resigned, are they all. But the

poverty that presses on them is great. They who once had splendid wardrobes can now, with great difficulty, command even such trifles as a pair of new gloves or a cap ; and, in the case of the two younger ones, their best apparel is so faded and gone, that they cannot appear in the streets unless their scanty and decayed dress be eked out by some of their elder sisters' better-conditioned gear. The girls love each other with the most tender affection, and each is more anxious to deck out her sister than herself.

Early and late, as you may perceive by the pale waxen hue of their countenances, do they toil for the support of the family, yet all their toil scarcely produces the means of a meagre subsistence. Their table, which was wont to be so abundantly spread, now boasts but the scantiest, and often the meanest fare. Yet for this they care nothing, as the merest and plainest trifle will now, as indeed it always did even in their best days, satisfy their wants. It is, however, a striking and melancholy memento of their fallen condition. Still, neither are they discontented nor unhappy. The house still rings with their melodious voices, singing the songs of their happier days ; and in the correct and scientific manner in which these songs are sung, the listener at once recognises the effects of a superior education. All the girls, especially the two eldest, play delightfully on both piano and harp, and they once possessed handsome instruments. Their father was in arrears for the rent, and the instruments were sold, and sold at half their value, to satisfy the landlord ; and thus, piece-meal, has the whole of their ornamental furniture gone, from time to time, for the last few years.

The father entertained once the most brilliant prospects for his two boys, and the education he gave them was calculated to adapt them for almost any si-

tuation they could be called upon to fill; and the lads themselves felt a full consciousness of the advantages they possessed, and fully participated also in their father's high hopes regarding their future fortunes. Grievous, therefore, was the disappointment, and sad the feelings of both father and sons, when it was found necessary, in order to eke out their scanty income, to allow one of them to go behind the counter of a druggist, and the other that of a haberdasher. Too young to think of calling philosophy to their aid, or to reason themselves into submission to their destiny, the proud boys' hearts were like to burst, when the humble employment was proposed to them, until habit had reconciled them to their lot, and perhaps shown them the folly of their pride. They still struggle to maintain their pretensions to superior consideration, and more especially do they struggle after this distinction in the article of dress. But the boys will be the makers of their own fortunes yet, and the humiliations to which they are now subject will prove a hard, yet a wholesome lesson.

The father is a highly respectable-looking, elderly man, but his countenance is care-worn and melancholy. He still dresses genteely, however, although his coat certainly appears to be rather the worse for the wear, but it is carefully brushed; and his neck-cloth is at once remarkably clean and neatly put on. His grave countenance, his stately form, and his grey locks, prematurely grey, render his appearance highly prepossessing and gentleman-like. His friends say, however, that they remark a great change upon him for the worse within the last four or five years. He is failing fast, and no wonder he should, for he has had much to distress him; and when he looks on his unprovided children, and thinks how different is his condition from what he once hoped it should be, the old man wishes himself in his grave. He rarely goes

abroad now, and never into the city; for he dislikes to revisit the scenes of his prosperity, or to meet the friends and acquaintance of his better days. When he does go out, it is to take a solitary walk of a mile or two into the country, where he may be occasionally met, and appearing to be half-interested in the scenery around him, and half-absorbed in melancholy reflection.

At home he has become a little peevish and cross-tempered. In the days of his prosperity he was all kindness, all good-humour, and urbanity. An angry word, then, scarcely ever crossed his lips, a frown seldom marred his countenance; but misfortune has soured his temper, and sickened him of the world. His affectionate family make every allowance for the old man's weakness, and not only never resent his little hasty ebullitions of anger, but always endeavour to soothe and allay the irritability which occasions them, and he is not insensible to the kindness; for he often apologises for the rudeness of a hasty expression the moment he has uttered it; and if it is to one of his daughters, he draws her towards him, and imprints a kiss upon her forehead, a tear glistens in his eye, and he bids her never mind the unguarded language of a cross old man. His daughter on these occasions makes no reply; she cannot, her heart is too full; but she flings her arms around his neck and sobs.

The mistress of this fallen house, again, is a tall, genteel, lady-looking person. She evidently was once beautiful, but her beauty has long since faded away, not so much from the encroachments of age as from the pressure of misfortune. Her countenance, too, like her husband's, is grave and melancholy, yet is there much to admire in those elegant features, and in the dark eye, whose brilliancy affliction cannot altogether quench. The whole countenance is eminently impressive, and calculated to command respect.

Like her husband, she still dresses well, and it is most pleasant to look upon her even in these the days of her poverty. Her plain, clean, frilled, close cap, white as the driven snow, and her flowing silk gown, one of the remnants of more prosperous times, deck out a figure of more than ordinary dignity, a dignity which is not a little improved (indicative of decaying physical powers though it be) by a pair of slender tortoise-shell spectacles. Hermann is calm, solemn, and deliberate; but there is nothing of austerity in it, nothing repulsive. On the contrary, it is gentle, kind, and affable. She is evidently a woman of education; her language and deportment bespeak it; and the apartment in which she at this moment sits exhibits some beautiful specimens of her attainments in the accomplishment of drawing; executed in the days of her youth, when she feared no evils, when no approaching misery was anticipated.

But the shifts to which the unfortunate family are often driven to procure even the means of subsistence, ay, even these, for they are reduced indeed, is, perhaps, after all, the most melancholy part of the picture. More than once has Louisa been seen, under the cloud of night, disguised in an old cloak and bonnet, stealing up to the pawnbroker's to procure something wherewith to put off the morrow, or perhaps to furnish the long-delayed meal of the day. She hesitates and lingers about the entrance to the pawnbroker's before she can muster courage enough to go in; yet this courage, perhaps, she would never find, did she not also watch the opportunity when the place was clear of applicants. Never, poor girl, does she leave that place but in tears; for it is only when the trial is past, when agitation and anxiety have given way to reflection, that she feels fully impressed with the degrading nature of her errand. This expedient, never, and all others of a similar kind, are care-

fully concealed from the unfortunate father. He knows nothing of them, or, at least, he is saved the pain of hearing them discussed.

His table is always furnished, if not plentifully, at least comfortably, and he does not inquire whence or how it has been procured. He is afraid to ask, for although he does not *know*, he *guesses* the source and the means.

MY UNCLE.

If it be a miserable thing to have too much to do, or more than one can overtake, it is most assuredly a still more miserable thing to have nothing to do; and of this truth no man that ever lived, perhaps, was more sensible than my poor, dear, departed uncle; or at least there was no man who ought to have been more sensible of it than he, and I have reason to believe that he was.

Poor dear uncle, he was a jewel of a man—a man of ten thousand; and he would have been, as he deserved to be, a happy one, had he not been afflicted with an independency in the latter part of his life, which rendered it unnecessary for him to do anything. I say afflicted with an independency, because it was precisely of that unhappy amount, which, though it certainly places a man beyond the reach of want, is yet a great deal too limited to allow of his employing either himself or it in any sort of active or available way—just enough to eradicate all desire of doing anything, and not enough to admit of any indulgence in any of those enjoyments with which wealth can so agreeably supply the place of employment. My uncle

was nailed down, as it were, for his natural life, to one precise and particular spot in creation, and to one precise and particular purpose in life ; or if he can be said to have moved, his motions must be likened to those of a mill-horse. They were within a limited and impassable circle, where he pursued one unvarying and eternal round. His independency, in short, hung about his neck like a mill-stone. It tied him fairly up, and made him one of the most useless beings in creation. But, in candour, I must not, after all, lay the *whole* blame of his utter inutility as a member of society on his annuity ; for I always suspected that the worthy man had in reality no great talent for business, and, what is more, no great inclination for it, though he certainly affected great fondness for an active life, and really was active enough in trifles ; but I observed that he liked his work to be of his own choosing ; and, further, that it was only in trifling matters that he ever exerted himself.

It may be remarked of many, if not of all of those who have no serious occupation to follow, that they are amazingly fond of little domestic sort of jobs, little missions, and so forth, and that they attach a vast deal of importance to them, and go about their execution with great earnestness and indefatigable zeal. Such a man as this was my poor dear uncle ; but in him it was carried farther, I think, than in any other instance which ever came under my observation. He, good soul, absolutely gloated over the prospect of a message, a mission, or a *job*, or a purchase, or an order for coals, or any thing, or every thing, in short, that was likely to afford him a forenoon's employment, or presented itself in the shape of a "something to do ;" and so precious did he hold these morsels, that he never allowed himself to indulge in the extravagance of finishing them off at a

gulp. To drop metaphor, he took care never to complete what he had in hand, at one call, or with one effort. He economised it, and contrived to keep himself running to and fro a whole forenoon about one job or mission, however apparently simple it might be. Thus, what a spendthrift in this sort of treasure would have gone through in an hour, he made last him, perhaps, a week. For instance, if coal was wanted for the house, none but himself must order it. It would be more than the servant's place was worth if *she* dared to do it; and as for his wife, she knew better than to interfere at all. The order must be given by himself, and he must go himself to the coal-yard, and he must see Mr Black himself—he would not order otherwise; and if Mr Black was not within—an absolute windfall of good fortune this—he must call again, that is, to-morrow forenoon, for it was too good a job to be exhausted all in one day. The lad who kept the coal-merchant's counting-house, knowing my uncle well, and knowing well, also, the purpose of his visits on such occasions, used to endeavour to extract the order from him; but it would not do. My uncle was not to be *done* that way. He was not to be so cozened out of a good job by a jackanapes of a coal-merchant's clerk. In truth, he would as soon have parted with his hat as with the order, until he had squeezed the last drop of enjoyment out of it which it was capable of affording; and there is nothing wonderful in his being shy on this point either, when it is considered that he had been looking forward to the *job* for an entire week previously, with the most pleasing anticipation, and wearying his life out till coal was wanted. Nay, he complained, or, if he did not absolutely venture to complain, he at least *wondered*, in a tone very like that of complaint, that they had lasted so long. “Dear me, Betty!” he would say to the servant girl, and

looking now and then into the coal-box in the kitchen, "are these coals not done yet? The last did not serve us so long by a week;" and he affected here to be highly pleased with their long duration, although in reality he was both irritated and disappointed.

In such a case as this of the coal, I may mention by the way, that, although my poor dear uncle met Mr Black on the street by accident—a circumstance which most other people would consider rather fortunate in a small way—he would not give him his order, for this also would be finishing the *job* prematurely, and when there was no occasion whatever for doing so; he would merely intimate to him that his stock was nearly out, and would add, "But I will look in upon you myself one of these forenoons."

At length, however, the worthy man finds Mr Black, and in the very centre of his coal-yard, too. Here, therefore, one would think the business would have ended. The order must now be given, surely, directly and conclusively. The *job* is now fairly brought to a close. Not at all; my poor dear uncle thought the last coals he had smoked a great deal, and deposited too much ashes; and this he explains to Mr Black, and he inquires if he has no other description in the yard. "Oh yes; great variety," says the civil and accommodating Mr Black; "here is Elgin, here is Halbeath, here is Wallsend," &c. &c. "Ay, just so now," would my uncle say; "why, then, I'll tell you, Mr Black, what I'll do, or rather what you'll do. You'll be so good as put me up a small sample of each in a sheet of brown paper, and I'll take them home and show them to my wife, and we'll determine on which we shall take." "Why, why, Mr Shaw," would Mr Black say, "you'll never carry such a thing as that yourself; I'll send one of my boys with the parcel." My uncle could have knocked him down for his officiousness. "By no

means, I'll take them home myself." Accordingly, the coal samples are bundled up, and off would my poor uncle walk with his dirty burden, as proud of it as if he had been carrying the king's crown at a procession. For why?—it was a job after his own heart. On reaching home, the worthy man would display his dingy treasure on the kitchen dresser for inspection; a consultation would then take place with my aunt regarding the various merits and demerits of the different samples; and on these occasions it was generally determined that he should order—what? Why, the very same description of coal they had last; and, *next* day—observe, not the same day—my uncle would make out a new errand, and a new forenoon's employment, in ordering accordingly.

I observed, too, of my uncle, that not one of the shops he dealt with was in his own neighbourhood, although every thing he could have occasion for, and of the very best kinds, too, was to be had within thirty yards of his own door. *His* shops were all at the farthest extremities of the town. Indeed, he seemed to make it a rule never to purchase an article within the distance of a mile of his place of residence; and I firmly believe, if any man had opened a shop another half mile still farther off, he would have been sure of his patronage. Reversing the ordinary notions on this subject, distance was the greatest recommendation which his butcher, baker, or grocer, could possess; and the reasons for this part of his conduct are obvious enough. Distance made a job, otherwise of no value, something worth looking after. Two or three runs to one or other of these distant shops in a day—and he generally managed to make out this—got quit of as many hours delightfully.

Of all the jobs, however, of this kind, which came

within his province—and there were very few of any kind that in his opinion did not—that of attending the butcher-market was by far the best. It was frequent, steady, regular, and constant. Groceries did pretty well, too, for he could run backwards and forwards for two or three hours with samples of this kind of tea, and that kind of sugar, and bits of different kinds of cheese, from sixpence per pound upwards, to show my aunt before concluding a purchase ; but then, this, though very good certainly, came comparatively but seldom ; probably not oftener than once a fortnight or so, although here, too, he managed a bit, and would on no account order more than a fortnight's consumption of any thing at a time. But, after all, there was no job like butcher-marketing. It was almost daily, for one thing ; and then there was such a variety, that he could go to and from the shop to the house, reporting progress to my aunt, and giving a faithful and detailed account of the different nice things on sale, for an hour or two, without seeming to be very trifling or very tedious. I ought, however, to have mentioned, that the butcher's shop was an exception, in point of distance, to all the rest. It was near at hand. It was not the nearest he could have got ; it was only two streets off ; and the reason of making it an exception to all the others was, that the frequency of the visits compensated for want of distance.

On the first visit of my poor dear uncle to the butcher's shop of a forenoon, he of course had not made up his mind as to what he should have for dinner. This was a point which could be settled only on the spot, and in the presence of the gigots and sirloins themselves. The business of marketing here, however, was always preceded by a quiet, calm, leisurely conversation with the butcher, on the merits of black and white faced sheep, stot-beef, and grazing, and such like appro-

priate and edifying subjects. Indeed, through the assistance of the butcher, and the frequency of the intercourse he had with him, my uncle had acquired such a knowledge on these topics as would have enabled himself, had he had any inclination to have set up in this particular line, to have done so with every prospect of success. He knew every inch of the best grazing ground in Scotland, and a good deal about that of England, and could at once distinguish a wedder from what was not a wedder, and a Merino from a Shetlander. He frequently tried, by sly and far-draughting questions, to ascertain the butcher's profits ; but on this score the butcher was extremely sensitive, and always drew in his feelers the moment he perceived the conversation tending that way. He would, indeed, readily enough give his own particular version of the story, in a slump and general way, showing that he was losing money every day—that, in fact, he was carrying on his business merely for the benefit and accommodation of the public. My uncle, of course, did not believe a word of this, and, therefore, endeavoured to bring him to show it in a satisfactory way, by going into details, and exhibiting a plain and distinct debtor and creditor account of the affair ; but the butcher always shyed at such an idea ; so that my poor dear uncle could never arrive at a satisfactory conclusion regarding his profits, though he always asserted that he believed them to be very handsome. I may mention, by the way, that he was very much addicted to this way of pumping shopkeepers and other men in business, to ascertain what their profits were ; and his inquiries on this score were, I must say, frequently deemed rather impertinent, and in more than one instance, of which I was myself cognisant, were resented accordingly. This, however, did not deter him from the practice, but only induced him to shift the ground of his

operations to a less fastidious and more compliant quarter.

Well, then, when my poor dear uncle had got through the morning's conversation with the butcher, a ceremony which was never omitted, he then began to look round the shop for something for the pot or the spit ; and now came the " tug of war " between him and the butcher ; for my uncle, poor dear man, liked a good bargain. They sailed pleasantly enough together till this critical moment, but here they went off from each other at a tangent. Their interests were no longer the same, the one wishing to buy as cheap, the other to sell as dear, as he could. They, therefore, now all at once assumed something of a hostile attitude towards each other, and boldly prepared to do battle to the last farthing, and a quarrel was sure to be the consequence ; for he and the butcher quarrelled regularly every day, and regularly became friends again after the terms of purchase had been once fairly concluded. But the quarrel with the butcher, though a very good thing for putting off half an hour or so, was not by any means the best part of a marketing business. There was the choosing, and, as I said before, the various reports to my aunt, as to kinds, qualities, and prices—as thus : It would be agreed sometimes, perhaps, between my aunt and him, before he left the house, that they should have, probably, a neat small roast of beef, of six or eight pounds weight ; and off my uncle would go, accordingly, to make the purchase. The matter, to all appearance, was settled irrevocably, and my aunt would be patiently expecting the butcher's boy with the roast, but, instead, back would come the gentleman himself to report that Mr Fletcher had a beautiful fillet of veal, which he thought he could have reasonable ; and would add, " Had we not better take *that*, my dear, in place of the roast ? " Of course, my good

aunt would agree to the change, and the caterer would again set out, but now to purchase veal instead of beef. Back, however, he would come once more, to announce that he had discovered, in a corner of the shop, what had entirely escaped him before, a perfect treat, a treasure—for my uncle was a *leetle* of a gourmand—in the shape of an exquisite gigot of five-year-old black-faced wedder mutton; and now, as the subjects had become numerous, and the variety rather puzzling, it was necessary that a consultation should be gone into; although, as my poor dear uncle generally took his own way in the long-run, this might be considered as rather a superfluous ceremony; but he, nevertheless, always insisted on it in such cases. This consultation, however, nine times in ten, ended, as in the case of the coal, by the first-named article being finally adopted. But the great end was gained: my uncle had knocked a forenoon's employment out of it.

There was nothing on earth that my poor dear uncle hated so much as being cut out of a job by any such untoward occurrence as its being suddenly found unnecessary, or by the party happening to call, with whom any certain piece of business was to be transacted. Nothing on earth provoked him so much as these extremely inopportune visits. He could have knocked the man down who came under such circumstances, and with such felonious intent; and, indeed, he both looked at and spoke to such person as if he were within an ace of doing so. I recollect one instance of this kind, where a grocer was very near losing his custom, by nipping a job in the bud, which himself had carved out, by committing a mistake in the execution of an order. My uncle had called on the grocer alluded to, and had ordered two bars of brown soap. Well, two bars of soap came, neatly put up in brown paper, and were regularly delivered

into the hands of the servant girl. As the soap was not immediately wanted, the parcel was not opened for some hours after it had been received. At the expiry of that period, however, it was opened, when, lo!—as we have it in the story of the cameleon—the soap was white!

“Oh, it doesn’t signify, my dear,” said my uncle to my aunt, in a kind, easy way, affecting an amiable spirit of forgiveness towards the grocer, while, in fact, he not only forgave him, but felt his heart fairly melting with gratitude towards him, for the delightful job he had thus unwittingly carved out for him. “It doesn’t signify, my dear,” he said; “I’ll just step in to-morrow forenoon to good Mr Thom’s, and mention to him the mistake he has committed, and desire him to send out the proper description of soap, and take this away.” Here, then, was a delicious little affair for to-morrow—a perfect windfall—for it was of course wholly unlooked for. Added to the usual business of the butcher-market, it promised to bring him up comfortably to one or two o’clock in the afternoon. Well, my poor dear uncle made up the parcel of white soap again with his own hands, restoring it precisely to its original state, and waited anxiously for to-morrow forenoon.

To-morrow forenoon came, and he was in great spirits; for before the soap job offered, he had no prospect of anything but the butcher. “Now, my dear,” he said to his wife, after having dressed, and being just ready to start, “I’ll just tell Mr Thom, as I said before, to send home the brown soap, and to take away the white. But no; i’ faith,” he added, chuckling, “I’ll make the rogue pay for his blunder, by having a joke at his expense. I’ll say to him, with a grave face, ‘Mr Thom, do you know, a very singular and most extraordinary thing happened yesterday?’ He’ll say eagerly, ‘What’s that, Mr Shaw?’

Then I'll say, still in a very grave and sedate tone, 'Why, sir, yesterday a gentleman—a particular friend of yours, and in the same line of business—sent to another gentleman, a customer of his, two bars of brown soap, and, strange to tell, they turned white by the way—white as the driven snow, upon honour;'" and here my poor uncle chuckled and laughed at his own conceit, and enjoyed, in anticipation, its effects on Mr Thom; when, lo! just as he was going out at the door, who should be in the very act of ringing the bell but one of the grocer's lads, with two bars of brown soap! The mistake had been discovered, and he had come to rectify it. The joke and the job both were knocked on the head. I cannot go on. I must leave it entirely to the reader's imagination to conjecture what were my poor uncle's feelings on the occasion—what his disappointment, his vexation, his anger. I must leave it also to the same ready fancy to picture the look he assumed, when he saw the boy and the brown soap. The latter was uncovered; and the little hard-hearted villain carried it shoulder-high, as if to increase the weight of the blow he was about to inflict.

Although I cannot venture to describe these things, I may venture on the sequel. The next time my uncle had occasion to call on Mr Thom, he told him, in a very angry tone, that he was much displeased with his carelessness in the instance of the brown soap; and added, that if his orders were not in future more carefully attended to, and more correctly executed, he would be compelled to change.

With all his foibles, however, my poor dear uncle was a most affectionate and attentive husband. He went all his wife's messages, and executed all her little commissions, with great alacrity and cheerfulness. Some people alleged, indeed, that it was more to please himself than to gratify her, that he

did all this. But be that as it may, he certainly was most useful to her in this way. He would go for a pennyworth of shoe-tie for her, or tape, or pins, or anything, in short. No fish were too small for his net; and he would go for these, too, to the farthest end of the town. Indeed, as I mentioned before, the farther they were distant, the better; and if the tape was found the hundredth part of an inch too narrow, he would go back again, with the greatest pleasure imaginable; nay, he would insist upon going back, and this so strenuously, too, that I often suspected he committed such mistakes on purpose. Be this as it may, it is certain that they very frequently happened with him; and it is equally certain that he was never known to exhibit the slightest impatience or displeasure on their being pointed out, and a necessity shown for their being immediately rectified. And so did my uncle go on, till the close of the unvaried and monotonous chapter of his innocent but useless life.

NOTICEABLE PEOPLE.

THERE are two or three descriptions of persons whose characteristics, although, perhaps, neither sufficiently peculiar, nor sufficiently marked, to warrant us in claiming for them a distinct classification, will yet be found to present some certain fixed and perfectly recognisable points. Of such are, first,

THE STEADY MAN.

This is an excellent and worthy member of society, and entitled to all manner of respect and consideration for the inestimable quality by which he is dis-

tinguished. Sober, honest, correct in his habits and in his principles, he is invaluable to all whose interests are in his keeping.

Regular as the clock, and steady as the steeple, he can always be depended on. Nothing short of a broken leg will prevent him being at his appointed place at the appointed hour, and nothing less than an earthquake move him out of that place till the due period of attendance has expired. There he sticks, hard and fast ;—as immoveable as a church.

Now, is it not a pity that this very worthy person should be, as in nine cases out of ten he is, such a dull, heavy, phlegmatic sort of being? That he should be so wholly destitute of all the nicer feelings and perceptions of humanity? So impervious to all appeals to its more refined and delicate senses? That he should be, in short, such a sodden, inanimate clod?

It is a pity, and the more pity is it, that there seems no necessity for its being so. Yet, so it is unquestionably, always bearing in mind that there is no rule without exceptions.

Your steady man, when so called emphatically, is, if not generally, at least very often, a terribly obtuse sort of personage. In fact, it will often be found—always speaking under exceptions—that he has no other quality on earth, saving honesty perhaps, to recommend him.

It seems to us that these good people, becoming early aware that they have no chance of success in the world through energy of character, or force of talent, take to steadiness as a substitute, and they could not do better ; for, in the long-run, it is sure to meet with its reward.

Downright immobility, which is the steady man's distinguishing characteristic, is, though perhaps you would not think it, a capital quality for getting a man on in the world. One of the very best.

We know more than one worthy person who have attained comfortable circumstances merely by an exercise of the talent of sitting fast—of never moving from the seats into which they have been thrust.

The chairs of these excellent persons rose with them as if by the aid of well oiled machinery. Gently, softly, and gradually, until they reached a comfortable and independent elevation, and were raised completely above the jostlings of the world, and all its harassing cares and anxieties. And there they sat, conspicuous and striking examples of what steady sitting can do.

We have an idea that all steady men, par excellence, are in a kind of subordinate, although often both respectable and responsible situations. Such as head-clerkships, small managerships, or foremen to great establishments. The term will not, we think, apply so well, somehow or other, to independent persons. To men in business for themselves for instance, or to persons who fill very high offices.

The steady man, then, we may say, is always in the employment of others, although always also at the head of the subordinates.

But, lo! even while we speak of him, behold there he is.

That's he, there ;—that stayed, middle-aged person, with the blue cotton umbrella under his arm.

You see his appearance is very respectable. Not much, indeed, of what we would call the gentleman about it, but decent and confidence-inspiring.

In person, he is stoutish, you observe, with a strong tendency towards obesity. This comes of good and regular living, and, in part, from advancing years. It is in no small measure owing, too, to the circumstance of our steady man's unexciteable nature, which permits of every thing he takes in the shape of food doing him good, worthy man. There is no-

thing of this kind lost on him. His appetite is excellent, and his digestion superlative. His walk, you perceive, is slow, measured, and composed. His countenance grave, but by no means very intellectual in its expression. In fact, rather the reverse. It is not at all calculated to impress you with the idea of its possessor being a very bright genius, and neither is he, good soul.

It is just now, you observe, exactly seven and a half minutes to nine o'clock A.M., and our steady friend is on his way to his place of business.

"Too soon, is not he?"

Not the fiftieth part of a second. His place of business is exactly seven and a half minutes moderate walk from this, so that he will enter the door at the precise instant the clock delivers the first stroke of nine, which is his morning hour, and this he has done for the last twenty years.

To conclude, one would think that the steady man might be active as well as steady. So he might, and so he sometimes is; for the two qualities are by no means essentially incompatible. Yet, somehow or other, they do not seem to accord very well. Activity, besides, is rather a dangerous companion to steadiness. It is very apt to unsettle the latter, and, at some time or other, to swerve it from its true perpendicular.

This, at any rate, we know, that amongst the steady men, emphatically, of our acquaintance, those that possess steadiness alone seem to get best on in the world. So that, on the whole, we do not think the addition of activity any improvement on the character, or one likely to benefit the steady man's own interests. Next on our list is

THE DIRECTOR.

A certain sort of family likeness will be found, we think, running through the various members of this class of persons, no matter what may be the particular nature or character of the establishment or association over which they preside ;—whether they be Directors of Gas Companies, Insurance Companies, Shipping Companies, or Banking Companies. So satisfied are we of this, that we think we would know a Director by head-mark—know him at once when we saw him.

He is a comfortable, substantial-looking personage, of a jolly presence and bold bearing—well up in years, and of goodly corporeal dimensions; for a thin scarecrow of a Director is an absurdity—ridiculous. No doubt, there is such a thing to be seen occasionally ; but it is nonsense, and should not be.

All Directors, if they are not, ought to be such as we have described them ;—stout, comfortable-looking old boys, who have made a deal of money, and who can take as good care of it.

Your Director is not often a very brilliant personage, nor of remarkable refinement of manner. But he is a shrewd, worldly sort of person, with a good deal of common sense, and very lively perceptions of his own and the company's interests.

As becomes a man of his consequence, the Director carries a somewhat high head, and always looks as if he felt he was somebody.

On meeting days his manner and general bearing is especially important and dignified. On these days he puts on his best coat, and has his shoes particularly well blacked. If the latter creak a little, so much the better. There is weight, authority, effect, all other things being in accordance, in the creaking of a shoe.

It sounds well under a portly man when crossing a floor. Figure to yourself, then, good reader, a stout, rich, and elderly gentleman, (three indispensable qualifications,) dressed in an ample blue coat, ample yellow vest, dark kerseymere small clothes, with gaiters of the same, and you have before you the beau ideal of "a Director."

This, however, it must be confessed, is the picture of one of the better sort. There are many of them, who, though possessing all the special requisites above enumerated, have a mean, scrubbish sort of look, shabby in their apparel, and with hard, calculating faces.

These are they who always oppose all rises in the clerks' salaries, and who, with spectacles on nose, look so sharply and scrutinizingly over the cash books and petty expenses of the concern, and who are, if not the terror, at least the torment, of cashiers, and all who have the disbursement of the smaller outlays of the establishment.

Every body of Directors has a sharp hand of this kind amongst them, who, in the indulgence of what seems a natural instinct, delights in hunting the pounds, shillings, and pence, through the mazes of interminable cross entries and endless columns.

Next comes

THE JURYMAN.

We are not quite sure if the reader will join with us in considering this personage as an individual of a recognizable class. But we have an idea that we know him, too, by head-mark.

Is he not a decent, heavy, sensible-looking man? Apparently a respectable trader. He is not, however, what we would call an educated man, as you

may perceive by his very gait, and, particularly, by the unrefined expression, if we may so speak, of his unsophisticated countenance. But he is an honest, conscientious man, and entertains, as is evident from the gravity of his countenance, a due sense of the importance of the part he is called upon to act.

Mingled with this expression, too, as a little closer scrutiny will discover, are certain slight indications of the smallest matter of vanity. The worthy man is not a little proud of the consequence with which his temporary legal character has invested him, although neither is he free from some degree of perplexity and uneasy feeling regarding the terrible and solemn duty he is called on to perform. He does not know how he will get through with it ;—these courts are such awful places.

But, see, there he is himself. There is our Jurymen. He is just now on his way to the court. He is, as you perceive, equipped in his Sunday suit of blacks ; having thrown off his apron, and doffed his mealy coat for the occasion. These blacks are still glossy ; for, so carefully hoarded have they been, that, though nearly twelve months old, they are still new.

Our worthy friend's clothes are by no means what is called smartly made. The coat, in particular, being a tremendously side and wide article, but the cloth is of good quality, while the very untidiness of the make seems, somehow or other, to contribute, as it does also, in some other cases, to the substantial appearance of our Jurymen.

Last, but not least, comes

THE MARRIED MAN.

This is rather a delicate subject. But do you know a married man when you see him, 'good reader ? That is, without any previous knowledge of his being a

member of that happy, numerous, and most respectable fraternity, the married men of the civilized world. We say the civilized world ; for, we cannot say that we, ourselves, with all our acumen, would know a married Chippewaw or Esquimaux from an unmarried one, although, we dare say, the symptoms of the condition alluded to are pretty much alike in both cases.

But the married man of the civilized world we know in a moment, and so may you, gentle reader, with a very little instruction.

Whenever you see a grave, dull, thoughtful, care-worn gentleman, with a face as long as a fiddle back, you may at once set him down as a married man. The absence of all spirit, all life, all animation, being a sure sign of matrimonial felicity.

Slovenliness in dress, too, is another symptom, and, when added to a sneaking spiritless gait, amounts to proof positive.

These gentlemen, we mean the married men, all tell you that they are happy ;—that it is a delightful thing to be married, &c. It may be so ; but only look at their dismal countenances, and we rather imagine you will find some difficulty in believing them.

You must, at any rate, think it very odd that they should be so very happy and so very long-faced at the same time.

THE POOR DANDY.

THERE is an object in nature to which scarcely any human being ever extended, or ever dreamt of extending, the smallest portion of sympathy or com-

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passion ; and yet there are few that have, in reality, a stronger claim on the charitable feelings of the humane. This object is the poor dandy—the poor fellow who would be a buck if he could, but whose poverty will not allow him to do more than aim at the character by a series of abortive efforts. Instead of feeling for this luckless wight—the victim of a natural and harmless ambition—the world generally views him with contempt or aversion ; it laughs at his attempts at smartness in dress, and cruelly sneers at the defalcations of his outer man.

Now, *we* look upon him with unfeigned compassion ; it goes to our hearts to see the poor fellow's locks so carefully brushed and oiled, and his hat so shabby. We would give him a new one, if we could ; positively we would, for we have a lively sense of the pain it must give him to be obliged to sport such a castor. We think, too, we see the melancholy, the forlorn, the hopeless look with which he passes the brush around its bare circumference—bare and hard as a board ; and hear the deep-drawn sigh with which he places it on his head.

To us the attempts of the poor dandy to cut a dashing figure have something exceedingly piteous about them—something positively touching ; they have always affected us in this way. We think of the agony the poor fellow must suffer in being compelled to make his appearance in a threadbare coat ; of the dreadful torture it must be to him, when he detects cold inquisitive eyes singling out, and dwelling with relentless pertinacity, on the external deficiencies which he had hoped might have passed unobserved ; these inquisitorial glances perhaps accompanied by the sneer of contempt, or the broad laugh of heartless exultation. How the poor fellow's cheek must redden !—how his feelings must be tortured and lacerated !—and this not only daily, perhaps,

but ten times a day. We think, too, of the distress of mind which the struggle to maintain appearances must occasion him ; of the painful ingenuity which he must exercise to keep up these appearances ; of the torturing thought, the anxiety, the hopes, and the fears, which must be his, when endeavouring to compass a new garment ; of his eager and heart-sicken-
ing longings for a new outfit.

When we think of all this, how can we do otherwise than feel for the poor dandy ? But he brings it all on himself by indulging in pretensions beyond his means. True, but—Heaven help us !—is there to be no compassion for sufferings brought on by our own follies—faults, if you will ? We would not own such a stern, cold morality, to be made king of the Cannibal Islands.

There being but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, our poor dandy does, indeed, sometimes—there is no denying it—cut rather an absurd figure ; and there are occasions on which to contemplate him with gravity certainly does exceed all “powers of face,” as when he insists on sporting the character of the “swell,” or “bang-up,” in defiance of the most monstrous incongruities and most bare-faced contradictions in the clothing department. Being, too, as regards dress, if not literally a thing of “shreds and patches,” at least a compound of frailties and inconsistencies, he is terribly exposed to untoward accidents. The least thing deranges his nice and careful adjustments, severs the very *tender* connection by which the various component parts of his outer man are held together, and exposes the nakedness of the land. A sudden gust of wind, for instance, will sometimes make awkward disclosures, and he himself is extremely liable to commit no less awkward inadvertencies—such as leaving the ragged ends of a ragged white pocket-handkerchief (his only

one) protruding from his coat-pocket ; or overlooking a hole, of the size of half-a-crown, in the heel of his stocking.

Our poor dandy, too, sometimes assumes airs that contrast rather oddly with the palpable signs of the "hard up" condition which his outer man will still exhibit, notwithstanding all his efforts to conceal them. Matter failing him, he must try to make it out by manner. We have ever felt disposed to overlook these little flights of our poor friend ; of course, not extending this feeling to cases of insolence ; our whole paper, indeed, being meant to bear reference to the poor dandy of amiable and really gentlemanly dispositions—by no means to the empty, swaggering puppy, the would-be blood, we sometimes meet with. In *his* case there is nothing to excite feelings of sympathy, but a great deal to excite the reverse.

The poor dandy has a spruce exterior, and wears the look of a gay gallant ; but, alas ! he has a heavy heart—there is little buoyancy there. The consciousness of the many deficiencies in his equipment, of the almost utter hopelessness of having these deficiencies supplied, is constantly pressing on his spirits, constantly present to his mind, giving a melancholy, care-worn expression to his countenance, that will not be concealed by the lively air and free-and-easy sort of manner which he is so prone to affect.

Women—let the reader observe this, and he will find it to be true—women invariably sympathise with and feel for our unfortunate friend, and their conduct is in striking contrast with the men. You will rarely find the dear creatures laughing at him, or, if forced into a smile by the remarks of their male friends, it is but for an instant. Their fair faces quickly assume a look of grave compassion, and as certainly will this look be accompanied by the sympathising exclamations of "Poor fellow!"—"Too

bad to laugh at him !” Bless their tender hearts ;
they can feel for the sorrows of the poor dandy !

CIVIC RULERS.

It may be observed of every civic body, that their members generally each take to, and keep by, one particular path as regards the discharge of their public duties ; that is, each discovers a different sort of genius, by which he in time comes to be distinguished. Some discover a genius for *proposing*, some for *opposing*, and some for making long-winded speeches. Some exhibit a genius for doing nothing, some a genius for nuisances—that is, for ferreting out public annoyances. Others display a genius for improvements—for knocking down and building up,—for slicing off and cutting through.

The gentleman with the genius for proposing, and he with the at least equally useful talent for opposing, may at once be discovered at the meetings of the body to which they belong, by the deadly scowl with which they regard each other, even when not in actual contact. They glare on each other like a pair of wild cats ; and, impelled by that undefinable feeling which urges us still to look on what we loathe, their eyes are constantly upon each other. They cannot help it. In the look of the proposer—the great tabler of motions—there may, however, be detected a lurking expression of dread of his formidable antagonist, on whose face, again, sits a sardonic grin, indicating anything but good-will to the former. It being the business of the one to get up motions, and of the other to knock them down as fast

as they are got up, it is curious to mark the proceedings of the pair when in discharge of their respective functions. Before tabling a motion, the proposer eyes his ancient and well-known enemy with a look of mingled suspicion and defiance. He seems to calculate on instant and fierce opposition to everything he is about to advance,—and he is not mistaken. There, ready to pounce on him, on the slightest opening presenting itself, sits the dreaded opposer, leaning his head upon his hand, and eyeing the motion-maker with a malicious smile, or grinning with delight at the real or supposed weak points in his reasoning.

The gentleman with the genius for making long-winded speeches is a respectable-looking, but somewhat over-dressed elderly man, slow and pompous in manner, and of a grave countenance. This gravity is meant to express wisdom, but, not being exactly of the right kind, it does not altogether answer the purpose intended. It rather, with reverence be it spoken, gives a sort of goose look to the gentleman who has unadvisedly adopted it; and is, therefore, one which, as any physiognomist could tell him, he would be much better without.

This gentleman, who is the dread and terror of his colleagues, owing to his tremendous powers of annoyance, *rises* on all occasions, and, if permitted, would probably never sit down again. But he is not permitted. His colleagues, who had long borne with him with the fortitude of martyrs, have now got into the way of nipping him in the bud. They now seldom allow him to get beyond three or four sentences. One would think that this cavalier treatment would cure the speech-maker of his prosing propensities. No such thing. If he be of the right breed, nothing will cure him. He sets it all down to the folly, obstinacy, and stupidity of those who refuse to listen to

him, and, in this comfortable opinion, retires within himself, to gather fresh vigour for the next opportunity of spinning an oration.

Many a warm, comfortable dinner has this gentleman spoiled for his colleagues with his long-winded speeches ; but that was before they had plucked up courage to resist his tyrannous inflictions—to shake themselves free of the thralldom of his soporific spells. They know better now, and if the dinner-hour be approaching, slip their hats quietly on their heads, and sneaking out of the apartment one after another, leave, with very little ceremony, the speaker on his legs. Nothing daunted, the latter holds on his monotonous way until he has speechified the last man out of the apartment, when, finding nobody left to listen to him, he coolly takes up his hat and walks after them.

The gentleman whose genius lies in the way of doing nothing may be observed to have, generally, rather a perplexed sort of manner. He always looks as if he would fain do or say something if he could, but does not know exactly where or how to begin. In default of this, he puts on a grave face, and tries to look as intelligent, and as full of the matter in hand, as he can. It is all he can do.

Of all the various geniuses, however, of which civic bodies are usually composed, the genius for nuisances, and the genius for improvement, present the most edifying characteristics. The gentleman distinguished for the first has several special and interesting peculiarities. He is an exceedingly active and useful member of his body ; for, resting his fame on this single ground of ferreting out and running down public nuisances, he is constantly on the alert to discover them, and in this is so expert that one would think nature had specially adapted him for such pursuits, by gifting him with some extraordi-

nary powers of nose. It would, moreover, seem as if he held that organ constantly aloft, and kept snuffing the air as he went along ; for he will detect offensive things where your more obtuse olfactories can perceive nothing in the least disagreeable. Some peculiar faculty of nose, therefore, he certainly has. It is rather unlucky for this gentleman, inasmuch as it is very apt to deprive him unjustly of a large portion of his glory, that running down nuisances is rather a popular recreation. The consequence is, that no sooner does our friend notify his detection of a nuisance, than half a dozen members of the body to which he belongs link themselves to him, and insist on hunting down the nuisance along with him. This they do on pretence of aiding him, and serving the public at the same time, but, in reality, to appropriate a share of his glory, which they further seek to diminish, by becoming more clamorous about, and more abusive of, the newly discovered nuisance than the discoverer himself. By-and-by these officious half-dozen members are joined by others ; for the spirit of hunting down public nuisances is remarkably infectious—when, the original discoverer having given, as it were, the view halloo, the whole pack start in full cry after the unfortunate annoyance. The first discoverer, unwilling to submit to be robbed of every particle of reputation, endeavours to keep the lead in the pursuit, and to be, if he can, the first in at the death ; but it very often happens that he is outstripped by his officious concurrents, and his eager shouting drowned in their more obstreperous clamour, until the whole chase becomes so confused and involved, that nobody can tell who first scented the game, which has just been so triumphantly put down. This is a hard case, as regards the original discoverer, inasmuch as it deprives him of the merit to which he was so justly entitled. He sometimes,

indeed, makes some attempts subsequently to claim this merit, but nobody listens to him ; for, the nuisance once removed, no one will further concern themselves about either him or it.

The gentleman with the genius for improvement falls next under our notice. This is a person of a restless and most formidable activity ; for, having an instinctive abhorrence of allowing anything to remain as it is, you have no safety with him. You cannot calculate, if he happen to be a person of any influence, on keeping your house and garden together and entire for a month ; for he may in an instant propose knocking down the one, and carrying a road through the other.

The gentleman with the genius for improvement does not contemplate objects with the eye of an ordinary person. If he looks at a building, it is to see where a corner or a projection could be sliced off, or an addition stuck on. If a street, it is to mark where exuberances might be curtailed, or deficiencies filled up. Even natural objects he views in the same spirit. If it be a tree, it is to consider whether it would not be an improvement to lop off all its branches on one side. If a hill, how it could be shaved down or cut through. There is no denying, however, that if this person does a great deal of mischief sometimes, and at all times gives a vast deal of at least temporary annoyance, by keeping your immediate atmosphere filled with brick and lime dust, and your roads strewed with stones and rubbish, he yet frequently does a great deal of good by knocking off ugly, awkward corners of streets, by straightening crooked ones, by lowering those that are too high, and elevating those that are too low. He, indeed, sometimes creates a terrible stir, and commits fearful havoc, to accomplish these objects ; frequently knocking down whole acres of old houses, and giv-

ing to the city the appearance for a time of having been battered by a park of artillery ; but on the storm subsiding—on things being restored to order again—you cannot deny but a very great improvement has, on the whole, been effected. This person, however, must be carefully watched, and kept within due bounds, otherwise, in his mania for improving, he would not leave one stone of the city on another. The best way is to keep him smashing away about the outskirts of the town, or to let him loose amongst a parcel of old ruinous houses that, of little value themselves, occupy much valuable ground, and disfigure the city.—Just let him in amongst these, and you will see what a havoc he will make. In a week there will not be a stone standing. Keeping him thus employed prevents him entertaining designs on other quarters, where his interference is anything but desirable. On no account must the improver be permitted to get to work in the heart of the city. If he is, he will keep the streets impassable for months ; choke you with all sorts of dust ; compel you to wade knee-deep in mud ; break your legs with his stones and barrows ; create the most dreadful confusion in your most frequented thoroughfares ; and leave you scarce the breadth of a sheep-track to walk on in your broadest streets. Let him, in fact, once in, and you will never get him out.

THE INCREASING FAMILY.

THE commonly received maxim that men should marry young is very good so far ; but they should not marry too young. It is both unseemly that a mere youth

should be addressed with the reverential name of father, and unfavourable to his progress in life, that he should too soon be burdened with the cares of a family. It is positively painful, and this because in some measure unnatural, to see the sober demeanour which marriage somehow or other invariably produces, encroaching upon a face where the gaiety, and even the frivolity, proper to youth, ought still to reign without dispute. It is still more distressing to see a mind of some saliency and considerable promise arrested in its career, and, by the necessity of filling a number of young mouths, fixed down to some toil hardly worthy of it, without the hope of ever again venturing its powers in fields beyond its present range. We decidedly think, with all due respect for the views which argue the expediency of an early marriage, that no one ought to venture upon that step till the most of the first difficulties of life are over, and some assurance has been gained of the possibility of answering all the pecuniary demands which this condition can be expected to lead to.

By way of illustrating this position, let us take a young man of about twenty years of age, who sees only the bright side of things, is as lively and merry as a cricket, and always walks as if he had just come out of a dancing-school. At this period, he has no doubt whatever of becoming very soon a rich man ; and then how he will "go it !" He will have carriages, and horses, and dogs, and a fine house, a well-filled cellar, and a sumptuous wardrobe ; and he will jaunt about from place to place during the whole summer—and he will entertain magnificently. What a house he will keep ! He will make everything fly right and left, without grudge and without limit. Happy as he is in his present condition, and fully satisfied as he is with everything about him, such thoughts as these make him happier still ; and from this, and

other sources of joy, he drinks such frequent and intoxicating draughts of pleasure, that he is absolutely like to leap out of his skin with delight, and would instantly knock any man down who should dare to say that this was not one of the most charming of worlds. By-and-by, however, the young gentleman becomes all at once exceedingly grave, and is detected in frequent fits of abstraction and melancholy. He begins to write verses, too, and sighs as he writes them. His desk is filled with half-finished sonnets and plaintive ballads—none of them of very high poetic merit, but all of them very sad, very tender, and very melancholy. What is the matter? What can have happened to effect this extraordinary change?—and, above all, what on earth has made him turn poet? Alas! poor youth, he no longer skips about, the liveliest of the lively. His walk is now sober and sedate, and instead of laughing joyously outright, as he used to do, he never goes beyond a faint sentimental smile. Altogether, his manner and appearance have become quite lack-a-daisical and affecting. Then what is the matter? Why, the young gentleman is in love. In no long time, the interesting swain, who is now in business for himself, is united to the object of his affections, and again he is as lively, and merry, and thoughtless as ever. No; not altogether so thoughtless, perhaps; for the furnishing of his house, and the other unavoidable expenses attendant on the happy occasion, have rather taken him aback a little; they have, in fact, given him a squeeze which has made every bone in his body ache, and have suggested to him some rather grave reflections. However, he still is a merry fellow, certainly; and what is more, he is a happy fellow.

In due time our happy man is presented with a son and heir to the fortune which papa has yet to make for him; and this occurrence—I mean the birth of

his son—greatly adds to his felicity. The baby, to be sure, requires a good many expensive little knick-knacks in the way of dress ; but he does not grudge them, not at all ; nor would he, although they were ten times more expensive—he is so delighted with the little fellow, who is his very picture ; at least every body says so, and what every body says must be true. The rather serious consideration, however, does certainly cross him now and then, that here is an additional claim upon his exertions, and these, he begins to think, must be increased to meet it ; and he does increase them cheerfully, but seriously : and now his countenance, like a barometer before rain, has fallen, though imperceptibly, another point or two towards *grave*—a slightly deeper shade of thought has settled on it, and it takes rather more now to make him laugh than it did before ; and when he does laugh, though it is sufficiently cordial and hearty still, it is not altogether so boisterous nor so long protracted as it used to be. The young gentleman, too, begins to squall a little, especially during the night ; and has already wakened papa repeatedly from a profound and refreshing sleep. But papa was not angry at the little fellow. He was not in the least displeased at being so disturbed—not he ; he was only sorry for his dear little boy, who must have been unwell ; but he really wishes he could be kept quiet at night at any rate, if at all possible, for his own sake ; not that he feels it in any way disagreeable, but the child itself must be the worse for such unseasonable squallings.

By-and-by, our happy man receives another addition to his family, and his delight is not less on this than on the former occasion ; but it is now evident that he either must increase his income by some means or other, or he must retrench in some quarter, to provide for this additional claim ; and he now begins to think very seriously what may be the best way to ac-

comply with this, and the thought adds another shade to the incipient gravity which is fast settling on his once joyful and merry countenance ; but he is by no means unhappy for all this, quite the contrary ; he is now happier than ever he was, only his happiness is more stayed, rational, and philosophical, than it was when he had nothing to think of. This is really all the difference, although you may think otherwise ; and his first-born has now become such an amusing, lively, active, funny little fellow ! He breaks every thing in the house that will break with him, and that he can lay his hands upon ; and he insists on getting upon papa's knee every morning at breakfast time. Papa himself taught him this custom, and he sometimes finds it rather annoying to be sure ; but the little fellow will not be denied. He will scream himself to death if papa does not take him ; and he is such a sagacious little rogue, that he commences screaming the moment he perceives the slightest preparatory movement for the morning's repast. What, then, can poor papa do but indulge him ? He accordingly plants the little fellow on his knee ; and as the little fellow is in high spirits, a great deal of amusement may reasonably be expected, and those who expect this are not disappointed. He commences the performances of the morning by capsizing the cream-pot ; he then proceeds to the cups, which he also capsizes one after the other, and finally breaks two of them and a saucer. Papa, who is highly tickled with these feats of dexterity and proofs of spirit, endeavours in the meantime to gulp down a mouthful or two of tea every now and then ; but to do this, he is obliged to watch the smart little fellow's motions, and to avail himself of the opportunities afforded by his attention being for the moment engaged somewhere else, for it is only then that he can with any safety make the attempt. With all papa's caution, however, he is sometimes

taken by surprise. and has the saucer of scalding tea, which he is slyly endeavouring to carry to his lips, canted over on his legs. The egg, too, which papa is attempting, with great inconvenience and labour, to discuss, is overturned on the table-cloth, and probably some tea-spoonfuls of it plastered on his light waistcoat, which he put on clean that morning; and all this, and a great deal more, is accomplished by the stout, active, restless little fists of his tormentor. Papa at length rises from table without having taken any thing to speak of; but he does not mind that, for he was not much disposed to eat at any rate, and the little fellow has afforded him an amount of amusement worth twenty breakfasts.

The squalling at night, which was formerly, even at the worst, but a solo, is now a duet, or the two perform alternately, which is rather an improvement, as there is then no cessation. No sooner, in that case, is the one done than the other strikes up, so that papa is serenaded the whole night without any intermission, and he must now just catch a sleep when he can. Still papa complains not of the annoyance. The only feeling which it excites in his parental bosom is that of compassion for the poor little sufferers; and he gets up himself two or three times in the middle of the night, in the depth of winter, throws a wrapper about him, for it is intensely cold, and gropes his way in the dark to nurse's room, to ascertain what is the matter, and to endeavour, if possible, to soothe the little squallers; but all his attempts are vain, or rather they somehow or other make things worse. The poor things scream ten times louder than before, until they at last fairly scream him out of the apartment, when he again returns to bed, wondering what can be the matter, and his teeth clattering like a pair of nut-crackers with the severity of the cold, to which he has now been exposed more than half naked

for upwards of three quarters of an hour. In despite of the squalling, however, which is still going on vigorously, and which he now considers a hopeless case, that is, beyond the reach of any thing that he can do, he gradually, though certainly unwillingly, sinks again into sleep. But he is not permitted to remain long in this happy oblivion. In about half an hour he is again awakened, but now in a very alarming manner. The squalling, instead of abating, had increased while he slept, and has now put the house in a complete uproar. The servants, roused from their beds, are running to and fro in dishabille with lighted candles, some bringing this, and some going for that. The kitchen fire is struck up; pots, pans, and kettles, are in requisition to produce instant supplies of hot water. Tubs and basins are prepared, and heaps of flannel sheets and towels are piled up around, and a regular process of bathing, fomenting, rubbing, and plunging, is commenced on the bodies of the little screamers, papa and mamma assisting in and presiding over the whole. At length, after full two hours of the most dreadful confusion, terror, and alarm, the storm ceases. The little screamers, wrapped snugly up in fresh flannels, fall into a profound sleep, and papa again retires to bed; but it is only for an hour or so, as the morning is now far advanced, and his business requires that he should be up betimes; and when he does get up for the third and last time, the first thing he does is to go and take a look of his little ones, whom he expects to find seriously ill after the horrible night that they, and he too, have spent; but papa is surprised and delighted to find that there is, after all, nothing whatever the matter with the little rogues. They are in a profound sleep, and looking as well as ever they did in their lives; and papa now begins to think that they kicked up the row merely to deprive him of his night's rest, which, it must be

confessed, they effectually did. This, however, is not the first time they have played him such a trick. He has been often so disturbed before, and, indeed, can count upon its recurrence at least thrice a-week.

Time wears on, and another and another little cherub comes to increase the felicity of the happy man. Things are now looking serious, very serious. Here is now not one, or two, or three, to provide for, but absolutely a whole colony. With each little stranger's arrival, a deeper and a deeper shade of thought settles on the countenance of the delighted papa, till he finally becomes as grave as a judge. All his fanciful juvenile anticipations of living in style are long since fled. He is getting up in years, too, and those muscles of his face, that used to play with such ready and pliant motion under the most trifling excitement, are become rigid and intractable, and he rarely now does more in the humorous way than give a very grave, dignified, and distant smile. The demands, too, which are made upon his purse are now incessant. There are the open, direct, every-day demands; but there is, besides these, a serious, a dreadful, though quiet, under-current of expenditure going on in the shape of yearly accounts. The other is small shot. These are, every one of them, forty-eight pounds at least. There is the tailor's bill, the shoemaker's bill, the milliner's bill, the baker's bill, the butcher's, the grocer's, &c. &c., all tremendously increased, and increasing. Indeed, there has been for the last ten years an annual improvement taking place on the respective amounts of each of these accounts, much more manifest than satisfactory.

In the tailor's bill, which used to be filled with items exclusively papa's, papa can now scarcely discern the trifles which are his in the immense and closely written roll which is now unfolded before him. The account now runs after this fashion:—"To

jacket and trousers for Master Robert, to ditto for Master John, to ditto for Master William, to ditto for Master Alexander, to ditto for Master Thomas ;" here, probably, some such trifle as a waistcoat or a pair of gaiters for papa occurs, and then the formidable document goes on :—" To fancy suit of green for Master Robert, trousers and mending for Master William, to making down your greatcoat for suit to Master Andrew," &c. &c. &c. In short, papa's share of the account is in about a similar proportion to the whole that the bread was to the sack in Falstaff's tavern bill.

The shoemaker's bill, again, runs exactly after the same manner. Here, Master Robert, Master John, Master William, Master Alexander, Master Andrew, and Master Thomas, figure as before ; every twentieth item only, or thereabouts, being dedicated to papa. Papa pays ungrudgingly ; but he certainly does begin to think that it is no joke, and cannot conceive how the boys contrive to wear so many shoes. Then, what a connoisseur the once gay young spark—who has seen the day when he would scarcely even name such vulgar things—has grown in brown soap and raw sugar, and all the other homely but necessary articles of domestic use. And what a formidable appearance the happy man's house now presents, compared to what it did some fifteen years ago !—dozens of pairs of shoes here, dozens of hats there ; dozens of umbrellas ; dozens of little cloaks and greatcoats ; every thing, in short, is now on a great and numerically formidable scale, and seems to be increasing in a most astounding and alarming ratio.

Papa sometimes succeeds in stealing unobserved into a retired room, and enjoying there half an hour's undisturbed perusal of the newspapers ; but it is not often, after all, that he is successful in effecting this retreat. During the first year of his married life he

was able to take a nap for an hour after dinner, on the sofa or in the easy-chair, but now all this pleasure is gone. No longer any such periods of repose. In at least seven times out of ten he is caught in the attempt at sneaking off to his own room; probably in the lobby, when the discoverer instantly seizes him by the skirts of the coat, and sends forth a shout that in a twinkling brings a dozen of his brothers and sisters to his aid. These immediately join in the attack, by flinging themselves on papa, whom they finally succeed in carrying back a prisoner to the dining-room, where they forcibly reinstate him in his easy-chair, amidst deafening shouts of triumph and rejoicing. Papa, seeing the case is hopeless, flings down the papers, and, with the best grace he can, resigns himself to his fate. The humming of a fly in the apartment would at one time have discomposed him; but he is now deaved with noise without the smallest irritation. He is tamed into submission to a thousand vagaries.

Papa had once a fine Cremona, an excellent fiddle—and it is indeed still extant in the family—but it has been converted into a go-cart, by the simple operation of removing the belly, and attaching a string to the head, and it now draws bricks and rubbish famously; at least so say little Bob and little Will, who have the merit of the discovery, and whose united ingenuity it was that changed the destiny of the instrument. Of papa's music, too, the painful and expensive collection of several years, these same ingenious and active little gentlemen have made a handsome assortment of paper caps, boats, and kites. Papa's fowling-piece, a regular Joe Manton, and a pair of very handsome pocket-pistols, of all of which papa was rather vain, have gone a similar road. The locks of both gun and pistols have been snapped to pieces, and the barrels, especially that of the fowling-

piece, were found to make a most amusing sort of pump, just by wrapping a little tow about the end of the ramrod. The butt is then plunged into a tub or other repository of water, no matter whether dirty or clean ; indeed, the dirtier the better, when it is intended to be employed against any one. The ramrod prepared, as already said, with tow at the end, is now leisurely drawn up in the barrel, and a column of water, admitted by the touch-hole, follows it. The ramrod is then suddenly and forcibly thrust down again, and this column is ejected, by the same channel by which it gained admittance, in the form of a beautiful stream about the thickness of a quill, and may be directed against any obnoxious person within the distance of ten yards, at pleasure, and affords capital fun. Well, papa's Joe Manton was thus employed by the youngsters for three or four months before he found it out ; and when he did find it out, he was very angry. But what could he do ? It was too late ; the gun, which cost him fifteen guineas, was not worth sixpence by the time he made the discovery.

Papa must not now leave a single article for which he has any regard, or which he has any wish to preserve, but under lock and key. If he do, he will repent it ; and this he knows, by sad experience, full well. If it *will* tear, it will be torn to pieces long before he returns ; and if it will not tear, it will surely burn or break ; and these various modes of destruction can all be tried in their turns. The day was when papa could lay any thing down any where in his own house with the utmost safety, and feel quite assured of finding it unharmed on his return ; but not now. There are no fewer than seven or eight active little imps watching his every motion, and looking with eager eyes on every thing he does, and most especially on every thing he takes from his pocket, and ready, the moment his back is turned, to

pounce upon the unprotected article, to test its capabilities, and prove its durability. Papa dare not now leave an article exposed for a minute in any part of the house. Papa, indeed, has a room which he calls his own, but with what propriety he himself best knows ; for, notwithstanding all his edicts, injunctions, and threats, he finds it impossible to keep it clear of his tormentors for ten minutes together. On some pretence or other they find their way in, and, do what he can, he is never without at least half a dozen of them, so that either reading or writing is entirely out of the question. He has here abundance of writing materials, however ; but what a condition they are in ! His quills and pens are split up to the feather, and crushed and flattened. His ink-bottle is filled with rubbish. His paper is torn, blotted, dirtied, and creased. Three-fourths of his wafers, too, are missing, and the other fourth is crumbled into fragments. His sealing-wax is broken into bits a quarter of an inch long. His blotting-paper is saturated with ink, the bottle having been overturned on it ; and the shining dust for sprinkling wet writing is now a solid lump of paste, some one of the active little fellows having poured a quantity of water amongst it, and thereafter stirred it about with the ivory folder, which itself now boasts of two nicely serrated edges, an effect which another of the active little fellows produced by hacking it deliberately and judiciously with a table-knife.

HAT-HUNTS.

HAT-HUNTING, or chasing, (in windy weather, of course,) has never, we think, obtained that consideration, nor been looked on in that philosophical spirit, to which its merits as a minor recreation, so far as regards the on-looker, entitles it. For ourselves, there are not many things we like better to see than a good, well-contested, well-prolonged, hat-hunt or chase. To have the sport in perfection, the wind must, of course, be high, very high, and all the better if the huntsman be a rather fat and rather elderly gentleman, with a bald head ; possessing, however, sufficient activity of limb to induce him to start in pursuit—for if he does not, of course, there can be little or no fun. The circumstances of the hat being new, and the street very dirty—say, three to four inches deep of mud,—are further improvements. Indeed, they are all but indispensable to what we would call a complete and highly-finished exhibition of the hat-hunt. Perfection in this exhibition is attained when the recreant *tile* is full of papers, and when these—as, indeed, they are sure to do—fly out in half-dozens with every revolution ; some springing up into the air, others flying off horizontally in fifty different directions at once, and thus distracting the attention of the huntsman.

So far as mere movement is concerned, it does not, perhaps, make much difference whether the hat be new or old, the street dirty or clean ; but that the hat should be new, and the street should be dirty, is desirable, on the amiable principle of the more mischievous the better sport.

The reason why we, who affect to be something of connoisseurs in the recreation of hat-hunting, prefer

stout elderly gentlemen as exhibitors, is this:—the most critical and most interesting point in the hat-chase is when the huntsman, after a long run, watching his opportunity, pounces on the hat. Now, if he be a young, supple fellow, he performs the operation with an ease and celerity that at once accomplish the object—he seizes the hat, and the sport is at an end. Whereas, if he be elderly, and consequently a little stiff about the joints, he stoops with such difficulty, that the hat—if it be anything of a spirited hat at all—can easily, and almost always does, start off on a new and livelier career than before, just at the moment the old gentleman is about to clutch it. The sport is thus prolonged *ad infinitum*. The bald head, too,—but this, we confess, is a little hard-hearted—looks well in the case of a vigorous and earnest huntsman, in the act of pursuing his game along the centre of a crowded street; it heightens the general effect of the exhibition greatly.

But it is not to the huntsman alone that the whole interest of the exhibition is confined; the hat comes in for a large share of it. Hats, in truth, in such circumstances, become really a curious subject of study—they become, as it were, instinct with life, and assume the features and characteristics of vitality.

So viewed, it will be found that the prevailing disposition of a recreant scraper that has escaped from its owner's head, is that of sly, mischievous cunning. When it goes off first, it goes off with a sudden but hearty and honest whirl; but watch its subsequent progress, and you will soon perceive the spirit that is within it.

Having made a rush of a hundred yards or so in a straight line, and with great regularity of movement, it suddenly bolts up against a wall, and there reposes, apparently as quiet and harmless as when on the head of its owner. But let any one approach it, especially

the latter, and off it goes again with greater speed than before, just at the moment it is about to be caught—a moment for which it has quite evidently been watching. Sometimes, too, it squats down with the same treacherous appearance of a willingness to allow itself to be taken, right in the mud over which it has been a moment before rolling with mischievous delight ; stopping suddenly in mid career, for the express purpose—as no reasonable person can doubt—of deceiving its pursuers into a belief that it has repented its conduct, and is willing to atone for it by submitting to capture.

Another very common trick of the fugitive scraper is to affect to be rolling leisurely along, and thus to tempt you into the belief of its being an easy seizure. Deceived by this appearance, you pursue with a corresponding moderation of pace. The cunning scraper gradually, and almost imperceptibly, increases its speed ; you perceive it, and increase yours. It gets on faster and faster ; you do the same, until both have attained their maximum of velocity ; the scraper, however, invariably keeping the lead.

As a proof of the mischievous disposition of hats who have thrown off all allegiance in this lawless way, it may be observed, that if there be a cart or carriage in the way, you may depend on it that it will, even at the extra trouble of going considerably out of its line of flight, clap itself either right before one of the wheels, or get in amongst the horse's feet, to be crushed or trampled into irremediable shapelessness. If, too, there be one spot in the street more dirty or more wet than another, as sure as fate will it take it, and go right through it. A favourite feat of the fugitive scraper is to roll through one or more of those accumulations, or little seas of mud, that the scavenger's industry has collected on either side of the street. We have seen a hat take the run of

these with astonishing precision and singular judgment.

Yet, however common hat-hunts or chases may be in windy weather, a first-rate one—one calculated in every way to give entire satisfaction to the beholder—is more rare than might be supposed by those who have paid no great attention to the subject.

One of the best hat-hunts we recollect ever to have seen occurred last winter on the Mound at Edinburgh; an excellent place, by-the-way, for seeing sport of this kind; for the wind rushing through the gullet on its western side, and straitened in its course by the Castle-rock, sweeps it with the violence of a tornado. Circumstances were eminently favourable; the wind was high, the gentleman fat, and the hat an uncommonly spirited one.

On first starting from his head, it careered directly against the wall on the east side, which it struck with a crack and a rebound that left no doubt on the minds of the beholders of its crown having been knocked in. For a moment the hat seemed stunned by the blow, and lay quietly on the footpath. Deceived by its quiescence, its owner approached it with a smile, and was about to grasp it, when (as hats always do in such circumstances) off it started, and away down the Mound it went, in a style that called forth the rapturous admiration of the bystanders, who expressed their feelings by sundry shouts of exultation. Away after it went the “stout gentleman,” both gentleman and hat soon giving evidence of excellent bottom. On starting on its new career, the hat made directly for some iron railings, and every one thought that there the chase must end; but on approaching within a few yards, it suddenly took a westerly direction, skimming along parallel to the rails until it had cleared

the obstruction, when off at a tangent it went down the opening on the west side ; the gentleman still pursuing, but becoming evidently much blown. Having reached Prince's Street, the hat took along that street in a lateral direction, and ended by crossing the flag-stones, and coming slap against the window of an area or sunk shop, shivering a four-and-sixpenny pane to atoms. Here it lay down quite exhausted ; it could do no more, but it had done well : and here it was picked up by its breathless owner, in what condition we leave the reader to judge—the day being a very wet one, and the streets consequently very dirty.

It was altogether one of the finest things of the kind we ever saw ; the general effect of the scene being greatly improved by the attendance on the bald-headed gentleman, the pursuer, of a highly excited and greatly delighted mob, who cheered him and the hat alternately with great vigour and cordiality. The finale, too, let us remark, was something quite new : the smashing of the glass making a splendid finish.

N. B.—Reader, never stop a hat in such circumstances—the hat, of course, not being yours. Never be aiding or abetting in any such mar-sport proceeding ; let it take its swing. We always do, and so will every true lover of the sport.

JOHN.

If you happened to be sitting in the drawing-room of some venerable gentlewoman, with your back to the door, and heard her addressing one behind you by the

pithy emphatic name of JOHN, you would be at no loss to know the exact appearance of the individual so addressed, without either turning to inspect him, or glancing at his reflection in the mirror over the fireplace. You would know—know by intuition—that John was a decent old serving-man of some sixty-two years of age, with a well-preserved old face and greyish hair, a clean blue-striped jacket, and an eye that spoke unutterable reverence for “the family.” A neat orderly man is John, and rich withal, being understood to have made five hundred pounds during the fifty years he has spent in his present place, all of which lies snug in the three per cents. He is not so much a servant, for all his respect for his superiors, as he is their old friend and confidant. He has not been asked whether he designs to remain over next term for the last four-and-thirty years, and he never will be asked again. In fact, he is a fixture in the house, and it is far more likely that his master or mistress would think of leaving it, than that he would do so. They have not a secret which John does not wot of, and they seldom resolve upon taking any important step, such as removing from town to country, or from country to town, or buying a new horse, or inviting a party to dinner, without consulting him. He is now serving the second generation, and there is not a grown man or woman in the whole circle of their kindred whom he has not carried on his back, and obliged occasionally with nice things over and above their proper allowances. In the course of such a long period of service, he has seen many pleasant doings in the family, and as many melancholy changes. He has seen strapping lads go out as captains, thinking to take the world by storm, and yet reported in the list of slain within the year. He has seen blooming girls married away to apparent happiness, and yet sink before the noon of

their day. The young, the gay, the lovely, have one after another left the social circle, and now his master and mistress are a frail and solitary couple, while their house, no more ringing with the sounds of a frank and generous hospitality, has assumed a quiet almost melancholy. Their fortune, too, has rather declined, and they are not persons of so much consequence as they once were. Yet John, who has rejoiced on all occasions of their rejoicing, and saddened at all times of their mourning, and would have thought himself no true vassal if he had not done so, stands up still for the honour of the house. He may be brought, with a good deal of hesitation and evident anguish at the vitals, to confess that there are wealthier families in the country; but that any can be more respectable, he will never allow. On that point he asserts their pretensions with a vehemence and triumph that plainly tell how anxious he is to mask their weakness on the other ground. Touching their actual interests, he is every bit as zealous. He would not allow any other servant than himself to waste so much as even a crust of their bread. Try to dig any of the family secrets out of John—some little mishaps or mistakes—some small sins of omission or commission. Try to get a little touch of scandal out of him, the least bit of backbiting. He tell any thing to the discredit of the family!—he blab a family secret! Not for any earthly consideration.

The truth is, John is *one* of the family. He has been so long separated from his own kindred and the rest of the world, and is so totally unconscious of any interest of his own that is not also that of his master, that he cannot be considered as a distinct individual. There is a tradition in the kitchen, descended through a long series of maids comparatively short time in place, that John was once in love. He had some thoughts, it is

said, of a pretty lady's-maid that came to the house with her mistress upon a visit. But the thing blew by, and John moved on as he was. There is now no chance of his ever marrying: even if he were capable of leaving his place, he could never do such a thing; he has been in the hands of nephews and nieces these dozen years. Yet, devoted as he is to his good old master and mistress, John has a way of his own, which they must needs observe. He must not be hastily or sharply spoken to; neither must he be hurried in any duty. If pressed too much, John stands at bay, and gives battle immediately; urging him only makes him the slower. His superiors, observing this, have long ceased to attempt getting any thing more quickly than he likes. It is not that he designedly delays, from a desire of punishing them for their eagerness; he is incapable of such malice. It is because he deems it necessary to let the duty stand till he shows how it cannot be done sooner, or till he has defended himself from the charge of being tardy—processes in general not very speedy of dispatch. To this and all his other ways his friends have long been accustomed; and, accordingly, they never think of either chiding him, or of trying to alter in any minute particular the mode in which he chooses to do his duty. John does every thing exactly when and how he pleases. He has a way of his own.

By virtue of his ancient privileges, John furthermore assumes a right to act and speak in many matters beyond his original commission. He absorbs the whole patronage of the family, so far as tradesmen are concerned; orders what he likes to be done about the house, short of taking down stone-and-lime walls; and has it in his power either to advance or altogether to repress any charitable suit that may be brought before the family. In all these matters, he knows no law but his own sense of propriety; and

though this may be liable to err occasionally, it makes no difference. Whatever he does is done so purely through good and honest intents, that his master easily overlooks his mistakes.

In any other person, John's conduct occasionally towards his master or mistress would be reckoned rather impertinent perhaps ; but there is a bluntness, a simplicity, such an utter and palpable absence of all intention to offend in John's manner in these instances of apparent irreverence towards them, that it is absolutely impossible to get angry with him. If they complain to John that dinner is late in being served up, John will not hesitate to tell them that they have had it as soon as he got it to give them, and that if they want dinner sooner, they must tell the cook so. Or he may insist on it that it was as soon served up to-day as it was yesterday ; and may add, that he thought it odd they said nothing about its lateness then. Or if his master bids him bring up a bottle of a certain wine from a particular bin—we shall suppose it to be a rare and expensive wine, and, further, that there is no company present—John will start no objection to the order at the time ; he will not say a word, but proceed quietly to the cellar as ordered, and will bring a bottle of wine. This he will deliberately decant, still without making any remark, and place it coolly on the table before his master. On tasting it, however, the latter turns round to John with a look of surprise and inquiry, and says, "John, this is not the wine I desired you to bring up." John drily acknowledges the fact, and very unconcernedly adds, that he thought the wine he brought might do well enough for that evening, as the other was getting low, and had better be reserved, he conceived, for particular occasions. There is too much reason and good sense here to be resisted, whatever opinion may be entertained of the propriety of its com-

ing from John, and John's master accordingly submits with the best grace he can, possibly only saying, "Ah! perhaps, John, you are right."

John is remarkable, amongst other things, for the freedom with which he speaks his mind on all occasions to both master and mistress. When giving them advice, a duty which he frequently takes upon himself without being asked, he does not mince matters with them, but fairly tells them what he thinks without much regarding what effect it may have. He has a hundred times told them concerning things which they had done or intended to do, that they were the most foolish things he ever heard of in his life—perfectly absurd—never heard of any persons in their senses doing such ridiculous things—wonders that any person could think of it. This, it will be allowed, is pretty candid for a person in John's situation, but John thinks nothing of it, and is quite innocent of all consciousness of its impropriety. He sees none of its features but one, and that is its good intention. Nor are his master or mistress themselves willing to recognise any other. They see, however uncouth or indecorous it may appear, that it is not only well, but kindly meant; that it is the advice or remonstrance, as the case may be, of an affectionate though humble friend, who has their honour and their interests warmly at heart.

Notwithstanding John's familiarity and bluntness—the first, the result of long and faithful services; the second, of natural constitution—there is a sense of propriety about him that keeps him always strictly within the limits of his sphere, with respect to his master and mistress, in the presence of strangers. He presumes, it is true, but his presumption has nothing in it like the vulgar and impertinent intrusion of what we are told belongs to American servants. John's presumption is only that which might be safely resorted

to by an intimate friend of the family. Even when he takes the liberty of chatting, it is generally after the ice has been broken by his master or mistress. The word "indeed," said in a tone of slight surprise or inquiry, will, for instance, be as good to him as a decided wish to open a talk. Nevertheless, it must be noted, that it is only amongst themselves, and when none but themselves are present, that John indulges in the liberty-and-equality system above alluded to. When strangers are present, and more especially on occasions when parties are given in the house, which is now, however, very seldom, John is a completely changed man. He is then silent, obedient, and unobtrusive; maintains a proper distance, and listens to and obeys the commands of his master and mistress with the most profound respect and the greatest promptitude. His youth seems renewed. He starts no objections, offers no resistance to any order, whatever it may be, and obtrudes no uncalled-for explanations. John knows his province and his duty, and keeps the one and performs the other; yet he knows how to indemnify himself for all this penance when the guests are gone. John is a sober man on the whole—a perfectly sober man; and was never known, except on two or three very particular occasions, to have gone any way wrong as to liquor; but what with one thing and another on this occasion, odds and ends, drops and dribbles, left in bottles and glasses, which it would have been a pity to have thrown out, John *is* a very slight thing tozy, and has, therefore, altogether, under these circumstances, adding the quiet repose of his full chubby countenance, the calmness of his eye, and the rotundity of his figure, an appearance of great comfort and contentment in mind and body.

John has not now much to do; for the family, as already said, has dwindled down to two or three persons, and they are all getting old as well as John him-

self; and like himself, too, they are all methodical; and thus the motions of master, mistress, and man, are as harmonious as those of the spheres. John's duty, therefore, consists in one unvaried routine of extremely limited variety, and through this he goes daily with the calm deliberation, unerring precision, and easy, comfortable air, induced by the practice of upwards of twenty years, it being that time since the family sunk into its present quiet and monotonous system of procedure. At nine o'clock every morning precisely, John walks into the breakfast parlour with a tablecloth under his arm, spreads it slowly and deliberately, and with the same cautious deliberation puts down one after another the various articles which go to furnish forth the breakfast table, taking copious and long-drawn pinches of snuff at frequent intervals during the progress of his operations; and besides all this, occasionally improving his mind, and adding to his stock of knowledge, by reading any scraps of printed paper that may catch his eye about the room, or by turning over any books that may happen to present themselves on the side-tables; such little agreeable recreations as these being all included in the business of preparing for the morning's repast. At nine precisely, as we have said, John lays the cloth for breakfast, and at a quarter past ten he proceeds to remove it; and as he shakes it into the area over the rail at the door, he most likely takes the opportunity of making a good-humoured observation to one of the servants next house, who may chance to be out on a similar errand. He also takes this opportunity of looking up and down the street, to see if he can spy any gossip within hail; and before he re-enters the domicile, fully makes up his mind as to the state of the weather, and whether it will be a proper going-out day for his master and mistress. At five he makes similar preparations for dinner; and at half-

past six, he in a similar way clears the table ; and so on of all the other meals of the day. But in the intervals, there being few persons to attend to, few wants to supply, and little or no derangement of the household articles, John has not a hand's turn to do. In a good day, therefore, John may be seen standing bareheaded, for hours of a forenoon, at the door, the latter flung wide open behind him, looking complacently around him, or gazing with a sort of subdued or passive interest on the passers-by ; exhibiting, in his sleek, well-conditioned person, and untroubled ancient countenance, the very picture of ease, comfort, and contentment. Such is JOHN.

AN ESSAY ON SCARECROWS.

SCARECROWS are distinguished from each other in two ways, in particular—first by their dress, and next by certain leading characteristics, physically expressed, but which may be morally understood. Both the first and last depend, as many things else in this world do, on circumstances over which the individuals themselves have no control. In general, it will be found—in so far, at least, as apparel goes—that the Scarecrow takes exactly after the family to which he belongs :—that is to say, if it happen that there be a great number of boys in the family, then the family Scarecrows will, for the most part, be found to be youngsters about thirteen or fourteen years of age, with enormously thick legs, and a most formidable breech. Then there is a little ragged waistcoat, a little tattered blue jacket, either tightly buttoned, even to the bursting of the button-holes, or more

airily expanded by the thin, outstretched arms, through which a staff has been thrust to keep them in their proper positions.—Next comes a blue bonnet, which has been the foot-ball of the village school for full twelve months before it was placed in the wardrobe of the Scarecrow ; and this completes the figure, which, however, on the whole, has rather a decent appearance. If there be no boys in the family, then the family Scarecrow is, in all probability, an elderly sedate-looking farmer—not, indeed, in the best condition as to externals, but, on the whole, rather respectable. In this case, the Scarecrow wears knee-breeches ; presenting, in consequence, it must be confessed, shanks of rather attenuated dimensions ; for neither straw nor any other material can be well made available here, in giving the proper thickness of limb. A *hodden* grey coat, minus all the buttons, a flaming red waistcoat, and a monstrosly broad flat bonnet, complete the adult Scarecrow.

It must be remarked, however, that the thinness of shank which has just been hinted at is amply compensated by an enormous thickness of body, and a pair of prodigiously broad shoulders. One defect only can be detected in the entire figure. This is in the arms. The stick by which they are extended being rather short, the cuffs of the coat fall abruptly down for want of due support, and thus greatly detract from the Scarecrow's otherwise unique and interesting appearance.

We proceed now to the Gentleman, or Aristocratic Scarecrow. This personage is to be found on the lands of country squires ; and as he, like all the rest, takes after the family to which he belongs, his appearance is really genteel, if not, indeed, absolutely fashionable. The nether-man of this worthy is projected into a pair of excellent pantaloons, a little out at the seat, perhaps, (as may be guessed by the awk-

ward protrusion behind of a handful of the material of which he is composed, but which might not have been discovered but for this circumstance, and the accident of the wind now and then blowing aside the tails of his coat.) On his head he sports a shattered grey beaver, and on his feet a pair of worn-out Wellingtons. His middle boasts a very tolerable black waistcoat; and a surtout, minus one of the skirts, and a good deal dilapidated under the arms, completes his equipment. The otherwise eminently genteel appearance of this figure, however, is often greatly impaired by some instance of bad taste on the part of his constructor—such as encompassing his middle (to keep the surtout together, I presume) by a great clumsy, frizzled, straw-rope. Much better to have used screwers, or to have begirt him with a piece of cord, which would have been invisible at a little distance. Still, let this villanous taste exercise itself as it may upon him, there is that mark of the gentleman about him, that air *distingué*, which neither straw, ropes, nor any other such barbarous addition to his outer man, can ever wholly obliterate.

We come now to the third and last class. These are what may be called the Raggamuffin Scarecrows. They generally belong to poor villagers who have half acres of potatoes in the neighbourhood of the little country towns in which they reside. The appearance of this personage, I must confess, notwithstanding all my reverence for his kind, is very far from being respectable—at least not what a fastidious world would call so. He is generally either a squat, shapeless little figure, or a tall, gaunt one, without either soul or body. In the former case, the tails of his clumsy, ill-made, blue or black coat are trailing on the ground, a circumstance which gives him a most grotesque and ungainly outline. He has, besides, scarcely any *thing* or things that can be called legs, and his belly

is as flat and lank as if he had not eaten a morsel for a twelvemonth. The state of his apparel, too, is decidedly bad, very bad. The coat is in a most wretched condition ; it is torn to tatters, and is only kept in that shape which entitles it to the name of a coat at all by the sheer force of ingenuity, which has pinned and tagged the rebellious parts together, and thus kept them, by downright violence, as near to their proper and original positions as possible. Still, with all this, it must be acknowledged that the garment is by no means such a one as any person of correct taste would envy. The hat, again—But how shall I describe the hat ? How shall I describe that which *beggars* description ? I will not attempt it. Language is unequal to it. Suffice it, then, to say, that it really and truly was once a hat. The reader's imagination must do the rest.

It must not be thought, however, that the Ragga-muffin Scarecrow, because somewhat shabby in his apparel, and poor in circumstances, is therefore melancholy. By no means ; he is, perhaps, the liveliest of the whole race. It would do any man's heart good to see how gaily his *tatter-wallays* flutter in the breeze ; he positively looks, and I have no doubt really is, one of the merriest creatures in existence—a proof that happiness has no exclusive predilection for sound coats and breeches.

Having spoken thus fully and particularly of the externals of the family of Scarecrows, we bestow a word or two on their characters and dispositions, which are as various as their shapes, or the colours and cuts of their garments.

Some of the Scarecrow race, then, have a forlorn and melancholy air, as if they were doing penance for some heinous crime, or as if they were repining at the hard fate which had doomed them to a life of solitude and inactivity.

The sadness of others, again, though seemingly not less oppressive, is of a more animated—perhaps, also, of a more sentimental character, and appears to indicate feelings of regret for that society from which they are banished, and for those social joys which they fear they must share no more. All of these cast a wilful look on the passer-by ; and if he be a man of any feeling, he cannot but sympathise with their sorrow, nor refuse a sigh to their silent, but melancholy appeal.

Others of the Scarecrow family, again, have a self-sufficient air, and look upon you, you would be apt to imagine, with rather a supercilious expression of countenance. These evidently conceive that they are doing mighty things, and that, moreover, their appearance is highly interesting and prepossessing. In short, they are gentlemen who seem to have a very high opinion of themselves, and a proportionably low one of every body else.

There are others, again, of a grave, sedate, and dignified aspect. These take things coolly and calmly, and mind nobody's business but their own. One would, indeed, sometimes think that they pursued their present calling rather from a sense of duty than from inclination, and that they looked upon the scaring away of crows and sparrows as rather a frivolous, if not degrading employment. But this may be only imaginary ; and I would not wish to do them an injustice by insisting on it.

We come now to the humorous rogues. These are amongst the ragged corps ; but, though the most grotesque, they are also the most facetious-looking fellows in existence. All alive in their tatters ; their hats knowingly placed on one side ; and their whole bodies “going-it” merrily to jig time. These rascals seem to have a happy life of it, and, to all appearance, are not only contented, but absolutely delighted, with their

situation. I have often positively envied them, rags and all, and would not have cared to have taken a week of the potatoe-field along with them. I feel certain the merry rogues would have been delightful company.

As a contrast to the comic gentleman, there is the sour, sulky-looking fellow, with his battered, brimless hat pulled down over his sullen brows, as if he meditated some horrid crime—a dangerous neighbour, in short, one whom you would not care to meet with in a dark night, and on a lonely road. There is not a bit of life or humour about him ; on the contrary, nothing but scowling looks and sinister motions. For months together, he doggedly maintains the same position, and wears the same monotonous and forbidding aspect ; and yet, though he imagines himself, no doubt, a very formidable personage, I never could perceive that either the crows or sparrows cared a farthing more for him than for any of his brethren. There is no character in the world about this fellow ; nothing to excite either our sympathy or risibility. He is immensely disagreeable, and this is nearly all that can be said about him.

The next part of this interesting subject that engrosses our attention is the art of constructing the Scarecrow ; for it is an art, and one of no mean rank, nor of easy acquirement. Neither Chantry nor Roubilliac could, with all their skill in statuary, construct a good Scarecrow. They would make a thing that would look very well, perhaps, in a niche of a hall or gallery, or in a dining-room or parlour, but which would have no effect whatever where effect is wanted—across a ten-acre potatoe-field—the true circumstances in which to test the excellencies of your Scarecrow.

The statuaries alluded to would proceed *secundem artem*. They would carefully study proportion. They would dispose, arrange, and divide with mathemati-

cal precision. They would labour the minutiae, and they would fail. Now, your *effective* Scarecrow is the creation of a fine, bold, dashing, daring genius, unfettered by rule—a genius that, with fearless and masterly vigour, plants a leg here and another there, roughly and roundly, and which manfully takes its chance of results, and these (fortune favouring the brave) are sure to be, in such a case—if not positively always, at least nine times out of ten—highly favourable. The constructor of the Scarecrow must, in short, “snatch his graces,” for they are nearly all “beyond the reach of art.” He must proceed somewhat after the free, intrepid, sweeping, slashing manner of the Panoramic Painter. A leg must be made at a single blow, as it were; and be it known that a single inch one way or another will entirely alter the whole character and expression of the figure. It is for the man of genius to hit the happy medium desired. At one sweep must the arms be extended, and with one vigorous thrust must the stout body be placed in its natural position.

With regard to the garments, again, there must be here no tame nicety of fitting, buttoning, and so forth. All must be free and easy—tag, rag, and bob-tail. And they must be thrown on, too, with that careless, unstudied elegance, from which flowing robes derive so much of their grace and beauty. In short, the whole figure must be dashed off with a bold, unhesitating, and rapid hand, otherwise it will be tame, flat, and spiritless, without character, and without expression.

We being amateur practitioners in the interesting art alluded to, flatter ourselves that we can produce a pretty spirited Scarecrow; but we are sorry we can convey no directions to the reader through the medium of written rules; for it is one of those arts of which the actual practice must be seen to be under-

stood. We may mention, however, for the benefit of those who cannot conveniently make excursions into the country for the purpose of studying models there, that some very excellent living specimens of the human kind may be met with on the streets of every town, from which the young artist may work, not only with perfect safety, but with great advantage ; for they are often more decidedly frightful—the great object wanted—than their brethren in the fields.

PROVINCIAL RIVALRIES IN TRADE.

THERE are not many things, we think, more edifying, more amusingly absurd, than a war of advertisements between two trading establishments. The utter indifference which one feels regarding their miserablesquabbles contrasting so entertainingly with the earnestness of the disputants, who write as if the eyes of the world were on them, and as if that world took the deepest interest in their disputes. It may be a little wicked or so, but we read these hostile tirades with great delight ; and when we see one whose tone gives promise of eliciting a reply, look out for that reply with nearly as much curiosity and interest as we have looked for the appearance of a new “Waverley,” in the palmy days of Scott. The amusing qualities which generally characterize these entertaining effusions are constant attempts at saying severe and cutting things, but which, in fact, are—at least in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred—the most stupid and pointless things imaginable, but more amusing still. It is clear, from the general tenor of such advertisements as those we speak of, that the

writers think themselves amazingly clever fellows, and that they are planting dreadful hits on the characters of their antagonists. There is a pert, simpering confidence about the articles themselves, that leaves you in no doubt that such is the case. Another amusing point is the struggle to be concise in saying these cutting things; for there is a powerful antidote to discursiveness operating in such cases—every word has to be paid for. The great object, then, is concentration—to squeeze the galling insinuation, or biting sarcasm, into the smallest possible space; and the efforts to accomplish this are often entertainingly obvious. You see plainly that the struggle has been a desperate one, and that the writer's ingenuity has been sorely tried to pack the desiderated quantity of abuse or recrimination within the narrowest limits capable of holding it.

Belligerent advertisers, it may be observed, are greatly given to the use of *italics*. These are, of course, meant to give additional pungency to the severe things, but are as often employed to supply their place; the writer in such case perceiving that his words have no edge of their own, endeavours to give them one by putting them in the little sloping type. The styles adopted by hostile advertisers are of various character; sometimes it is the extremely civil and candid, accompanied by a calm, confident appeal to the public as to the justice of the advertiser's cause; sometimes it is the ironically jocular, or the delicately satirical: but the terms generally adopted are the severe and cutting, rendered more keen by the occasional use, as already hinted, of the pointed *italic*, which is intended to sink deep into the soul of the audacious offender. Occasionally, the advertisement recriminatory exhibits something of a classical or learned complexion. In such cases, some of the severer hits are conveyed in mysterious scraps

of Latin ; this occurs generally where the offended and highly indignant advertiser happens to have a "learned clerk" to assist him, who furnishes the quotation, and rough-draughts the declaration of war, or indignant reply, as the case may be. The advertiser is at first a little startled at the Latin, but on its being translated to him by the learned writer, he is delighted with it, rubs his hands with great glee, and exclaims, "Capital ! that's a poser—they cannot touch that." The "learned clerk" says nothing, but he smiles complacently, and looks uncommonly clever.

The quotation in English is much in vogue with warring advertisers ; these they fire off at each other with well-studied aim, and, as they evidently believe, with murderous effect. The morelofty-minded quote Shakspeare ; we have seen the immortal bard lugged in to aid the cause of a coffee-grinder. The fierce and terrible quote Byron. In the latter case, the quotation is darkly mysterious ; in the former sublimely severe.

It is rather a curious sort of thing to mark the progress of a war of advertisements between two parties—say, a couple of high-spirited grocers. At first their wiles at each other are very slight affairs, and are probably confined within half-a-dozen lines or so ; but by-and-by the ire of the belligerents waxes hotter and hotter, and with this increasing heat the angry advertisements gradually lengthen, until the combatants at last begin to hurl entire columns at each other's heads. This is what may be called heavy firing—cannonading ; the shorter articles with which the war commenced being musketry. The latter is usually maintained with great spirit by both sides—shot answering shot in rapid succession ; the former, as might be expected, is of a less lively

character, but more tremendous in its effects; it comes with solemn boom at lengthened intervals.

Sometimes it is difficult, or rather impossible, to perceive the cause of offence in the advertisement in which a war has originated; you can see nothing in it that you could suppose applicable to any particular individual; but, lo! all of a sudden up starts an indignant rival in trade, who declares that *he* has been hit, or at least aimed at, and forthwith concocts a rejoinder, which in due time appears. The rejoinder is, of course, replied to, and the war is commenced. There are other advertisements, again, that bear on the face of them a hostile intent—that exhibit, unequivocally, a design to demolish somebody; although you may not probably be able to make out who that somebody is.

We have elsewhere said, that we like much to meet with a promising advertisement; that is, one that has some provocatives in it, and is likely to elicit a reply from some quarter or other. Here, now, is one of this kind—one from which we should expect some amusement:—

“ Turkey Figs !

“ The Genuine Turkey Fig Warehouse,

“ No. 119, Fig Lane.

“ The advertiser, who has been long celebrated for this delicious fruit, begs to inform his friends, and the public generally, that he has just received to hand one of the most superb lots of figs that ever entered his premises. The fruit is in magnificent condition, and, having been bought under unprecedentedly advantageous circumstances, will be sold at lower rates, taking quality into account, than was ever known in the trade. The advertiser is aware that there are *some people* in his line who name

lower prices for their fruit than he does ; but let those who are gulled by this bait mark the description of goods that are put into their hands ; if they do, they will hardly think that they have bought cheap. Both as regards quality and price, the advertiser *bids defiance to competition*.

“ JOSEPH JENKINS.”

We have said, that this is an advertisement from which we should expect some amusement. The italics look exceedingly promising, and we have no doubt will quickly bring out somebody—we shall have the *some people* on the field immediately. Let us watch the next paper. Here it is ; and, lo ! here is also the very thing we looked for :—

“ Turkey Figs !

“ The *True* Turkey Fig Warehouse,

“ No. 97, Macaroni Place.

“ Jolly and Jumper.

“ From the tenor of an advertisement that appeared in yesterday's paper, it might be inferred that *the person* who inserted that advertisement was the *only* one in the trade who kept a first-rate article in the Turkey fig way. Now, the subscribers, Messrs Jumper and Jolly, do not think they arrogate too much when they claim *at least* an equal degree of celebrity for their figs with *any other person* in the trade, let *that person* be who he may. The subscribers might, perhaps, take yet higher ground, but this *for the present* they decline. Messrs Jolly and Jumper, *who pay for their figs*, do not *defy* competition, like *certain* people. They *court* it, because they feel that such competition will have the effect only of showing the public more clearly the advantage of dealing with them for the article in question.”

Aha, Mr Jenkins! this is severe, cool, and cutting. The italics look particularly ugly. But what can Messrs Jolly and Jumper mean by saying, they *pay* for their figs? It is to be presumed they do. Quite unnecessary to tell us this, one would think, and so pointedly too. We doubt there is more in the matter than meets the eye. Can Messrs Jolly and Jumper possibly mean to insinuate that Mr Jenkins does not pay for *his* figs? Eh? Shocking!

But we need not annoy ourselves with conjectures on this delicate and perplexing subject; let us rather wait, with what patience we can, for the next paper, where, if Mr Jenkins be the man of spirit we take him to be, we will have something that will rather astonish Messrs Jolly and Jumper. The matter, it is clear, cannot possibly remain where it is. Ah, here is the *next* paper. Let us run our eye over the advertisement columns. "House to Let." Hem! "Wants a Place." "Household Furniture." Ah! here it is at last!

"Turkey Figs!

"The Genuine Turkey Fig Warehouse,

"No. 119, Fig Lane.

"Joseph Jenkins.

"Who steals my purse steals trash,"

&c. &c. &c. &c.

"The immortal bard has well expressed the sentiment which would be every honest man's, were he called on to weigh his reputation against his wealth. Of the latter, the advertiser has little to boast; but of the former he trusts he has, and will always have, a worthy share, notwithstanding the attempts of *those who envy him* to rob him of it. In an advertisement which appeared on the 19th instant, by a

Messrs Jolly and Jumper, and which was apparently elicited by an advertisement of the present advertiser's that appeared on the 18th, these *excellent* and *worthy* gentlemen say :—' The subscribers, who *pay* for their figs,' &c. ; meaning thereby, as no reasonable person can doubt, that *I*, the present advertiser, do not pay for *my* figs, but obtain them by dishonest means. So infamous an insinuation as this the advertiser need not otherwise repudiate, than by an appeal to the character he has always borne ; and this he now does triumphantly. Messrs Jolly and Jumper call public attention to their late importation of figs. On this subject the advertiser could 'a tale unfold' that would harrow up the souls of every honest man in the trade, and make a too-confiding public hold up their heads in horror, and exclaim, 'Can men do such things?' But the advertiser refrains. Let Messrs Jolly and Jumper, however, take care how they further provoke him. As to the general quality of Messrs Jolly and Jumper's figs, the advertiser *says* nothing ; this is a subject on which the public have long since made up their minds, but whether for the *interest* of these *worthy* persons, they themselves best know.

"With regard to the quality of the *advertiser's* figs, he says nothing either ; it is unnecessary. This, however, he may and will say, that *he never buys damaged goods*, and that *he does not sweep the market of its refuse*, repack, and vamp it up, so as to catch and deceive the eye. 'Let the galled jade wince.'

"JOSEPH JENKINS."

"N.B.—J. J. again respectfully calls public attention to his last importation of figs, which, for quality and lowness of price, have never been equalled."

Well done, Jenkins ! Capital ! You have taken the shine completely out of Messrs Jolly and Jum-

per; but are not you just a trifle too severe or so—eh? Your italics cut savagely; that wipe about the refuse of the market, repacking, vamping, &c. &c., is a floorer. But here come Jolly and Jumper again.

“Turkey Figs!

“The *only* True Turkey Fig Warehouse,

“No. 97, Macaroni Place.

“Jolly and Jumper.

“In reference to Mr Jenkins’ last advertisement, Messrs Jolly and Jumper beg to intimate to *that gentleman*, that they will notice his slanderous insinuations in the only way in which they can *condescend* to do so. They have handed the matter over to their solicitors, who will forthwith call upon Mr Jenkins to substantiate his *infamous allegations* in a court of justice; the only place where questions which have attracted so large a share of public attention ought to be discussed.

“Messrs Jolly and Jumper avail themselves of this opportunity to intimate to the public, that they have just received to hand *another* prime lot of *genuine* Turkey figs; not the *refuse* of the market, as a *certain* person had the *politeness* to say, but the *best* the market could produce.

“JOLLY AND JUMPER.”

Aha! Jenkins, here is rather a scrape; matters have taken an alarming turn. What say you, Mr Jenkins, to the threat of carrying you into court? Does not that alarm you? High-spirited as you certainly are, we should fear that threat will bring you to your marrow-bones. Not a bit of it—Jenkins is not the man to be so easily put down.

“Turkey Figs!
“The Genuine Turkey Fig Warehouse,
“No. 119, Fig Lane.
“Joseph Jenkins.

“When people talk of carrying what they are pleased to consider cases of defamation into court, they should take care that their characters will bear handling; otherwise, they may chance to bring them out more damaged than they took them in. Messrs Jolly and Jumper, in threatening Mr Jenkins with an action of damages, have anticipated only by a single day a proceeding which Mr Jenkins had determined on adopting towards them; he has *now* put the matter between him and these persons into the hands of his solicitors, Messrs Short and Sharpe, who will do what is necessary therein.

“JOSEPH JENKINS.”

So, so, here they are at last!—the spirited advertisers, Messrs Jenkins, Jolly, and Jumper, all landed in a court of law. The *italics* have done it.

THE PUBLIC OFFICE.

SOME snug billets about these establishments. Some nice little quiet pasturages where elderly gentlemen may graze undisturbed, and grow sleek and fat, and, finally, slip comfortably into their graves. But did the reader never observe that there exists, in nine cases out of ten, a certain quiet, composed, but inveterate hatred between the subordinates in public offices; a cordial detestation of each other? The

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reader must have remarked it, we think, but whether he has or not, there can be no doubt of the fact, taken as a general one.

This mutual dislike, however, be it observed, is almost exclusively confined to the elderly clerks—to the hard-featured, cleanly little old gentleman with the bald head—to the round-faced old gentleman with the brown scratch wig—and to the long-faced old gentleman in the flaxen peruke. It is to these worthies, then, that the official sort of hatred of which we would speak is especially confined. At least, it is in their case alone that it assumes the ludicrous character under which we feel disposed to contemplate it. The younger clerks, if they entertain any grudge at each other, express it openly, which is in no way amusing; but the old boys carry it under a calm exterior, that, when viewed aright, renders it sufficiently comical.

With them it is a deep-seated, but cold and passionless dislike, which no possible occurrence can ever remove, or even in the smallest degree abate. It is fixed and transfused into their system, and has become a part of their nature.

Yet the old boys never quarrel outright; never bully one another; never commit any overt act of hostility. Their warfare is conducted on a quiet, orderly principle—its existence being made manifest only by snappish queries and still more snappish answers.

It is seldom, however, that they speak to each other at all. Not oftener than they can possibly help. They will not open their lips to each other for weeks, if they can by any means avoid it.

Heaven knows what ails the old fellows at one another, what can be the cause of that mortal grudge and hatred that they entertain for each other. It is impossible to tell; for, in truth, they cannot tell

themselves. They just hate one another ; and that is all that can be said about it.

Yet they have been twenty years together, probably much longer ; a circumstance, one would think, which should have inspired them with some liking for each other, if not positive regard. Quite the contrary, however. It has had the effect only of making them hate each other the more. The longer they have been together the more cordial is their detestation of one another. This is almost invariably the case.

If you would have a little more amusement with the old gentlemen's antipathies than what is afforded by what may be called its official exhibition, take an opportunity of having a little private conversation with one of them, and turn that conversation on the subject of his colleagues ; and if you manage the thing adroitly, you may calculate on being presented with a very full and very entertaining view of his hatred of his official brethren.

Begin with remarking how arduous his duties are. This is a favourite theme with all who are well paid, and who have little or nothing to do—with all who hold snug sinecure situations. Never mind how glaringly inapplicable the remark may be ; your sincerity will never be doubted for a moment ; for the sinecurist always thinks himself one of the worst used, hardest wrought, and worst paid men in existence. He will, therefore, swallow your sympathy at once and without hesitation.

" Bless me, Mr Wetherley, what a deal you have to do here ! "

With a faint smile of conscious martyrdom meekly borne, " Ah ! my dear sir, you do not know the half of it. Toiled like a galley-slave, my dear sir. Not a moment to breathe. Half-past nine in the morning till half-past three, never an instant away from

that desk. It would kill an elephant. If I had not the constitution of a horse I could not stand it."

"Your colleagues seem to take it easy enough, however. *They* do not seem to oppress themselves with work. Why do not they relieve you of part of the toil?"

"They!" pronounced in a tone of inexpressible contempt. "Ay, they certainly do take it easy enough. Were we *all* to do so, I do not know what would become of the business. Not I, I am sure."

"Yet that old gentleman at the upper end of the desk there seems to go through his work pretty cleverly."

"Humph! mere child's play, sir. I'd get a boy of twelve to do all that he does. Never here on any day till a quarter to ten, and away again as the clock strikes three. *He* takes it easy enough, to be sure. But it is the way everywhere; the willing horse gets the most work."

"He seems a pleasant old gentleman, too."

"Pleasant! Hah, I only wish you had a week of him, and you would find out whether he is pleasant or not. Why, sir, there is not, I will venture to say, a more disobliging man in all Christendom than is Mr Dickenson there. No, not one. Why, sir, it was but the other day that I asked him,—and it was the first favour I had asked him for the last dozen years,—I asked him, I say, the other day, to lend me his penknife a moment, as I had left my own at home; and what do you think he said? Why, he said he would not, that he had not penknives to lend to every body who chose to ask them. There is a pretty fellow for you. There is one to get on with, eh? That man, sir, would not step an inch out of his way to oblige his father. That he would not."

"Bad enough, bad enough, indeed, Mr Wetherley. How, then, do you get on with the other gen-

tleman—the long-faced gentleman in the flaxen wig?”

“Six and half a dozen.” Here a rapid series of significant nods and very hard winks, meant to intimate to you that the elderly gentleman in the flaxen wig is no better than he should be. In discussing this colleague’s character, however, there is an affectation of candour that is particularly amusing.

“Why, as to Mr Waghorn, sir, I have nothing to say against Mr Waghorn; nothing. And I suppose he has nothing to say against me. At least, I should fancy not. But some people have queer ways of doing things, and do queer things, too, sometimes. They know themselves best what these things are. For my part, I say nothing about them. There is such a thing as underhand dealing in the world, however. I presume it cannot be denied.”

No. It certainly cannot. Neither can it be denied, we think, that Mr Wetherley meant to insinuate that his colleague, Mr Waghorn, was one of those underhand dealers, and, therefore, not a man to ride the ford with. He, in fact, hates him, and that is the short and the long of it.

Now, the best of the joke is, that each of these worthy officials say precisely the same thing of each other. Mr Dickenson speaks of Mr Wetherley exactly as Mr Wetherley has spoken of him. Mr Waghorn, again, does the same thing. So there is no love lost between them. They all cordially hate and detest one another.

THE PARTICULAR MAN.

I AM what my friends and acquaintances call a "particular man," and my own family an "exceedingly particular man;" expressions which, I have every reason to believe, mean, in the one case, that I am a troublesome, and, in the other, a *very* troublesome, man. Now, I think, and so must every reasonable person, I should imagine, who shall be informed of the true state of the case, that there was never a charge so unfounded, nor abuse so unmerited.

In place of being troublesome to others, the truth is, that others are exceedingly troublesome to me, as I hope presently to show to the entire satisfaction of every unprejudiced person who chooses to read this article. The annoyances which I am made to suffer proceed, on the part of my annoyers, from a want of that little attention to minutiae, and a disregard of that order and regularity in small matters, the observance of which affords the only small chance we have of enjoying the least portion of happiness in this provoking world. The real truth, then, in my case is, that I am merely a regular man—a lover of method, of order, of propriety—one who likes to see every thing in its own place, and every thing done at the proper time, and in the proper way: and it is for this, forsooth, that I am considered a troublesome man; for I insist upon it, that that is the true meaning of the word "particular," as it is applied to me by my family and my friends.

It is singular that, although all I say or do, in my own house for instance, with regard to ordering and arranging little domestic matters, is meant, and admirably calculated, too, for the ease and comfort of those around me, as well as for my own, I can never prevail on any one member of my family to think so.

No effort of mine can induce them to consult their own happiness by attending to that order and regularity at which I have hinted above. Nay, they seem to take a wicked pleasure in thwarting me, as well in the most trifling matters as in those of greater importance. No man has ever fought a more intrepid or a more pertinacious fight than I have done for the good of others ; yet what a thankless task has been mine ! For twenty years—this time has elapsed since I first took up house—have I struggled against a desperate spirit of opposition, but, I must confess, to very little purpose. At this day I am as far, to all appearance, from the attainment of my object, order and method, as when I first began to introduce, or rather to attempt to introduce, my system. Indeed, there seems to be a conspiracy in my own house against me, a deep laid and widely ramified plot, extending through every member of my family, from the little errand girl up to my own wife, including, of course, sons and daughters, cook, chamber and children's maid. The reader may conceive what a battle this is to fight—one to a dozen, and all active and indefatigable in their several departments in the one great object of annoying and provoking me by the most marked neglect of, and most profound contempt for, those little ordinances, rules, and observances, which I would impose, and without which no family can possibly enjoy any thing like comfort. In short, I am kept in a constant fever by the incessant violation, by some individual or other of my household, of some part or other of the domestic code which I have introduced, or rather would introduce if I could, into my family for its better and happier government.

A few instances, however, of these rules, and of their infractions, will give a better idea of the rebellious spirit with which I have to contend, and of the ingratitude with which my endeavours to secure

the peace and happiness of those around me are treated, than mere general declamation can possibly convey.

It is one of my standing orders, and one the observance of which has been carefully and repeatedly enjoined by me on every member of my family, conjunctly and severally, always to place the tongs on the right hand side of the grate ; that is, the right, relative to a person standing opposite it. The advantages and conveniency of this simple disposition of that useful implement are so obvious, that I need not trouble myself, I conceive, to point them out. It is the natural position. You seize them at once, and without any trouble. They are then placed exactly to your hand. Now, could there be any thing more easy than the observance of this simple rule ? Nothing. Then, what can be the reason that I almost invariably find them on the left ? The reason is plain. It is to annoy me. There cannot possibly be any other motive on the part of those who put them there ; for it would be quite as easy to place them on the right hand side of the grate as on the left. This fact is incontrovertible. Here, then, is a glaring instance of that spirit of opposition, that defiance of all method and order, of which I have, and so justly I think, to complain.

On this point, because it is one of such easy observance, as I said before, and at the same time one of such manifest conveniency, I am particularly rigid, and have dismissed three servants successively for the contempt of my authority which they evinced by neglecting to attend to it, although apprised of the consequences of such neglect at the time they were engaged. I must, however, state, in justice to a very deserving girl, that the maid we have just now is much more attentive to my orders, in the particular just mentioned, than any of her predecessors, and has placed the tongs on the left side of the grate in three instances only, during the whole of the last fort-

night. I can speak positively to this, for I keep a memorandum of every dereliction of duty, and find this moment, by reference to my note-book, that the instances of neglect alluded to occurred on the 3d, the 7th, and the 12th instant. I must also add, that, in one of these cases, viz. the second, I am by no means quite certain that the fault was the girl's. She alleges that it was my son Tom who misplaced the tongs; and from what transpired on the inquiry which I set on foot regarding it, I am inclined to believe her, although certainly, I must say, she had nothing like direct or positive evidence to prove the truth of her assertion. Under these circumstances, I have placed a cross at the entry of the 7th, in order to denote that it is a doubtful case, and to remind me that the girl is entitled to the benefit of that doubt on account of her general good conduct.

Similar to the case of the tongs is that of slippers, shoes, and boots. These, I presume, every thinking and reasonable person will allow, ought always to be placed before the wearer in the same order in which they are to be worn; that is, the right slipper, shoe, or boot, on the right, and the left ditto on the left. The necessity of attending to this natural disposition of such articles of dress is also so palpable, that I need not dilate upon it.

Nevertheless, will it be believed, that, although I am daily, nay, almost hourly, endeavouring to impress this amongst other things on my servants, I have had my boots placed twice before me in reversed order during the last three weeks, and my slippers four times! Luckily I discovered the errors in all the instances before I put them on, and thus saved myself a world of trouble and suffering. No thanks, however, to my servants in the case of the boots, nor to my wife in the case of the slippers.

There is another thing on which I insist—(indeed,

I insist on a great many things, all of them, however, reasonable, and am, therefore, only stating a few by way of specimen, to show with what justice I have to complain of the captious spirit which opposes me, and to show how very undeservedly the epithet of particular or troublesome has been applied to me)—and it is this: I hold that so soon as a candle is set in the candlestick, it ought invariably to be lighted immediately, and be left to burn for the space of five minutes or so, and be then extinguished, not, however, by the snuffers, but by simply blowing it out. When this is done, the candle will ignite instantly on being retouched, and in a second after emit its full volume of light. If this is not done, and it is placed before you with all its unshorn honours on its head in the shape of a long superfluous loop of wick, (this is when the candles are not moulds,) the trouble you are put to is very great; you must coax and cut, and cut and coax again, and support and adjust the flaming top, which is now sending forth a blaze of light far beyond its real means, and equally beyond your power to control, until you have succeeded in bringing it within its natural limits—a circumstance which imposes upon you at least five minutes of the most annoying and provoking exertion. If the candle be a moulded candle, you have, indeed, no superfluous wick to combat; but then you have to go on touching and retouching the miserable atom of flame to entice it to burn, yourself all the while sitting or standing in a most irritating sort of twilight, neither dark nor light.

Again, if the rule to light candles before being brought to table, no matter whether moulds or dips, be observed, and yet they be extinguished by means of the snuffers, or still worse, by finger and thumb, as some lazy and dirtily inclined servants will sometimes do, then the rule had almost better not be ob-

served at all ; for in such a case the wick is caked, and, when cool, becomes as hard and compact as a piece of iron ; and there is then no lighting of it at all, at least not without great trouble, and a great waste of time. Under all these annoyances I suffer severely, notwithstanding my repeated edicts, all enjoining a careful observance of such proceedings as would entirely obviate them, not one of which, however, is ever attended to.

Is this being a trifling or particular man ? I should think not. Nay, I am convinced, that, were I to go on, I would remove the absurd and ridiculous imputation farther and farther from me with every step I advanced, and every new position or complaint I brought forward. But although I could, if I chose, very easily fill a newspaper with such well-founded complaints on my part, and gross violations of the simplest and most beneficial observances on the part of others, I do not think it necessary to multiply instances, those I have given being quite enough, I conceive, for effecting the object I had in view in writing this paper—namely, to show how unfairly I am dealt with when I am called a particular man.

There are some small matters, however, regarding my own peculiar likings and dislikings, for which I do not insist upon general sympathy, but which are so inoffensive in their effects, so little troublesome to others, and, withal, so reasonable in themselves, that I think I may as well mention some of them, just to show on what slight grounds a man may be accused of being a “particular” man.

I cannot endure the slightest approximation to hardness in my eggs, still less can I suffer them when they are too soft ; yet, I do not know how it is, whether at home or abroad, I am sure to get them either half boiled, merely tepid, or as hard as golf-balls, and, of course, in either case I cannot touch them.

I detest underdone meat ; yet I never see a roast, either at my own table or at those of any of my friends, that is not as red as a carrot ; and so raw, that even an Abyssinian or New Zealander would loathe the very sight of it. I sometimes think that this is done either on purpose to deprive me of my dinner, or from an erroneous impression that I am a cannibal, one who delights in sucking blood, and in devouring uncooked animal food ; and I may as well take this opportunity of undeceiving my friends, if they have taken this notion into their heads. I declare, then, upon honour, that I am not a cannibal, and that I have no predilection whatever for raw flesh.

I have, in common with many people, a great dislike of fresh butter—a dislike which is only equalled by my abhorrence of butter which is too salt. Neither of these can I touch. Powdered butter, eight days in salt—exactly eight days—is the thing for me. It has then a delightful nutty taste, salt just perceptible. I wonder, indeed, how any body can endure butter in any other condition. But, alas, alas, how rarely is it to be had in this palmy state ! Who will take the trouble of adjusting it with precision ? for three days in or over is ruin to it, to the taste of a person of acute perception. Yet the thing could be very easily done if people were in the least disposed to pay attention to one's comforts. I think, for my part, that I have met with butter in the exact state in which it ought to be, only four times in the course of my life—once at Cheltenham, in the year 1811 ; again at York, in 1816 ; again at Tobermory, in the island of Mull, in 1821 ; and the last time in my own house, on the morning of the 17th of October 1824. Never before nor since have I ever been able to command it even at my own table. They often try, however, to impose upon me at home, by asserting—and this they do, one and all of them, roundly and boldly—that the

butter has been prepared exactly according to my rules, and that it is precisely of the required age; but I am too sharp for them, and never fail to detect the fraud. I charge them with the imposition. They deny it. I get into a passion, and insist upon their acknowledging it, protesting, at the same time, (observe, it is my wife and daughters I am taking to task in this case,) that not one of them shall have a stitch of new clothes from me unless they give in. This threat has invariably the desired effect; a confession of guilt is made, and I—say no more about it.

I hope it will now be allowed that I used no exaggerated language, and made no vain boast, when I stated that no man has ever fought a more intrepid or a more pertinacious fight than I have done. I am, however, thanks be to my stars! still both able and willing to carry on the war; and I am determined to do it, notwithstanding the formidable odds arrayed against me.

THE PARTICULAR MAN'S WIFE.*

THE article entitled "The Particular Man," which appeared in one of our late publications, and was the composition of a literary associate, has elicited a letter from the wife of the author, to which, upon the fair principle of "hear the other side," we cannot refuse insertion. It is as follows:—

"I have observed," thus commences our afflicted correspondent, "that my very particular, or rather,

* It has not been thought worth while to alter the phraseology which adapted this paper for appearance in Chambers's Journal, in which it was, together with the preceding article, originally published.

as he styles himself, very troublesome husband, has thought proper to expose his weaknesses to the world through the medium of your Journal. You must understand, gentlemen, that we take in your work regularly, on account of the many excellent advices and amusing stories which it contains, and still more particularly by reason of its costing so little. Last Saturday morning, my husband having got hold of the sheet before any other body, I was presently much surprised to find him commence smiling and nodding to himself, with an air of confident complacency, as much as to say, 'Ay, this will surprise them a little, I think; this will show them who is right and who is wrong;' and he finally laid down the paper upon the table with a flourish, rose from his seat slowly and with great dignity of manner, and stalked out of the room without saying a word, and as grave as a Turk. At first I could not comprehend the meaning of his conduct, for it was very marked and unusual; but, on his departure, I flew to the Journal, and the whole mystery was soon explained. Then I beheld my gentleman's communication; for though the paper itself bears no positive evidence of the fact, I have no doubt of its being his; no one else could possibly have written it. And what barefaced impudence it was of him, of all men on earth, to write and publish such an article! But you and all the world must see, even from his own statement of the case, which he thinks so conclusive in his favour, that he is one of the most troublesome men alive. I wish, with all my heart, that any one who doubts this had but a fortnight's trial of him. He a lover of order and regularity, of peace, and quietness, and comfort, and so forth! Why, perhaps he is; but if so, he takes a very odd way of procuring it, and that is by putting every thing and every body about him in confusion, and keeping us all in hot water from morning to

night. Why, gentlemen, we have not a moment's peace or comfort with him. He is constantly telling us, it is true, that it is order and regularity he is aiming at, and peace and comfort to all around him ; but if you just saw the trouble he puts us to, the noise and racket he keeps up in the house when he is in it, shifting this, pulling and hauling at that, knocking, turning, and adjusting, placing and replacing all manner of things from the cellar to the garret, you would find it very difficult to believe him.

But he has taken very good care, in the representation of his case transmitted to you, bad as he certainly, though I believe unconsciously, has made it, to give you only one side of the picture, and that of course the most favourable. He has, moreover, forgotten to enumerate the one-hundredth part of the frivolous observances he requires of us, and of the still more frivolous prejudices and predilections with which he annoys us. He has not told you that he will take the pet, and remain in it for a week, if he finds the firescreen shifted the tenth part of an inch from the precise position in which he has placed it, which, he says, ought to be at an angle of 25 degrees with the fender ; or if he finds his spoon placed across the edge of his plate, instead of being placed alongside it ; or if the cork in the whisky-bottle happen to have been thrust a little too tightly in, or if it happen not to have been thrust tightly enough in ; or if any other than cream-coloured ware is placed before him ; or if the piece of bread by the side of his plate is not of the particular size, shape, and description, which he likes ; or what a passion he will get into if the girl put a single tea-spoonful more water into his tumbler during dinner than a certain fixed quantity, which is regulated by a mark or scratch made on the glass with a diamond ; or of the exclamations of wrath in which he indulges if it is not this identical graduated tum-

bler which is placed before him. Not a word of all this has he told you—not a syllable. No, for well did he know that he dare not, otherwise his pathetic appeal to public sympathy would have been laughed at; and yet these are not a tithe of the peculiarities by which he contrives to make and to keep both himself and us miserable.

He has, amongst other things, told you a long story about butter; and he evidently thinks that he will make your heart bleed within you at the recital of his sufferings in relation to that article. Now, gentlemen, what think you are the facts in this particular case? Why, the facts are, and myself and daughters are willing to take our oaths upon it, that there has not been an inch of butter placed before the unconscionable and unreasonable man for the last twelve-months that has not been in the exact state in which he says he likes it. But he won't believe it; and we are now determined, seeing that all our labour is in vain, to give ourselves no more trouble about his butter; and my own opinion is, and it is that of my daughters also, that we will come better on with him than we did before, in so far at least as this article is concerned.

He tells you that he makes us confess that we have been deceiving him, and chuckles over his dexterity in eliciting this confession; but I suppose I need scarcely say that we are glad to do this for peace-sake, and because we know, that, if we did not plead guilty, we should not, as he himself says, get a single new article of dress from him. Now, our last confession got us shawls apiece; and seeing that this is the case, we really find that it would not be convenient to stand on a trifle of conscience. But I must not conceal from you that we really have had occasionally some compunctions. We think, however, we will get rid of these by actually deceiving him,

when we can confess without any violation of truth, though my youngest daughter, who is a shrewd girl for her age, says she is sure her father will never say a word against the butter when it is *not* of the description he wants. We are resolved, however, to try the experiment.

He says he is determined to carry on the war, and I have no doubt he will be as good as his word. He has already carried it on for twenty years, to my sad experience, and I can perceive no abatement in the vigour with which he still prosecutes it. No human being but those who live with him can have any idea of the misery he keeps us in, or of the unhappiness he causes us, by the fretfulness and fickleness of his disposition, affected as it is by every trifling circumstance. Nor is his own case a whit better. The poor man has absolutely surrounded himself with his miseries. He can neither turn to the right nor to the left, without treading, as it were, upon a serpent, and being stung by it—sometimes in the shape of a carelessly-snuffed candle, as he calls it; sometimes by a pair of wrong placed tongs, (see his own communication on this subject;) sometimes by a blue plate, (you will recollect he cannot bear blue plates—he abhors them—his must be, as I told you before, a cream-coloured one;) sometimes by this, and sometimes by that—so that his own life, as well as ours, is one of continued annoyance and suffering.

And then, again, the fickleness of his temper, irritated as it is by these trifles, I declare there is no enduring it. There will he enter the house—say at dinner-time, for instance—all smirks and smiles together, and in the best mood possible. We meet him at the door—I mean my daughters and myself—when, lo! all in a moment he discovers that the mat on which he is about to wipe his shoes is laid awry on the lobby; that it does not lie parallel, as

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he calls it, to the wall. Then there's an instant end to all his smirks and smiles. He flings down his hat and umbrella, or stick, in a passion, furiously adjusts the unlucky mat, and struts fuming and fretting into the dining-room. Here he finds those confounded tongs on the left side of the grate ; then he discovers that the candles on the sideboard have not been burnt down to the exact point at which he desires them ; then the roast is overdone, or it is underdone, or it is neither, or it is both ; and all is misery, and vexation, and unhappiness, for the rest of the evening. Not a word of all or any part of this either has he told you. No, not he. Oh, no ; he's a poor persecuted man—an innocent, suffering, uncomplaining martyr to the negligence of those around him. An ill-used man he is, no doubt of it. Seriously absurd as it may appear, this is really what he thinks. I know it.

In the mornings, too, when he first gets up, he is generally in tolerably good humour, and this lasts till he finds, when he is about to prepare to shave, that his razors, of which he has seven, all inscribed on the handles with the names of the different days of the week, and nicely arranged in a corresponding order, so that he each day takes up and uses the razor bearing the name of that day—until he finds, I say, that by some unlucky interference of the girl's, or somebody else, that their order has been deranged ; that Saturday comes after Tuesday ; and Wednesday, by this cutlery almanack, appears to be the last day of the week. The moment the discovery is made, his good humour is gone. He rings the bell furiously for the girl ; charges her with being the cause of the fearful anachronisms in his razor-box ; shaves himself in the sulkiest mood imaginable ; descends to the breakfast parlour, finds the eggs too hard or too soft ; and, finally, walks off in a passion, slamming

the door after him with a violence that makes the whole house shake. And yet this man has the effrontery to ask the world—and to ask it, too, in a manner which implies an assurance of a negative, nay, which defies them to do otherwise—If he is a particular man! I do not think impudence could go further.

You may believe it is not pleasant to me to say these harsh things of my husband, who is withal a good, kind-hearted man, but I am compelled to it in self-defence; for the world might think, from his statement of the case, that I was to blame, and that I was wanting in my duty in not seeing that matters were regulated in his house agreeably to his wishes. Now, so far from this being the case, not only myself, but every member of my family, sons, daughters, and servants, do all in their power to meet his wishes, and to comply with his various, I should rather say endless, whimsies; but it is impossible not only to obey, but even to recollect the one-half of them. Magliabecchi himself could not do it. His rules, orders, &c., if printed, would be like Blackstone's Commentaries, or the Codes of Justinian. No human precaution, or foresight, or assiduity, could obviate the tenth part of his miseries. Night and day we run to serve him, and anxiously do we strive to have every thing as he desires it; but it is all in vain.

The moment we see him approaching the house, every one of us flies to discharge some particular duty connected with his peculiarities. One adjusts the fire-screen as near to the desired angle as possible; another looks out for the graduated tumbler; a third puts the tongs on the right side of the grate; a fourth docks and snibs his bread to the proper dimensions. In short, we may all be seen on such occasions scampering up and down the house like as many bedlamites, while every countenance expresses hurry,

anxiety, and terror ; and when, as I said before, we think every thing has been done which he can possibly expect or require of us, lo and behold ! my gentleman is not five minutes in the house when he points out, to the consternation of us all, that we have either left a thousand things undone, or have done a thousand things too many.

It is impossible to say when all this will end ; but from what he says at the conclusion of his communication to you, it does not seem to me that that desirable event is likely to happen soon. In the meantime, I suppose we must just submit, and that with the best grace we can. I have succeeded, however, as I hope, in satisfying you that no blame attaches to me ; and if I have done this, the only object I had in view in writing is accomplished."

BORROWERS.

THIS is a very large, but we are not quite sure if we can add, very reputable class. They will doubtless call themselves so, however ; but as the point is one that admits of dispute, and as we never meddle with disputed points, we shall say nothing on the subject, either for or against, but content ourselves with saying they are a numerous class ; a fact which admits, we presume, of no question.

On closely analysing the great body of borrowers, we find it naturally subdividing itself into various smaller bodies ; in other words, we find that the great class of borrowers is made up of different minor classes, all regulated and actuated, indeed, by one common principle, but palpably marked and readily distinguishable from each other.

There is the bold borrower, the sneaking borrower, the occasional borrower, the habit-and-repute borrower, (to use a Scotch law phrase,) and the deep-designing borrower. All these are the natural enemies of the rich man's purse : polite and civil enemies they are, it is true, but all the more dangerous on this account. You can guard against and repel open attacks on your purse, but where is your defence against the smooth tongue and the fair promise ? where your defence against the insidious advances of the well-trained, well-practised borrower ?

Borrowers, as we have said, are divided into five principal classes, and into as many heads shall we divide our paper, beginning with the

Bold Borrower.—This person flies at high game only ; fifties and hundreds, (pounds, of course, meant,) rarely going below twenty ; this is about his minimum. The general bearing of the bold borrower is in keeping with the first part of the title bestowed on him ; his manner is bluff, fearless, and outspoken ; he carries things with a high hand. This person conducts his operations thus :—He comes up to you with a shout, slaps you on the shoulder, and in a confident, free-and-easy way, tells you he is short of cash to-day, and would be obliged to you for the loan of a couple of hundreds for a week or so. You think a moment, and while you are thinking he whistles and twirls his watch-chain, and without the slightest symptom of embarrassment awaits your decision. Taken at unawares by the confident bearing of the bold borrower, and in fact half-afraid to refuse him, you—although, perhaps, with no very great alacrity—produce the dust. He takes it up with the *nonchalance* of a tax-collector, counts it to the measure of an opera tune which he whistles, thrusts it into his pocket under cover of a laugh, got up for the purpose through the medium of some capital joke which he tells you,

and finally walks off with his prize, slamming the doors boldly behind him as he goes. The sound strikes to your heart, for you hear in it—at least you cannot help thinking so—the knell of your two hundred pounds. The consequence of this feeling is, that you begin to look rather foolish, as a man always does immediately after having done a foolish thing. There is a mingled air of abstraction, perplexity, and regret, on your dismal countenance, that is particularly edifying, and not a little absurd. You *now* begin to wonder what the mischief tempted you to give the man the two hundred pounds, and conclude by laying it down as a rule, that you will never lend another son of Adam a shilling. If you be a philosopher, you merely take snuff, and say it cannot be helped.

The bold borrower carries his point by storm, by sudden surprisals, and a fearless bearing: the *Sneaking Borrower* proceeds differently. He, again, approaches you with a quiet stealthy step and hanging look. He wants you to read misery in his face, in order to prepare you for the tale of woe he is about to pour into your ear. With the same lugubrious look, he begins telling you of an extreme and unexpected difficulty in which he finds himself involved, and from which you alone can, or at least will, (as he thinks,) relieve him. If he finds this touch at the pathetic threatening to fail, he superadds a little moisture of the eye, and this does for you; this you cannot withstand. You ask the amount required—you hand it out. The sneaker takes it with a lachrymose visage, counts it with a sigh, puts it in his pocket with a groan, squeezes your hand—for his heart is too full to permit him to speak, and glides away. Now this is gone money, irretrievably gone; for the borrower on the pathetic principle never repays. He always cries when you ask him, and meets

every request with a fresh catalogue of miseries ; so that, what with his dismal face, his crying, and his misfortunes, the case is quite hopeless. It is a case in which you cannot find it in your heart to insist.

The *Occasional Borrower*, although not particularly marked any way, is rather a dangerous customer ; for, not suspecting him of the failing, he is apt to take you at unawares, and is in general so respectable a sort of person, that you cannot well refuse him. The occasional borrower, then, we would say, is decidedly more to be dreaded than the

Habit-and-Repute Borrower ;—for, being quite aware of this gentleman's propensity, you are always on your guard against him, and have laid down an abiding rule that you will never lend him a sixpence. On this rule, therefore, you can fall back at a moment's notice ; you are thus, as it were, always in a state of preparation, so that he can at no time take you by surprise. One excellent thing, however, there is in the character of the habit-and-repute borrower—you can refuse him without offending him ; he never dreams of taking a denial amiss, so you need have no hesitation in favouring him with one at any time. This amiable equanimity of temper he derives from the frequency of the rebuffs he meets with, which have the effect of blunting his sensibilities, and rendering him perfectly callous to such treatment. He thinks nothing of it ; if he did, he could never get on ; for it would so damp and dishearten him, that he could make no attempts on any other occasion. As it is, he comes as fresh to a fiftieth application, after forty-nine have failed, as he does to the first. The habit-and-repute borrower, in short, can stand without wincing, without the smallest discomposure, any amount of rebuff, whether it be in the shape of delicate evasion or flat denial.

There is, however, a very formidable quality con-

nected with, and arising from, the stoicism of the accustomed borrower. He can, and does, return again and again to the charge, however often repelled; so that there is no safety with him. Though refused to-day, he may be at you to-morrow, and that, too, with as much freshness and energy of application as if nothing had happened. But you must keep steady; there is no other way for it; and this you may the more readily do, that, as we said before, you need entertain no apprehension of offending him, however often you refuse him.

We now come to the last, but by far the most terrible and dangerous of all the borrowing tribe. This is the *Deep-Designing Borrower*—the cool, cautious, wary practitioner. There is no guarding against this formidable person, so well laid and so admirably concealed are his plans. He neither pounces on his prey like the bold borrower, who, after all, frequently misses his object by an over-confidence; nor steals on it like the sneaking borrower; he proceeds after a way of his own. The process is expensive, but he makes it pay in the end, and it is all but infallible in its results. Having fixed his eye upon—in other words, having selected his man, the designing borrower begins preparing him for the grand catastrophe by a series of hospitalities, knowing that nothing links a man's heart to you like frequent eating and drinking with him—particularly when you pay the expense. On this principle, then, he dines and sups him throughout the necessary length of time; thus feeding him, as it were, for the slaughter, and pleasantly does the unsuspecting victim swallow the treacherous viands. Minor civilities, too, of all sorts, he heaps on him in unsparing profusion. He sends him presents of game; now and then a dozen or two of choice wine; procures tickets of admission for his family into exclusive places; proposes little parties of pleasure, ar-

ranges their details, and crowns all by paying their cost ; does, in short, a thousand things to bind the affections of his victim to him by the ties of gratitude.

In this course he will persevere for months, if necessary, without approaching in the most remote manner the great object at which he is aiming ; his patience and perseverance in this way are astonishing. But mark, the longer he delays, and the larger his outlay, the more heavily he lays on when he comes to pounce ; and in a mercantile point of view, it is but reasonable and fair it should be so.

In the meantime, little does the poor unconscious victim know what is awaiting him ; little does he dream that every kindness done him is but another turn of the cord which is gently, but securely, being coiled around him, to end at last in binding him hand and foot, and presenting him, a completely trussed and unresisting victim, to the insidious spoiler. But so cautiously is this operation performed, and so pleasantly ticklish is the handling of the operator, that the victim perceives nothing of the danger till the crisis has arrived. When it does, the borrower descends gently on his prey ; it is done during the discussion of a bottle of wine, the way having been prepared, during two or three previous days, by hints and insinuations. At length, however, the blow is struck—a request is fairly tabled for the loan of a thousand pounds. The victim, in the fulness of his gratitude for past kindnesses, takes him by the hand, gives it a friendly squeeze, and says, “ You shall have it.”

It is all right then—the thing is done ; trouble and outlay are all repaid, and a trifle over and above by way of commission.

OLD GENTLEMEN WHO HAVE NOTHING PARTICULAR TO DO.

WE have now resided for various lengths of time, in the course of our lives, in two or three different towns, and in each and all of them have observed a particular class of persons who, we do not think, have, as a class, been in any way specially noticed before. They are not numerous, and it is on this account, perhaps, that they have never attracted any particular attention, or been thought of as a distinct species. Every one knows the *individuals*, perfectly, but not as a body, nor as a marked and separate class.

The old gentlemen who have nothing particular to do—indeed, for the most part, nothing at all to do—are, generally, hale, sturdy *carles*, who have somehow or other scraped together a competency, and who have cut and run from the world, in so far as regards dealing with it. They now neither buy nor sell. We have an idea that our friends are mostly stout, corpulent, little men; but do not insist on this as being a universal characteristic. They are, however, invariably, healthy old chaps, amazingly active, and constantly on the move.

Their status in society seems to be that of the middle class. They are always respectably dressed, that is, comfortably. Just such a dress as gives you an idea of competence. But, in some cases, their circumstances may pass this limit, although not indicated by their outward appearance; for they have come to that time of life when comfort is more consulted than show; and when, therefore, externals can no longer be depended on as criteria. Since you can judge nothing of an old boy's circumstances by his appearance, provided his habiliments be anything decent at all, and even where they are not, you cannot

safely come to any conclusion regarding the state of his exchequer.

In the case of the gentlemen who have nothing particular to do, we have been often struck with the strong family resemblance between them. We do not, however, so much mean individually as collectively, between the veteran corps of one place and the veteran corps of another. Taking them in a lump in this way, the resemblance is amazing; not only in habits and practice, but even in general personal appearance.

Our old friends are great walkers, and being eminently gregarious, are always found herding together in little squads of three or four, but perhaps oftener in couples, or three at the utmost. In their walks, however, as very likely in everything else, they are systematic and methodical.

In fine weather, they generally meet—say, about eleven in the forenoon—and stroll into the country, returning about two or three. We have met them often.

It must not be supposed, however, notwithstanding this association, that there is anything like real friendship between the old boys—that they have the smallest regard for one another. Not they. They do not care a twopence for each other beyond the conveniency of companionship. Their affections have long since dried up, and they have now little of either sympathy or love for any human being, excepting, perhaps, a lingering instinctive regard for their more immediate kindred. Thus, although they walk out together, they may be often seen strolling along at wide distances from each other, and on their return severally popping off to their various homes, without any previous warning to their associates, or anything like a formal parting. There is no shaking of hands—no bidding each other good-bye; nothing of the

kind. They cut round corners, and up lanes, with scarcely a word. Nor do their ancient companions express any surprise, far less any concern, on becoming aware of their absence; they are accustomed to it, and it is just what they do themselves. Nor are their meetings a whit more cordial: they are cold, grave, and apathetic.

It is the churlishness and selfishness of age. Their tenderer feelings, their social love, if ever they had any, and doubtless they had their share, have long since withered and died, leaving nothing behind but the hard and barren stock on which they grew, and which throws out no fresh buds—which vegetates no more.

What a contrast! In youth, perhaps, these old men owned every generous sentiment; felt them glowing within them; would have gone to the ends of the earth to serve a companion; would have given him their last shilling. In more advanced years, still warm-hearted, steady and sincere in their friendships. Now, alas, alas, for poor human nature! they care for no one. They would not give sixpence to save their nearest relative from starvation. They will part with nothing. The nearer the grave, the faster they hold by the temporalities of life.

We have already remarked that the old boys are eminently gregarious,—they are so. But how they find each other out, how scrape acquaintance, we cannot tell. Meaning, of course, those acquaintances, picked up *after* they have become what we are describing them. One way, however, we do know. They occasionally make additions to their number by falling in accidentally, in the course of their perambulations, with some *canny* old fellow—as old, as idle, and as comfortable as themselves. This recruit they very probably pick up on some fine sunny day, when they are out on the stroll, and whom they, in all likelihood,

catch sitting on a bench in some shady public walk. In such cases there is no such nonsense as a formal introduction between the parties. Nothing of the kind. Neither shyness nor hesitation of any sort. They at once enter into conversation with each other, and, in a twinkling, are as familiar as if they had been acquainted for half a century. And then come the long prosy stories about nothing at all, which happened in the year 1770, and at any time upwards till towards the close of the century, which is the sort of boundary line of the old fellows, all reminiscences after that being too recent to be worth speaking about. Then they meet again on the following day, although without any understanding that it shall be so; then the new recruit joins the stroll. Off they all toddle together. And now he is a regular enrolled member of the corps.

It may be thought that the old gentleman who has nothing particular to do is a very inoffensive sort of person. So he is. But there are circumstances in which he may be found to be a very troublesome one.

In places of business, for instance, he is a sad bore—an absolute nuisance, worthy man. For, having secured his own independence—being all snug in this particular—and having himself nothing to do, he forgets—or at least does not choose to recollect—that you have got *your* battle to fight—your worldly affairs to attend to; and overlooking this, let him once in, and there is no getting him out. He will stick for hours on your hands, and bore you to death with his maudlin talk.

Unfortunately, too, he is particularly fond of calling at your shop or counting-house. It is a convenient resting-place for him; a pleasant lounge, where he can have what he calls and thinks an agreeable chat. To him it may be so; to you, we suspect, it is very much the reverse.

RESPECTABLE GOOD-FOR-NOTHING
PEOPLE.

THERE are, and we are sure the reader must have come across some of them in the course of his life, a curious description of persons, who, possessing many of those qualities which one would think well adapted for securing success in the world, and presenting none obviously of an opposite description, yet never do succeed ; who never can, somehow or other, manage to get on. Yet are the particular kind of people whom we mean neither dissipated, dishonest, nor deficient in ability. On the contrary, they are decent, respectable persons—grave, sober, and intelligent ; their whole manner and bearing, character and dispositions, being eminently calculated to impress you with the most favourable opinion of them ; and, at the same time, to excite your utmost wonder at the fact above alluded to, namely, their being always unfortunate, and never able, seemingly, to rise above the most humble circumstances.

It is a curious case—a puzzling one—and often has it puzzled us ; for we have had more than one agreeable acquaintance of the class of whom we are speaking, persons whom we both esteemed and respected.

What, then, is wrong in these cases ? for that there must be something wrong, after all, is evident ; some deficiency there must be somewhere ;—no doubt of it.

The broad fact is, that the worthy persons of whom we speak—notwithstanding their gravity, their steadiness, their intelligence—are found, on trial, to be absolutely and literally good for nothing. They want ordinary tact,—they want worldly wisdom,—and are deficient in energy and decision of character ; and

therein lies the secret of their utter uselessness. All their good sense is theoretical, none of it practical; and, therefore, of no value whatever to the owner, as an instrument for working his advancement in life. It will not enable him to remove the smallest obstacle that comes in his way. He, indeed, tries to do so with it, but finds it totally incompetent to the task.

Others coming the same road, but provided with better working tools, cast the difficulty aside in an instant; our worthy good-for-nothing looking on all the while, with a face of innocent amazement, and wondering how in the world they do it. The thing perplexes him sadly. Than the decent, sensible, respectable good-for-nothing, no man on earth is more willing to do well if he only knew how; but this, some way or other, he never can find out; and the consequence is, that he is always to be found dozing along the lower paths that wind round the base of the hill of fortune. He can by no means, although he has often tried it, find out that which leads to the summit; and in his perplexity gazes, with a look of amazement and non-comprehension, on those who have gained higher elevations than himself, and who are gradually increasing their height with every circuit. He cannot conceive how the mischief they got there; and the greater is his wonder that he sees amongst them many who started on the journey of life from the same point with himself, nay, many from much lower positions. The former, then, must have, some time or other, given him the slip; the latter, the go-by. They must; but how and when they did this, he cannot tell. It must have been when he was asleep, and no lack of such opportunity was there; for our worthy, respectable good-for-nothing is always asleep. It is, in fact, the circumstance of his being never awake that keeps him in the humble position in which we always find him.

The respectable good-for-nothing is always a person of quiet and inoffensive disposition. He would not hurt a fly, poor soul—not he. He injures nobody, and does not know how to resent it when any body injures him. Indeed, he resents nothing ;—never, at any rate, by any active proceeding. His countenance, too, is mild and intelligent, but always most piteously lugubrious. It is as long as a fiddle-back, and has an expression of heart-rending sorrow about it that it is most truly affecting. He, in fact, seems always as if he had just recovered from a fit of crying ; and so touching is this expression that we could never look on the grave, dismal, sensible face that exhibited it without being like to cry too. No wonder, however, poor man, that he should look dismal ; for, being, as has been already said, a remarkably intelligent person, his sense of his own unhappy state, of the strange fatality that prevents him getting on like other people, is very acute ; and the more distressing that he cannot, for the life of him, see the why or the wherefore of his ill-luck. He thus endures not only the misery of misfortune, but the perplexity of being unable to account for it.

The good-for-nothing will frequently be found to be of that description of persons who have made a fair start in the world under favourable circumstances ; who have yet, and without any apparent fault of their own, gone, as the saying is, to “pigs and whistles” before they have got half-way on their journey ; and who, by some fatality, can never manage to get their heads up again—never regain their lost footing, but continue during the remainder of their natural lives to be in reality, and to exhibit the appearance of, respectable unfortunates ; that is, grave, melancholy-looking persons in shabbyish apparel, who wander about doing nothing, but always looking as if they would do something if they only knew what to do.

These persons, including, of course, our worthy good-for-nothing, blame the world, and the world in turn blames them. They say the world used them ill, took advantage of them, and did not give them fair play. The world stoutly denies the charge, and says it used them no worse than other people, and they ought to have looked more sharply after their own interests. The good-for-nothing, in short, calls the world a rogue, and the world calls him a fool; and there the matter stands between them.

We have said more than once that the respectable good-for-nothing is a sensible sort of person. He is very sensible; nay, often a bit of a philosopher. It is, in truth, astonishing how rationally he talks. Yet it must be confessed that there is a peculiar kind of ponderosity about his good sense. It yields a terribly dull, leaden sound, and to a fastidious judge of the article, does not seem to be quite genuine. There is nothing about it, indeed, with which you can quarrel; still it never, somehow or other, impresses you with a very high opinion of the owner. By the way, there is a great deal of this kind of sense to be met with in the world. There are persons who will talk for hours in the most unexceptionable strain, nay, who never talk otherwise; giving utterance to a world of the soundest doctrines, and most undeniable truths; and who yet never impress you with the idea of their being clever people. On the contrary, you are very apt to be guilty of the irreverence of deeming them bores; seeing that it is one of the qualities of the most formidable description of bore to speak fluently and sensibly on all things.

To return to our worthy friend. Keep him *speaking* only of the world and its ways, and you would be amazed at the shrewdness and soundness of his remarks—at the correctness of his views—and the justness of his appreciation of conduct and motive. But

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bring him in contact with that world—thrust him into the midst of its strife, and you at once discover his weakness. You at once perceive his total want of energy, and activity, and tact. He cannot see an inch beyond his nose, and is taken by surprise by everything that happens. There seems, too, an unaccountable sort of powerlessness about him; for, somehow or other, he never can begin anything nor get through anything like other people; and, when emergencies overtake him, he gets bewildered, confused, stupified—looking very like a timid person who is threatened with being ridden over by a coach. He does not know which way to run—he hesitates—and the consequence is, that he is immediately knocked down, laid prostrate, and left sprawling in the mud, with probably a couple of broken legs. We think it hardly necessary to add, that our worthy good-for-nothing is generally a bit of a simpleton;—nay, a good deal of one, credulous and gullible. He swallows everything that is placed before him with unsuspecting avidity; and this weakness is betrayed in his countenance; for, notwithstanding it exhibits also a certain expression of intelligence, it would not take a Lavater to discover, in association and mingling with this expression, marked indications of that feebleness of character, amounting to imbecility, which renders our worthy friend what he is, namely, good-for-nothing.

FORAGERS.

THE reader must, we think, have observed amongst the various classes which compose that curious piece

of mosaic work called society, one of a particularly puzzling sort of character. It is composed of persons, and very respectable-looking persons too, who contrive to live, and live well, without any visible or known means of doing so. But there is a means for all that, and we know the trick of the thing. These persons forage; they beat about for a living, in a way which we hope presently to illustrate in a very plain, if not a satisfactory manner.

In the course of our life we have personally known three perfect specimens of the class of persons we speak of. Three only! but they were splendid geniuses in their several ways. We say in their *several* ways; because, though of precisely the same genus, and though proceeding on precisely the same principles, they were somewhat different both in their character and special modes of operation.

The first of these—we range them according to the chronological order of our acquaintance with them—was Dick Spelter, as he was familiarly called by his coevals; but our acquaintance with him having been in our younger years, and merely through his sons, who were our schoolfellows, we called him, with a respect for our elders becoming our years, Mister Spelter.

Dick, who was at this time somewhere about forty-five years of age, was a personage of rather tall stature, but somewhat bent. He stooped a little—a consequence, we believe, of intense mental application to the object of circumventing the difficulties of the day. His eye was always on the ground, and he was always buried in thought, even as he wound his way through the busiest streets of the city. Neither the bustling nor jostling of passing people, nor the perils of coach and cart, could for a moment withdraw him from the profound abstraction by which he seemed always engrossed. The countenance of

this prince of foragers, for so we reckon him, was a peculiar one. It had a startling sinister look ; proceeding, chiefly, from a habit he had acquired of gathering a large portion of his optical information with the tail of his eye, by side-long glances. This sinister expression was also heightened by a habitual grin, which he intended, we dare say, for a smile, and which on any other countenance would, perhaps, actually have been such a thing ; but on his it was the most alarming looking thing imaginable—cunning, sly, and roguish. Altogether, Dick's countenance, both in form and expression, bore a strange resemblance to that of an overgrown cat ; it exhibited the same indications of a deep-designing and treacherous nature. But the resemblance just spoken of held good in other particulars besides. Dick was quiet and demure, spoke little, and made no noise whatever of any kind. His step was slow, deliberate, and measured, light and stealthy. He rather glided than walked, and when in motion, always carried his hands behind him beneath the skirts of his coat. Thus it was that he might have been seen sliding noiselessly, and you would imagine, unobserved, through the streets, but Dick was wide awake. He had all his eyes about him, or, at least, the corners of them, and nothing could escape their vigilance ; they were in quest of prey. Dick, in short, was what is called a deep one, and a sly one to boot.

At the time we knew Mr Spelter, Mr Spelter was doing nothing ; that is, he was not engaged in any business, nor occupied by any employment, yet Mr Spelter had no other ostensible means of living, not the smallest ; and yet, again, Mr Spelter and his family lived well and comfortably. They wanted for nothing, neither food nor raiment. There was a man of talent for you ! Why we, ourselves, while we re-

cord the fact, are overwhelmed with admiration of his genius—of the genius of that man who could rear up a family, a large family, on—nothing!

When we said that Mr Spelter, when we knew him, was doing nothing, we will, of course, be understood in a particular and limited sense. He doing nothing! Mr Spelter was doing an immense deal. He was the busiest man in the busy city to which he belonged; how else could he have done what he did? Maintain his family genteelly without the vulgar aid of coin, the resource of your common-place ideal men. Dick's notions were much too sublime for this. He created something, and something substantial, too, out of nothing,—never stooped to inferior practice.

Mr Spelter, however, although not engaged in any regular business during the time we enjoyed the honour of his acquaintance, had been so at one period of his life; but what that business was, when or where he carried it on, we never knew,—nor did any body else. No one could tell what he had been, although there was a pretty general, though vague idea, that he had been something or other, somewhere or sometime. This, indeed, is a never-absent feature in the cases of all his class. They have always started in the world in the regular way, but have, somehow or other, always fallen through it.

It would gratify the reader, we dare say, if we could give him "a swatch o' Spelter's way"—if we would give a detailed specimen of his proceedings in the way of foraging; but we must at once declare that we cannot do this. His ways were mysterious, you only saw results. All that we can say about the matter is, then, that his house never wanted abundance of the creature-comforts of life; there were hams, cheeses, kits of butter, boxes of candles and soap,—everything, in short, necessary to good house-

keeping, and in never-failing, never-ending supply. But where they came from, or how obtained, who could tell?—we never could, nor could we ever even form a conjecture on the subject. There they were, and that is all we can say about them. We have reason, however, to believe that Dick did sometimes sail rather near the wind in some of his catering expeditions; that is, that some of his transactions had a shade—just a shade or so—of swindling in their complexion. We have heard that something approaching to this was the character of a particular case of a sack of potatoes, which Dick had somehow or other come across. Be this as it may, there certainly were some unpleasant consequences attending this affair. Dick was actually pursued—not at law, for nobody ever dreamt of throwing away money in pursuing Dick at law,—but in his own proper person, and by the proper person of the owner of the potatoes. On that occasion, Dick, being hard pressed, took to the roof of his own house through a skylight; for the enemy had made a lodgment even in the very heart of his domicile; and escaped, after exhibiting sundry feats of fearlessness and agility in skipping along steep roofs, and scrambling over airily situated chimneys, all at the height of some hundred feet from the ground. It is said that the potato-man had the temerity to give Dick chase over a roof or two, but soon abandoned the pursuit, as equally hopeless as dangerous.

The next in order of our foragers is Sandy Lorimer. Although pursuing the same peculiar walk in life, and acting on precisely the same principles as Dick, Sandy was, in other respects, a totally different man. He, again, was a stout, bold, noisy personage, with an imposing presence, and loud, hearty voice. Dick carried his points by circumvention; Sandy by a *coup-de-main*. He advanced boldly on

his prey, pounced on it at once, and bore it off in triumph. He did the thing by open, fearless—we suppose we must call it—effrontery. Sandy had formed a general intimacy, not merely a trading acquaintance, (mark the excellent policy of this,) with a large circle of dealers of all sorts,—grocers, butchers, bakers, &c. &c. &c. Being on this footing with these persons, he entered their premises, when on the hunt for provender, with a hearty freedom and familiarity of manner that admirably facilitated his subsequent proceedings, and altogether deprived them of the power of denial. They could not, in fact, find in their hearts to refuse him anything, even though perfectly conscious at the moment that they would never see a farthing of its value; his manner was so taking, so plausible, so imposing. His intrepidity, too, was beyond all praise. The length of a score, either as to figures or time, or both, never daunted him in the slightest degree. He would enter the shop where the fatal document existed with a bold and unflinching front; and that shop he never left without adding something to the dismal record of his obligations.

His butcher's shop, for instance,—where there was, to our certain knowledge, a score against him a yard long, and which had been standing for years,—he would enter with a shout, an hilarious roar, slap the butcher on the shoulder with a hearty thwack, and ask him what news. He would then turn round on his heel, and commence a regular survey of all the tid-bits exposed for sale, praising and admiring everything he saw. At length his well-practised eye selects a choice morsel.

"There, now, Mr B.," he would say, advancing towards the article in question, "there, now, is what I would call a nice little roast. That does you credit. What may the weight be?"

The butcher instinctively takes it down, and puts it into the scale ; not, however, with much alacrity, for he has certain misgivings on the subject. But Sandy never minds this, though he sees it very well ; he is not to be driven from his purpose by sulky looks. "Eleven pounds and a half, Mr Lorimer," at length says the butcher.

"Boy," says Sandy, addressing a little ragged urchin, who is in waiting to carry for customers, "take this out to my house ;" and, without giving the butcher time to adopt counteracting measures, should he have contemplated them, the beef was popped into the boy's tray, and despatched from the premises. This is one particular point in the forager's practice. Another is, never to trust to the seller of an article sending it home to you, but always to see it despatched, beyond hope of recall, before leaving the shop yourself. These points Mr Lorimer always carefully observed, and his success was commensurate with his forethought.

Besides catering for the family, however, Mr Lorimer picked up a very tolerable independent living of his own ; and this he accomplished by the following process. On entering a grocer's shop, he is particularly struck with the rich look of a cut cheese that is lying on the counter. He openly expresses his admiration of it, being on a familiar footing with the shopkeeper. He takes up the knife that is lying beside it, with a hearty, pleasant freedom of manner ; keeping the shopkeeper the while in play by an animated conversation. He cuts off a whacking slice, and despatches it, having probably asked his friend to toss him over a biscuit. Luncheon, then, has been secured, but something is wanted to wash it down. A glass of ale or a draught of porter is in request, but this he cannot with a good grace ask where he has had his cheese. Indeed, there is no such oppor-

tunity as would warrant him in asking it. He must catch some one of his numerous friends in the liquor line in the act, in the particular predicament, of bottling ; and this a little perseverance, aided by a shrewd guess of the most likely places, enables him to accomplish. He has also acquired the free entrance (by what means we know not) of a certain range of bonded cellars, where he can occasionally pick up a glass or two of choice wine, with which, and perhaps a slice of ham and a biscuit, foraged in some other quarter, he can make a pretty substantial passover.

Such, then, is Mr Lorimer.

The next on our list is Major Longson,—the civil, polite, well-informed, bowing-and-scraping Major Longson. By the way, we never knew precisely how he acquired this same military title ; we rather think it was a local-militia honour, for the major's name never appeared in any army-list. Be this as it may, however, major he was always called, and by no other title was he known.

The major was an elderly man, grey-headed, and of a grave, thoughtful, and intelligent countenance ; mild and pleasant of speech—soft, smooth, and insinuating ; but he was a most determined forager and a perfect master of his business, which, however, he conducted in a quiet, gentlemanly sort of way. In his mode of proceeding there was a peculiarity which does not characterise the practice of the other two. The major dealt largely in *samples*,—samples of wine, samples of cheese, samples of tea, samples of everything ; but we suppose we must be more explicit. To be so, then. The major had a habit of making tours amongst the dealers in the articles named, and all others useful in housekeeping, (the major was a bachelor, and had therefore no family to provide for, nobody but himself,) and in the most polite and en-

gaging manner possible, requested a sample of some particular commodity. It was at once given him ; and if the article was, say tea, he never failed to go home with at least a pound weight in his pocket ; and so of all the other necessities of which he stood in need.

We have often been surprised at the singular talent which the major possessed of scenting out edibles, and that in the most unlikely places. He must either have had some wonderful gift of nose, or some strange intuitive guiding power that conducted him to his prey. A friend of ours and an acquaintance of the major's, at whose place of business he occasionally called, once happened to have a small consignment of figs from Smyrna sent to him. Our friend was in a totally different line of business, dealing in nothing that would either eat or drink, but of this consignment he took charge, stowing the *drums* of figs into a small dark back room, that they might be out of harm's way ; being too tempting an article to keep in an exposed place. But, of all the depredators whom our friend dreaded, there was no one whom he so much feared as the major, whose foraging habits he well knew. When he came, therefore, the door of the little apartment in which the figs were stored was always carefully closed, and every allusion to the delicate fruit sedulously avoided in his presence. Vain precaution ! Bootless anxiety ! One morning the major entered our friend's counting-house with a peculiarly bland countenance, and, smiling and bowing, said, he had been informed that Mr S. had got a consignment of figs ! If perfectly convenient, he would like to see them ;—he was extremely fond of figs ;—a fine wholesome fruit, &c. &c.

We leave the reader to conceive our friend's amazement and mortification on being thus address-

ed by the major—the man, of all others, from whom he was most desirous to conceal the luscious treasure ; for he knew that he would not only carry off the usual sample for himself, but that he would come day after day, as long as a fig remained, to get samples for his friends, (this, of course, fudge,) in an affected zeal to find purchasers for the consignee. All this accordingly took place, and the major effected an entrance into the fig-room, carried off his sample, and returned to the charge next day ; but, fortunately, the figs had been all disposed of and removed in the interim. Our friend could never conceive where or how the major had obtained his intelligence in the case just mentioned ; but it was, after all, only one of a thousand every whit as mysterious and unaccountable. The major was evidently born with an intuitive talent for finding the depositories of good things, be these where they might ; they could not escape him, for his vigilance was great, his scent unerring.

Being fond of all sorts of delectable edibles, fish was, of course, on the major's list ; and he was, fortunately, so situated locally as to put a good deal of enjoyment of this kind in his way. He lived, in the first place, in a village situated on the sea-coast, several of the wealthier inhabitants of which kept pleasure-boats, with which they went frequently a-fishing for amusement. Now, the movements of these boats the major watched with a sharp and wary eye, so that they could not land a tail, on returning from a piscatory expedition, without his presence or his knowledge. Hovering about on the coast, like a huge sea-gull, he pounced on the boat the moment it touched the strand, having been seen, some time previously, bowing, and scraping, and smiling to the party as they approached the shore. " Pleasant day, gentlemen, for your excursion ;—excellent sport, I hope—

some beautiful fish, no doubt. Ah! there now!"—(the major is now leaning over the gunwale, and pointing out with his cane some of the choicest specimens of the finny tribe which it contains)—"there is a lovely fish; three pound weight, if it is an ounce. There is another beautiful fish,—and there—and there—and there; all these are excellent." The amateur fishermen take the hint, and the major is invited to take a few. He runs up to the house; in a twinkling a servant-girl, with a clean towel or a basin, is at the side of the boat, with the major's compliments to the "gentlemen," and in another twinkling a dozen of the best fish are on their way to the major's kitchen!

THE REGULAR TORN-DOWNER.

AMONGST the various classes of unfortunates whose external appearance bespeaks the misery of their condition, which the streets of every city and town exhibit, there is one in particular which has long had a large share of our especial attention. This class consists of a certain description of individuals in the last stage of shabbiness as to apparel, and who yet have about them something of the appearance of having been once in better circumstances.

At first, from having noticed only two or three unfortunates of the kind alluded to, we set them down as mere varieties of a species; but a little further observation, by discovering to us that they were pretty numerous, satisfied us that they formed

a class—a distinct and separate class. As such, then, we are now to consider them.

By what accident, or combination of accidents, the torn-downer has been reduced to the unhappy state in which we find him, who but himself can tell? His is a curious history, full of odd circumstances and incidents, and unlucky chances, with (this is invariably the case) a certain groundwork of dissipation, which has had—although the unfortunate himself does not see, or will not own it—the effect of lessening the benefits of all his advantages, and of aggravating the evils of all his misfortunes.

The torn-downer, then, is dissipated; he is desperately so. He will go through fire and water for drink—he will submit to any privation for drink;—he will *do* anything for drink.

“ Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold,
But belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old,”

is *now* his creed; and in the spirit of devotion to the tankard expressed in the above lines, does he heart and soul concur.

The torn-downer does nothing now—nothing whatever; for nobody will have anything to do with him; so, finding himself thus thrown off by the world, he throws off the world in turn, and commences a career of independent starvation. Kith and kin he abjures—they, however, having first abjured him—and connects himself with an entirely new set—gentlemen who, like himself, having been disgusted and annoyed with the crushing and squeezing, and difficulty of keeping their places in society, have withdrawn from its pressure to hover on its skirts, and to contemplate with a philosophic eye the vain and anxious turmoil from which they have retired. The torn-downer, in

fact, absolutely acquires a certain citizen-of-the-world sort of look ; a bland, expansive kind of expression, indicative of an entire exemption from all the cares, and passions, and prejudices of life. He has got above them all.

It has been already hinted, that the torn-downer, who, we may as well add, is also a kind of drunken philosopher, is in a deplorable state as to externals ; but this is a department of his entire composition worthy of some special consideration.

In the attire of the subject of our sketch, however wretched it may be, there may always be perceived an attempt at something above the mechanic or tradesman—something approximating to his former condition—something which he desires should distinguish him from the vulgar herd of dissipators, with whom he feels sensitively conscious he might otherwise be classed. With the torn-downer, then, the surtout is a favourite article of dress ; so is the drab or brown hat. In these, then, especially the former, you very generally find him attired.

The surtout is in a deplorable condition ; it is bleached and threadbare, cruelly and mercilessly brushed, sorely battered about the button-holes, torn at the pockets, and minus all the buttons behind. Still, it is a surtout, and, being so, forms one of the desired marks of distinction. A white neckcloth, too, is often aimed at, and occasionally accomplished ; but the surtout buttoned close upon an old greasy black stock is the most general fashion and wear of the torn-downer. There is something, by the way, in this desperate sort of pretension in the article of dress that greatly adds to the squalor of his appearance. He looks infinitely more wretched than the open, undisguised mendicant. The latter's rags bespeak poverty, indeed, but the former's bleached surtout and battered white hat give an idea of a state of despera-

tion and wretchedness far beyond what mere poverty would suggest.

Another peculiarity in the clothes of the torn-downer is, that they never seem to fit him. They do not seem to have been made for him; neither have they. They are the cast-off clothes of some acquaintance who knew him in his better days; and hence, as formerly alluded to, the superior sort of cut observable in his apparel, however wretched it may otherwise be.

There is something worth noting, too, in another circumstance relating to the present department of our subject. Select any particular individual of the class of whom we are speaking; keep him in your eye for some time, and you will perceive his outer man gradually progressing, day by day, from shabbiness to utter desperation. You will perceive everything about him getting rapidly into the last stage of decay; the bleached and dilapidated surtout becoming more and more bleached and dilapidated; the baked, battered, and shapeless drab hat, becoming more baked, battered, and shapeless. Marking this, you begin to wonder how matters are to end, how far shabbiness can be carried; and, above all, how or where on earth your torn-downer is to get his outer man renovated. A crisis you see is approaching, and it is one in which you begin to feel an interest. You see that your man cannot possibly hold out much longer, and marvel greatly what turn affairs will take in the end; when, lo! just at this critical moment, all your curiosity, all your speculations, are put an end to, by the sudden appearance of your friend in an entire new rig,—that is, new with reference to him, but it is, of course, all second-hand, the gift of some charitable acquaintance. It fits very indifferently, being either too wide or too narrow, too long or too short; but it is, on the whole, in tolerable order, and,

although palpably never intended for its present wearer, is a most desirable and timeous acquisition.

Whenever, then—we speak from a series of observations all confirmatory of the fact—the torn-downer gets into the last stage of desperation as to apparel, he is sure to burst upon you one day in a state of entire renovation—a renovation extending from top to toe, from shoe to hat. A new rig is certain to come from some quarter or other; and we rather think our friend relies on this,—that he reposes on the feeling that somebody must and will supply him with a new suit, when a new suit can no longer be delayed.

Elevated by the comfortable sensations imparted by his new integuments, the poor torn-downer begins to look a little large, to hold his head considerably higher than usual. If he carries a stick, he now shoulders it with an easy, careless kind of air, and in his manner altogether presents a sort of ludicrous caricature of the independent gentleman.

Heaven knows how the torn-downer lives! It is a mystery. But a still greater is *where* he lives. We verily believe no human being but himself knows this. It is in some strange, out-of-the-way and interminable purlieu of the city. We have frequently endeavoured to trace him to his quarters, but never yet succeeded. His turnings, and windings, and doublings, through narrow alleys and tortuous passages, were sure to throw us out in the long-run, and to baffle all attempts at seeing him fairly kennelled.

We have said that the torn-downer does nothing, and this is true of him generally; but he sometimes clerks a little for small concerns, for he writes a capital business-hand, figures well, and is altogether rather a shrewd and clever sort of person. He may be found, then, occasionally putting in order the greasy hieroglyphical books and long-winded unin-

telligible accounts of some small huckstery business. But his favourite employment is clerking to a publican; for here there is always something in the way of drink going, and even although there should not be so much of this as he could wish, the very idea of being amongst it, as it were, is delightful to him.

If the torn-downer be, as he frequently is, a broken-down lawyer, then he picks up a trifle now and then, mostly, however, still in the shape of drink, by teaching small roguery to small swindling bankrupts, whom he puts in the way of *doing* their creditors.

THE RESPECTABLE ROGUE.

THERE is a very general prejudice against rogues of all sorts, especially against rogues in rags. The world detests and despises the unsuccessful knave. The prosperous rogue it treats with more lenity,—nay, with a degree of tenderness, if not absolutely with respect. It may, indeed, look askance at him occasionally, with an equivocal sort of glance; but it is afraid to speak out, and never tells him its mind of him freely. It feels delicate, and cannot think of accusing a person who dresses so well, who looks so much of the gentleman, and whose domestic establishment is so respectable, of being a—a—what shall we say? Why, we feel a little delicate in speaking out, too—say, of being a little queer or so in his dealings. This is the most gentle phrase that occurs to us at the moment. No, the world cannot think of being so rude; the world is a polite world to all who face it boldly, and who keep a good coat on their backs.

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Yet is there, certainly, somehow or other, a very general prejudice against the particular class of the community of which we have been speaking. There is no denying that. It is a prejudice, however, in which we are proud to say we do not partake. It would be most ungrateful of us if we did ; for two of the finest fellows we ever knew—the kindest-hearted, the most hospitable, and in whose kindness and hospitality we have often shared—were a couple of the greatest, the most decided rogues in Christendom—rogues of the first water. But they were respectable rogues, men of substance, men of pleasant manners and benevolent dispositions ; kept elegant houses and superlative tables. You had, in fact, nothing to do but to avoid dealing with them—for they were both a sort of general merchants or traders—to find them all you could wish, agreeable companions, and most intelligent men. But as to trusting them—hem !

Rogues, as has been already indirectly insinuated, and as every body knows, are of many descriptions. They are, in the language of advertisements, “too numerous to mention ;” nor is it our intention to mention them, far less to describe them. In our present essay we intend to confine ourselves entirely to one particular class, the respectable rogue. Who the respectable rogue is we shall now endeavour to give the reader as accurate an idea of as we can ; for, although he may often have met with him, and very likely to his cost, he may not, without some description, at once recognise him under the designation which we have bestowed on him.

Before, however, entering on this description, let us, to prevent mistakes, state generally, and at once, that *our* rogue is not an open, professed robber,—not a pilferer, pickpocket, housebreaker, highwayman, nor thief. By no means. He is a decent member

of society,—a good, worthy, church-going man, and generally in the mercantile line, although not strictly confining himself to any particular pursuit.

The respectable rogue is usually a middle-aged man, of grave, stayed demeanour; calm, placid countenance; mild and pleasant of speech, and with very much the look of a philosopher. His dress is generally composed of a sober suit of dark-coloured cloth; a narrow, very clean, white neckcloth, is neatly and modestly wound round his somewhat scraggy throat; his shoes are always well blacked; and the respectability of his appearance is completed by a rather broad-brimmed hat, which, as every one must have observed, gives a sort of substantial air to the wearer, especially if he be pretty well up in years.

Let us pause here for a moment to remark, that such kind of practitioners as we have described *our* rogue to be, namely, quiet, calm, grave personages, have greatly the advantage of, and are generally more successful than, your smart, bullying, blustering, out-spoken, flashily-dressed rogue,—the devilish active and clever fellow, as he thinks himself, and as he is sometimes called by others. But it is a mistake—a gross mistake. This sort of rogue has, generally, little or no management or method about him, but, thinking to carry things with a high hand, goes direct to his point, and in nine cases out of ten misses his mark; his noise and bustle only creating alarm and suspicion, and finally scaring away the prey.

We have known several of this class. Bright, broad, yellow-waistcoated, and gold-chained rogues, who carried high heads, and talked much and loudly; but they, somehow or other, never did much good; certainly never half so much as the quiet, steady, low-speaking, and little-speaking practitioner, whom we have introduced to the reader. The former, in

fact, has no chance whatever with the latter, clever as he may think himself; and this we take upon us to assert roundly, without the smallest fear of contradiction.

But to resume. The respectable rogue, as already hinted, is a great church-goer. His calm, honest-looking, candid countenance, is to be seen as regularly in its wonted place there, of a Sunday, as the clergyman's. Nay, on these occasions, his appearance is absolutely patriarchal; for he is seated in the midst of his family, all well-dressed, and most becomingly demure. The father himself is the very personification of Piety: his devout attention to the sermon is truly edifying to behold, and—a word in your ear, good reader—it is worth two hundred a year to him, if it be worth a farthing; for there are many sitters in the church, warm men, with whom he may deal, and has dealt, in various articles, and very much (as he manages matters) to the benefit of his worldly interests.

We have said that the respectable rogue is generally in the mercantile line, but we have also said that he does not strictly confine himself to such pursuits: neither does he. He has, in fact, no objection to enter into any sort of *spec.* that promises to pay, and it will be a very queer one that *he* will not make pay, in some shape or other. He will buy—no, that is not exactly the word, as buying implies paying, and our friend never pays;—deal, then, is the more correct expression; he will deal in anything—bricks, coffins, treacle, hardware; any commodity, in short, which can by any process be converted into money. He will enter into any project, where it is not an imperative condition that there should be a tabling of cash previous to admission; and, even where it is, he often contrives to get in without advancing a copper. He squeezes himself, or

rather glides in, through chinks or openings, which, having been unseen, are left unguarded,—and once in, all is right. Try who will get him out again, until he finds it convenient to retire ! and when he does so, see if he goes empty-handed.

We come now to the most delicate and most interesting point for consideration in the conduct of the respectable rogue. How does he manage in his transactions ? What is his particular mode and manner of *doing* the natives ? What are the sort of proceedings that have obtained for him the flattering reputation he enjoys ? These are curious and interesting questions, but they are not easily answered ; or, rather, it is impossible to answer them—at least, in plain definite terms ; for the respectable rogue manages things so adroitly, and with such cautious dexterity, that nobody can ever charge him with any distinct, palpable piece of rascality. They can only say of him, generally, that he is a dangerous customer, and that they had need to have all their eyes about them who deal with him. Further than this they cannot go ; more than this they cannot say, for the lives of them. Even those who have come in contact with him, and lost by him,—the latter being invariably an inevitable sequence to the former,—cannot tell how they have been *done* ; they only know they have been losers, but how it has come about, they never can exactly tell. It is a mystery to them ; for, during the whole transaction with our friend, he was so grave, so sedate, so reasonable, so open and candid, explained matters so fully and plausibly, met impatient and angry demands with such a quiet, pleasant smile, that, although there was evident loss to accrue, and some things that certainly looked a little odd or so, yet there was nothing (whatever they thought) which they could venture to call, or think of calling, positive knavery.

One point of management, however, on the part of the respectable rogue, we may advert to. It is one which is of the utmost service to him in baffling all attempts at saddling him with any particular or special grounds of accusation. This is, the rendering all transactions as complicated as possible; giving them as many twists and turns as they are capable of, in order to bewilder and mystify. If he can only manage *that*, the rest is comparatively easy; he can then accomplish a little comfortable juggling with tolerable safety, and finish by fobbing something neat. It is true that he will sometimes come across a sharp customer, who will not be thrown out by his turnings and windings, but will track him, nose him through them all, with an unflagging diligence, and finally insist on a fair and square settlement of accounts. In such case, our friend has nothing for it but to come down with the *rhino*, or to throw himself on the shuffling system, as practised on the excessively civil principle, and try what that will do for him, and ten to one but it does a good deal for him in the end; partly by exhausting the activity of the creditor, blunting the edge of his urgency, and partly by disarming him of his more savage purposes.

The respectable rogue has, as a matter of course, tried two or three bankruptcies in the course of his life, and made out pretty well with them. On these trying occasions his conduct was most becomingly decorous, and he looked the unfortunate man so well—appeared so meek, so resigned, so patient under his sufferings, so very like a philosopher in distress—was so quiet, and so candid in his explanations, so sensible in his remarks, that his creditors could not find it in their hearts to be severe with him, nor to press him very hard on certain points of a delicate nature, involving the disposal of certain sums of money. They could not; they rather felt for, and pitied the man;

for he wiped his eyes two or three times, when under examination, and spoke of his small family: not much, however, nor ostentatiously, but in that quiet allusive way best calculated to touch the heart.

One other characteristic only of the respectable rogue now remains to be touched upon. His words are sweet and balsamic, and flow over his smooth tongue like candy syrup. There is no withstanding his gentle, insinuating "My dear sir," especially when accompanied by the still gentler smile with which unsuspecting flats are cozened. Many, many a score of pounds have these honeyed words and this bland smile put into his pocket;—many a day of count and reckoning have they averted, and many a storm, raised by disappointed and impatient creditors, have they allayed—blessings on them!

Reader, have you any "respectable rogues" among your acquaintance? If you have, do not you think our sketch of him a tolerable likeness?

PHILOPROGENITIVENESS.

Be not alarmed, good reader. We are not about to give you a dissertation on bumps. We have no intention whatever of boring you with either science or sentiment. The philoprogenitiveness of which we mean to speak is not that of the phrenologists. Quite a different thing. *Our* philoprogenitiveness is an art, not an institution of nature. It is the art of getting at papas and mamas through a prudent and judicious admiration of their offspring.

This art is tolerably well understood, and turned

to pretty good account, by many, but is not often, we think, practised in the regular systematic way best calculated to develop its utmost capabilities of forwarding the practitioner's interests.

We are satisfied that, practised in this way, an excellent thing might be made of it, and in this opinion we are fortified by the experience of a very sensible friend of ours, who makes out capitally by a steady, well regulated, and judicious system of child-praising.

Many an excellent dinner has it procured for our worthy friend, Bob Martin, and the *entrée* of many a hospitable mansion. To many a well-furnished board has it made him welcome, and last, though by no means least, many a settlement of many a landlady's score has it helped him to procrastinate *sine die*.

When looking out for lodgings—for Bob was a bachelor—he always chose houses where there was a family of young children. They were the instruments with which he wrought his purposes, and he could not possibly do without them. He could not have made his quarters good for a fortnight in any house where there were no children; for Bob was a villanously bad payer. Where these were, he could reckon on being permitted to stay as long as he pleased.

When in quest of a new billet, Bob generally effected his lodgments by the following process. Having selected a house whose exterior and situation pleased him, and which, above all other considerations, exhibited symptoms of containing some specimens of the rising generation, Bob rang the bell, calculating on one of two chances:—either that the person who answered the door should have an infant in her arms, or that one or more children should be found romping in the passage. The latter was most

generally the case ; and, when it was so, Bob, on the door being opened, would suddenly fix his eyes on the child as if struck with admiration of its appearance. Then, without waiting to speak to, or even to look at, the person who stood by, he would rush into the passage, catch up the miniature specimen of humanity in his arms, gaze on it with rapture, and exclaim, " Bless my heart, what a lovely child ! What a beautiful creature !"

If it was the mother of the child, his future landlady herself, who had opened the door, and who now stood beside him, it was so much the better. But, even if it was not so, he was sure to bring her very quickly on the ground by his praises of little Master Jacky, which, in such case, he took care to sing out at the top of his voice.

All simpering and smiling, her ears tingling with the delightful music of her Jacky's praise, the mother would come curtsying towards Bob, and wish him " A good morning, sir," in the blindest tones imaginable.

" How old is the dear creature, ma'am ?" would Bob say.

" Two years and a half, sir, come the 15th of August next. No, I'm wrong. It is the 17th."

" Bless my soul ! you do not say so, ma'am ?" exclaims Bob, in the utmost amazement. " *That* boy only two and a half years ? Impossible, ma'am, impossible. You must be mistaken. Why, he is bigger than many boys of six."

" Yet he is no more, I assure you, sir," replies the delighted mother, with a modest simper. " Not a day."

" Well, now, I would not have believed it. I could not unless you had assured me."

Now, be it observed, all this praise of Bob's, all this unconscionable praise, was bestowed on a stunt-

ed, miserable-looking little wretch. But what did that signify? Bob knew it signified nothing. He knew that in this, and all such cases, he was perfectly safe. The apartments were now glanced at, merely glanced at, however; for Bob was so engrossed with the dear, delightful Master Jacky, whom he insisted on carrying in his arms during the process, that he paid little or no heed to the various conveniences and accommodations, now so anxiously and eagerly pointed out to him by the delighted mother. His attention is wholly taken up in admiring the beautiful child, to whom he keeps talking in a strain of the fondest endearment.

Bob finishes by hugging and kissing the "lovely infant," places sixpence in its tiny fist, and his quarters are secured without further trouble—no inconvenient queries put, no reference asked; for who could think of any such proceeding with so kind and civil a gentleman?

The quarters thus secured, Bob continued to hold on the same tenure; that is, by an increasing admiration of the personal beauty and mental capacity of Master Jacky.

With regard to this last, Bob declares he has seen a good deal of precocious genius, but never before saw anything to compare to that evinced by his dear little friend. The fellow, he swears, will one day be Lord Chancellor of England. "He will, ma'am, depend upon it," he says to his doating mama. "Do you know, ma'am, when I said to the little rogue the other day, 'Well, Jacky, my man, how do you get on?' 'I do not get on at all,' said he, quite sulky. 'Why, what is the matter, Jacky?' said I. Well, ma'am, what think you was the young dog's reply?"

"Why, really, I do not know, sir," replies the simpering mama, glancing delightedly at the little snub-

nosed, saucer-eyed rascal, whose precocious genius was the subject of discussion.

" 'Why, what is the matter, Jacky?' said I. 'Should you like to know, old feller?' said he. Ha, ha, ha. 'Should you like to know, old feller?' By Jingo he did, ma'am. These were the very words. Now, is not that a sharp fellow for you, ma'am? That young scamp, ma'am,"—here Bob spoke in a grave and serious tone, solemnly and deliberately—"that young scamp, ma'am, take my word for it, will not rest until he gets upon the Woolsack. And please, ma'am, do me the favour to recollect that—to recollect that I have said it—said it most distinctly and unequivocally. It will form a passage in his history, ma'am, a very striking and interesting passage, ma'am."

"La! Mr Martin, now, you are so droll. But do you really think Jacky so clever?"

"Think it, ma'am! think it? Why—why"—and Bob here took out his handkerchief, and blew his nose—"why, ma'am, upon my soul I do. He is an astonishing boy, ma'am, an astonishing boy."

How could Jacky's mama dun Bob after that?

Bob, however, although sufficiently lavish in his praises of children, was very economical as regarded any more substantial proofs of his regard for the "little darlings," and, in the case of his landlady's children, fell upon a singularly ingenious expedient for gaining a reputation for kindness at small cost.

When any of the younger children—for it was only on these he could practise with safety—those who could not speak, and therefore could not blab—came into Bob's room while he was at breakfast, he smeared the *outside* of their mouths with butter, cream, or jelly; taking care, however, to put none in! and

thus, marked with an incontestable sign of having partaken of his hospitality, dismissed them.

Need we say how Bob, at the cost of a sixpenny doll or a shilling drum, could at any time stave off a threatening demand for rent? Need we say how at processions, and other public spectacles, Bob would fly to a "dear little creature," whom he saw pressed in the crowd, taking care that either papa or mama, or both, were by, raise it up in his arms, and insist on holding it aloft that it might see what was passing? Need we say how often this kindness led to an acquaintance? How often this invitation to call led to an invitation to dinner? and, finally, how often this invitation to dinner led to an intimacy of the most profitable kind, by adding another house to Bob's list of those where he could always calculate on a knife and fork? Need we say how Bob accomplished the same end, by taking violent fancies to children in steam-boats and other public conveyances? Need we say how by these, and a thousand other methods, Bob made an excellent thing of it; and showed to what capital account philoprogenitiveness might be turned by a man of genius and discretion?

THE MAN WHOM EVERYBODY LIKES.

MEN who are generally liked, men who are much liked, and men who are well liked, are not very rare; they are to be found everywhere, and have nothing very marked about them. But the man whom everybody likes, against whom there is not one dis-

sentient voice, is not often to be met with, he is a rare bird. However, there are a happy few who attain this pre-eminently felicitous position in the world. These favoured persons are not numerous ; they move in distinct orbits, each in his own, and wide apart from one another ; for there cannot be such a thing as two men whom everybody likes in the same neighbourhood—hardly in the same town, unless it be a large one ; the laws of nature forbid it. They are, therefore, scattered widely over the face of society, and to be found only at remote distances from one another.

One reason why men whom everybody likes are thinly spread over the social surface is, that no given locality could support more than one of these happily-conditioned persons at a time. We say, support him, because the man whom everybody likes is in a great measure supported at the public expense ; for what else, when we take it in the aggregate, is the constant and unremitting series of private hospitalities of which he partakes—the incessant and endless round of dinners and suppers to which he is invited—but public expenditure?—voluntary, indeed, but not the less what we have named it on that account. No moderately wealthy community, then, of small dimensions, could possibly support more than one of these favoured persons without great inconvenience.

The man whom everybody likes is invariably a jovial, jolly, good-natured soul, with a round florid face, expressive of great contentedness of mind and of much benevolence of disposition, with a little—a very little—touch of imbecility. Perhaps that is rather too strong a word—we had better say weakness. He is not a bright genius, that is certain ; the man whom everybody likes never is. Indeed, he could not be that man if he were ; for, if he had

any talent, those who had less would envy him, those who had equal would be jealous of him, and those who had more would despise him ; and thus would the harmony of that system which revolves so smoothly around him, and of which he is the centre, be disturbed and distracted. As it is, things go on pleasantly ; there is no rivalry, no jealousy, no contempt.

Some people may suppose that it is a very easy thing to attain the enviable character which we are just discussing ; but it is by no means so ; on the contrary, it is very difficult. Only think of the amount of good-nature required—the forgiveness of spirit, the forbearance, the patience, the ever-watchfulness not to offend, the constant flow of animal spirits, the eternal good-humour, let the world wag as it will. Only think of all this, and we have no doubt you will at once acknowledge it is no easy matter to become a universal favourite. Then, again, to retain this ticklish position, a man must be everything to everybody ; he must refuse no requests, at whatever cost of trouble or inconvenience to himself, and he must make none that may be in the slightest degree disagreeable to any one. Above all things, he must never attempt to borrow money ; any approach to this would instantly hurl him down from his high place. On the other hand, he must be too poor to lend ; too poor to admit of any one dreaming of borrowing from him ; because applications for loans, and refusals of these loans, would equally operate against his popularity. He must, then, be just rich enough to keep him out of other people's pockets, and poor enough to keep other people out of his.

The man whom everybody likes is, as already hinted, of a jolly presence ; he is always in excellent bodily condition—fat as a whale. This, in part, pro-

ceeds from his own good-nature, but in part, also, from the excellent living to which his character of universal favourite introduces him. He is one of those pets of the world whom it delights in feeding well—it crams him like a stalled ox. It does not think of bestowing honours on him of any kind, but it takes great pleasure in gorging him with savoury and substantial food ; it gives him dinners and suppers, as many as he can set his face to, and sometimes a great many more ; he has often, almost always, more invitations than he can possibly overtake, notwithstanding a capacity for eating and drinking which falls to the lot of few men ; for with such is the man whom everybody likes most especially gifted. It is one of his qualifications for the happy position he is placed in, and without which he never could attain it. It is, in truth, amazing the quantity of work of this kind which he has to go through, and not less amazing the quantity he *does* go through. His presence is as certain at every merry-making within the limits of what may be called his district, or locality, as mine host's self ; besides this, he has to undergo a good deal of eating and drinking—a sort of skirmishing it may be called—without the pale of his own particular circle, to oblige those new friends whom he is from time to time meeting at the tables of the old.

Would it be believed, however, that the final end of the man whom everybody likes is almost uniformly tragical?—killed with kindness, he usually dies of apoplexy.

THE CUTTER.

GENTLE reader, are you aware that there are other objects or things in the world called cutters besides six or eight-oared barges, pleasure-yachts, cruisers, &c. ? Are you aware that this name is bestowed upon a certain kind of little black glass bottle employed in carrying clandestine cargoes of ardent spirits to clandestine drinkers ? It is ; and unless the subject has come under your observation, and you have given it some attention, you can have no idea of the extent to which the system of cutter-trading is practised ; nor, perhaps, of the misery and wretchedness which it carries into the bosoms of those families where it has become a habit.

Neither can you have any idea of the shifts and expedients fallen upon to cloak and conceal the movements of the little cutter ; its frequent out-goings and in-comings.

The reader may possibly imagine that such practices as are here alluded to must be confined to people in the lower ranks of life. It is by no means so. We cannot tell exactly where they stop—at what point in the social scale the cutter ceases to be employed ; but this we do know, that it is an inmate of houses where you would little dream of finding it—where the externals of respectability would forbid your imagining for a moment that any one within it was in the habit of indulging in the low and disgraceful practices which its presence implies.

The cutter, we are sorry to say it, is peculiarly a female instrument of dissipation. It is by the female members of families, almost exclusively, that these little craft are put and kept in commission, being well adapted for secrecy and concealment.

The cutter itself, gentle reader, is a little dumpy black bottle, of various shapes, sometimes square,

sometimes round, sometimes octagonal, &c., &c.: burden somewhere about half-a-pint, frequently less; but when this is the case, the deficiency of capacity is compensated by the frequency of its trips. It is then kept constantly at sea, scudding about from morning to night; its destinations being various, perhaps, but always returning to the same port.

By one who knows how and where to look for these mischievous little craft fraught with ruin, they may be seen cruising about the streets in all directions; some in the act of going for cargoes, others returning with them.

We would take a considerable bet that in half an hour's ramble through the streets, leaving us our choice of district, we will point out half a dozen cutters in full and active employment. Yet, observe, the little argosy does not sail openly; it is rarely exposed to public gaze in tell-tale nakedness, but is concealed by various ingenious devices and expedients. It may be said, in short, to sail always under false colours; but the experienced observer can detect its presence notwithstanding.

He sees an untidy servant-girl scudding along with *something*—a scarcely perceptible something—under her apron. No ordinary observer pays any attention to the circumstance—he does not notice it; but the shrewd marker of curious things knows that this something is a cutter; he could swear to it, and would be perfectly safe in doing so.

Or the same vigilant noter of suspicious circumstances sees a little girl tripping onwards with something wrapped in a towel, the thing covered being a small object, and bearing no proportion to its covering, which hangs about it in superfluous folds. Here, too, he at once detects the cutter; it has been out on a trip, and is now returning, charged to the cork.

Again; mark that hand-basket which yonder re-

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spectable-looking woman is carrying along with such a demure countenance. How very innocent both the one and the other look!—both the lady and the basket. Let us have a peep into this basket, however; it is rather impertinent, to be sure, but we must not stick at trifles. There, up with the lid! Well; I see nothing in it but some parcels of groceries. Ay, but be so good as remove one or two of these parcels. Aha, here it is! What? Why, the cutter! snugly nestled between a pound of sugar and half a pound of tea, and covered over with half a wedge of soap.

Ah! these baskets, these baskets! what a deal of sly dissipation they are privy to! what a deal of irregular traffic they conceal!

A pretty good way of cloaking the cutter, and one much practised by ingenious contrabandists, is to despatch him in a *very large* basket, the purpose here being to deceive by the disproportion between the container and the thing contained. Nobody suspects that a basket of such ample dimensions should be sent out with so small a thing as a cutter. It passes, and is intended to pass, for a despatch for bulky family necessities.

There are other circumstances under which the little cutter is seen at work in a rather curious point of view.

A respectably-dressed elderly lady enters a grocer's shop, carrying one of these cunning baskets; she takes her place at the counter, and in a confident tone desires to be served with various articles, such as tea, coffee, sugar, soap, &c.; all this is done openly and audibly, and you perceive nothing wrong, no symptoms of secret dealing. Patience a little, however; see, the lady has obtained all the articles she named. Well, then, she has nothing to do but pay and walk off. You mistake; she has a little private business to transact with the shopman, as you may

perceive by her lingering at the counter, and anon casting inquisitive glances around her, as if to see that no one is marking her movements. Now she stretches over the counter, and whispers a word or two to the attentive grocer, smuggling something into his hand at the same time. He is up in an instant; he understands the thing perfectly; says something in reply, in a low tone, inclining towards his customer, or probably gives intimation of comprehension merely by a nod; wheels adroitly round—a slight quiet splash or gurgle is heard, and in a twinkling a little cutter, filled to the cork, is slyly handed over to the lady. She pops it into her basket, pays her score, and walks off. The whole, it may be observed, of this part of the business between the lady and the shopman is done with a silence and celerity that marks no other incident in their transactions. All the rest is conducted by open speech, this almost entirely by signs. There is a sort of free-masonry in the thing that renders language unnecessary.

Need we take a view of the condition of the house, and of the family, where a cutter is in commission? Need we describe the disorder and discomfort that prevail in that unhappy house? Need we describe the neglected state of the children, the cheerless fireside, the hurried, slovenly, and long-delayed meal—the quarrelling, the unhappineses, the miserable sights and sounds of all descriptions that meet the eye in the house of dissipation? We need not. They may readily be conceived, and nothing that can be conceived regarding them can possibly exceed the dismal truth.

THE FIRST SHAVE.

Who amongst our male readers does not recollect *this* important epoch in their lives? The *first shave*!—the first step within the pale of manhood—the first warning to prepare for manhood's cares and troubles! Can you forget, dear sir, the strange, mingled feeling of pride and shame with which you first applied the shaving-brush to the upper lip, and followed it with the razor awkwardly and uncouthly handled?

Well do we recollect the momentous event. Well do we recollect the stealthy step and cautious movement with which we sought the depository of our father's razors; the noiseless secrecy with which we abstracted the said razors, and hurried to the most remote apartment with our prize, that no eye might see us in the performance of the novel operation which we contemplated.

Well do we recollect how carefully we secured the door before commencing that operation, and the intense satisfaction we felt in that free and unconstrained use of papa's razors which we had thus secured; for we had long contemplated them with a wistful eye, but had not dared to meddle with them. Well do we recollect how we revelled in the luxury of wielding, unwitnessed and uncontrolled, these tiny but formidable instruments, and the engrossing interest with which we went through the process of our *first shave*!

Well, too, do we recollect our alarm and confusion, when papa, discovering that *somebody* had been tampering with his razors, called out, "Who has been at my razors? Does anybody know who it was that left my razors covered over in this way with soap and wet?" We said nothing; for we, of course, could give no information on the subject!

But more distinctly than all do we recollect the blush that mantled on our cheek when it became manifest to us that a suspicion of our secret practices began to be entertained in the family; and never shall we forget how our ears tingled and our face reddened when this suspicion, which had hitherto been confined to suppressed tittering and giggling, with now and then a sly allusion to our secret, at length openly took tongue in the person of our little sister, who, detecting us in the act through the key-hole of our operating-room, made the house ring with the cry of "Johnny's shaving! Johnny's shaving!" We thought the razor would have dropped from our hands. It was a trying moment. But driven desperate, as it were, by this flagrant exposure, and the consequent consciousness that concealment was no longer of any avail, we, from that day, became less and less anxious to elude observation, until we at length fairly began to shave with open doors; regardless who should see or know that we had taken to handling the razor.

Alas! what vicissitudes, what heart-wearying struggles with a selfish world, what hopes and fears, what cares and anxieties, crowd into the busy space between the day on which the soft down of the upper lip has been removed for the *first* time, and that on which the grey, grisly beard of the chin has been shorn for the *last*!

SHUFFLERS.

It is a great pity that the shuffler *will* shuffle—that he will not pay what he owes; for he is a very pleasant and agreeable sort of person to converse with.

He has a smiling, laughing, chatty way with him that is very taking. Beware of him, though; he is a cunning shaver for all this, and will give you a world of trouble before you have done with him. Many a weary, many a hopeless, fruitless call will you have to make on him before you get your money out of him. Indeed, so perfectly hopeless do these calls in time become, that you make them at last rather as a matter of course, or from habit, than from any idea of receiving payment of your account; this being a thing so utterly unlikely, that you cannot, even in imagination, conceive it. You cannot for a moment—however active, however creative your fancy may be—figure to yourself your shuffler handing you over the money he owes you; you cannot, for the life of you, give anything like form or substance to such an unnatural, extravagant idea.

It may seem somewhat strange that the shuffler should be so long borne with as he is by those whom he plays in this way, as an angler does a trout; but this is accounted for by the circumstance that the shuffler is known, or believed, to be a man of substance at bottom; and it is, in fact, because he *can* pay, that nobody will compel him to do so. If he could not, they would have him in jail in a week. This being one of the world's general rules, to harass to the death the man who *can not* pay, and to treat with every lenity and indulgence the man who *can*, but *won't*.

The shuffler, then, has always some mysterious, indefinable sort of funds somewhere. Nobody can say precisely what these funds are, or where they are; but there is a general though vague notion in the trading community that he *has* means; and it is this belief that procures him credit in the first place, and saves him from persecution in the second. It is this, too, that enables him to go shuffling on until he has

“shuffled off *this* mortal coil;” when, and not till when, his shuffling ends.

We have already hinted that the shuffler is a sly-boots, a cunning shaver; he is, as witness the winning smile and affable manner with which he meets you when you come to dun him—a smile and manner which (and well does he know it) at once disarms you of all that makes a dun formidable. Without being aware of it yourself, he softens you down with his smirking affability until you become as plastic as wax, and then he tells you some capital little stories, or some amusing little anecdotes. In these he excels; his selection is choice, and he tells them in an exceedingly pleasant and agreeable way. In truth, this knack of relating little stories is one of the main stays of his system, and is one to which he always has recourse when in the presence of the enemy—that is, a craver. In such case, he gives story after story, anecdote after anecdote, in rapid continuity. In this there is a purpose—a deep purpose; it is to prevent you broaching the one great and important subject—your demand. You can’t get near it—not within fifty miles of it, although it is one which, of course, you called for the express purpose of discussing; for this, however, he takes care you shall have neither time nor opportunity.

If the shuffler can only get you to laugh, or to join him in a little conversation, or even to take an interest in what he is telling you, he considers himself safe for the time—and so he is; for you cannot press very hard, or say anything very harsh to a man to whom you have just been listening with pleasure, or with whom you have just been in friendly and familiar conversation. You will, doubtless, in the long-run, force the object of your call on his notice, but your urgency is by this time reduced to mere inanity. Your demand, in place of being the bold and per-

empty thing you at first intended, and which it certainly would have been, had you been allowed to come thump out with it at first, degenerates into a feeble, civil, half-muttered allusion to a certain "small account—hem." A request so gently made the shuffler has little difficulty in parrying. He turns it aside with a humorous remark on the scarcity of cash ; and you finally walk off, without having got an inch beyond the point at which you have been sticking for the last twelve months.

You have not been long gone, however, before you get excessively angry with yourself, for having been so easily done over by the shuffler. You remember that this is at least the hundred and fiftieth time that he has so cozened you ; and looking fierce as you think of it, you clutch your umbrella—if you happen to be carrying one at the moment—by the middle, with a determined grasp ; or if it be a stick, you strike it emphatically on the flag-stones, and swear that you will not be trifled with in this way again—that you will no longer submit to take smirks and smiles for good hard cash.

Need we say that this bold resolution is not worth twopence ? for on the very next occasion on which you call on the shuffler, the same scene precisely is acted over again ;—the shuffler smirks and smiles as before, and, as before, you walk off without having obtained a glimpse of his coin.

The shuffler always receives you with a gracious smile and an excessive affability ; and so far as this goes, he is, as already hinted, a most pleasant person to meet with. But he will, after all, much rather avoid than encounter you ; he will get out of your way, if he can by any means accomplish it ; for this is a much simpler process than cajoling, which is always less or more troublesome. If, then, he only has timeous notice of your approach, and his premises

present such facilities, he will plunge down a stair, or he will dart up one ; or he will glide into a dark recess, or pop into an unoccupied room ; or even, if no better shift offer itself, he will ensconce himself behind some bulky commodity, and be thus, probably, within a yard of where you are standing, while his little ragged errand boy is answering, according to instruction, your inquiry for him with a " Just gone out, sir."

It is a curious enough sight to catch the shuffler, as may sometimes be done, in the act of retreating into his hiding-place to avoid you. He is in a tremendous hurry, as may readily be believed ; for he is acting under the powerful stimulus of an enemy at his heels, and is therefore extremely alert in all his movements. You can, in fact, rarely get sight of more than the skirts of his coat, just as they are disappearing.

If the shuffler cannot avoid you, why then he makes the best of a bad business, and greets you with his wonted smiling affability ; exhibiting nothing in his manner that could lead you for a moment to believe that he would have got out of your way if he could ; on the contrary, he receives you as if there were no other man on earth whom he could be happier to see. The shuffler is thus, of necessity, a hypocrite. He is, it must be confessed, a low, mean hypocrite. Of his meanness and hypocrisy we had lately, in the case of an individual of the species, a very remarkable example.

We were standing one night in the shop of this gentleman, who is a bookseller, and who, we may as well add, is one of the most inveterate and expert shufflers we know, when two genteel-looking, but very poorly dressed, girls entered. It was a cold and wet night, and the poor young women, having no umbrella or other protection, were drenched with rain ; a circumstance which had the effect of giving

to their thin and shabby apparel a still more shabby and wretched appearance.

The shop of our shuffler, which was a very handsome one, was blazing with light, and much did the poor girls seem to suffer from the painful consciousness that this light but served to render their miserable plight the more conspicuous—that it brought into but too distinct view their decayed and shapeless bonnets, their worn-out shoes, faded frocks, and scrimp and colourless shawls.

All this they felt, and it appeared to have sunk their hearts within them—to have left them scarcely strength enough to go through with the business they had come upon.

On their entrance, our shuffler eyed them for a moment, enquiringly, then running up to them with extended hands, and a winning smile on his countenance—

“Bless me, my dears!” he exclaimed—“how do you do?” taking a hand of each; “and how is your father?”

The elder of the girls glanced at us, raised a handkerchief to her eyes, and in a voice choking with emotion, said—

“He is dead, sir. He died last night.”

“Dead! dear me!” exclaimed our friend with a countenance expressive more of amazement than sympathy, although he evidently intended that the latter should predominate.

“Dead!” he exclaimed.

“Yes, sir,” replied the poor girl; then added something, but in a tone so low that we did not hear it. We heard, however, the reply, which was audible and prompt enough.

“Certainly, ma’am, certainly,” said our shuffler; and he flew behind his counter, pulled out a drawer with hurried alacrity, glanced into it, looked at the

sisters with an air of grievous disappointment, and exclaimed—

“Most unlucky! not a single sheet! But I’ll send round to the warehouse to see if there be any there.”

Having said this, he went up to his clerk, or book-keeper, who was at the moment engaged in the back part of the shop, and whispered something in his ear. The lad put on his hat, ran out of the shop, and returning in a few seconds, said, addressing his employer, “There is not a sheet in the warehouse, sir.”

“Dear me, how unfortunate!” exclaimed the latter, with a distressed countenance. Then turning to the girls—

“My dears,” he said, “I am sorry, extremely sorry, to find that I have not a single sheet of the description of paper you want.”

The eldest girl muttered a soft word or two in reply, blushed, curtsied, and wished him good night.

Our shuffler escorted the sisters to the door with great tenderness of manner, and bowed and sympathised them out. On having done so, he came up to us, rubbing his hands, with something very like an air of glee, and said,

“Distressing case—most distressing case. These two poor girls are the daughters of a very old friend of mine, who has long been in very distressed circumstances. He died, it appears, last night, and they wanted some funeral letter-paper, of which, most unluckily, I happen just now to be quite out. Really, I have not been so sorry for anything for a long time.”

Now, knowing our man, we suspected there was some manœuvring in all this—something wrong; and we were not mistaken. We subsequently ascertained—it does not matter how, but we *did* ascertain

it—that our shuffler *had* the description of paper wanted by the poor girls, the daughters of his “very old friend.” Ay, ream upon ream of it, and that, too, in the very next drawer to that which he pulled out with such ready alacrity, *knowing* it to be empty!

But can the reader guess what it was he whispered to his clerk? We will tell him, and he may rely on its truth. He whispered to him to make a show of going to the warehouse for the paper, and on his return to say there was none!

Yet this man calls himself a respectable man, and he is so esteemed by the world. *We* exhibit him as a specimen of the shuffler.

UGLY PEOPLE.

WE have a great respect for ugly people;—that is, for the really and truly ugly. Not your merely ill-favoured pretender, whose whole boast is an excessive length of nose, an extraordinary extent of mouth, but the out and outer, whose entire countenance is a combination of every thing that is hideous in feature. These are scarce, though. It is amazing how scarce they are, considering that the bulk of mankind are by no means beauties. But such is the case. In the whole course of our lives, now a pretty long one, we have seen but three chef-d’œuvres of this kind. One was a custom-house officer, the other a permit writer, and the third a dealer in spiritous liquors. Oh! what faces these were! What noses, what mouths, what eyes, what teeth, what complex-

ions! We feel strangely excited at the very recollection of them. You expect a description of them, gentle reader, do you? No, no, that is out of the question. What idea could mere pen and ink give you of these hideous countenances? None, none whatever. We will not attempt such a thing.

Yet of these three favourites of nature, there was only one of wholly unamiable, undescribable, unmitigated, unredeemed ugliness. The other two, superlatively ugly as they were, had still something human about them. But the third, the custom-house officer, heavens! what a countenance was his! Nature must have been making experiments when she moulded that face. It could not have been manufactured in her regular course of business. Or, perhaps, she had been in sportive mood, and had amused herself by making a caricature of the human face divine. If this was the case, she was eminently successful. It was a happy hit. That custom-house officer was a masterpiece.

There is a strange fascination about the really and truly ugly. You cannot keep your eyes off them although shuddering while you look. At least, such is the effect they have upon us. We have many a time, when we chanced to pass a countenance of more than common ugliness, run across the street, got clandestinely again in front of its owner, and taken another peep of the curious combination and exaggeration of feature. Nay, after this, we have stood fast, and followed with our eye the receding figure of the fascinating gorgon, filled with indescribable but not unpleasant sensations.

We like, too, to converse with the hideously ugly. We like to be on a familiar footing with them; to have their ugly faces near to, and directly confronting us. We like such opportunities of gazing without offence in their delightfully appalling counte-

nances, and thus feasting at leisure on all its horrors. We like to hear the hobgoblin's husky laugh. We like to mark his horrible smile; the motion of his huge lips, to see the twinkling and leering of his round, staring, lustreless eyes.

All this we like much, but it is a treat of too great rarity to be often enjoyed; for, as we remarked before, the superlatively hideous are scarce, and the chance, therefore, of obtaining a personal acquaintance of any of the favoured race next to none.

Oh! the dear ugly creatures! how we do love them. We have a feeling for them amounting almost to admiration. If it is not precisely that, it is something very like it.

We know very well that we entertained, when a youngster, a very great respect for the hideous custom-house officer of whom we have spoken above, and we respected him solely on account of his superlative ugliness, which, by the way, we may as well mention, he greatly improved by excessive drinking. His indulgence in this propensity aggravated every horror of his horrible countenance tenfold.

It is far from being a painful feeling; nay, we think it is positively an agreeable one, that which is excited by the sudden presentation of an exquisitely ugly face. The surprise is rather pleasant than otherwise, as is made sufficiently evident by the gentle simper—just the faintest thing imaginable—that begins to play on the countenance when all the exaggerations of the ugly face are unexpectedly presented to you. We could philosophize on this a little, but think it unnecessary.

Let not the reader imagine that he has seen, far less that he knows, numbers of ugly people, really and truly ugly. No such thing. There are not, we should suppose, nay, we are pretty certain, more than a score in all London, if so many. There were just the three

of whom we have spoken, in a city whose population exceeded 160,000, so that London, on this data, will hardly give the score.

We are extremely sorry to say an ungallant thing, but we do think there are more ugly women than men. This opinion may, however, we allow it, arise from the circumstance of any departure from comeliness being more readily marked in the case of the former than the latter. It may be so, but still we have a lurking suspicion that the balance of ugliness, or, perhaps, we should modify it to ill-favouredness, is decidedly with the female sex, especially amongst the humbler classes. There, we say it unhesitatingly, the general run of good looks is, beyond all doubt, on the side of the lords of the creation.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRADES.

It may be observed of most trades, we think, that their members or professors are distinguished by certain very obvious characteristics.

These are more or less marked in different cases ; but in all are at once sufficiently distinct and peculiar to be considered as necessary and natural results.

How it should be so ;—how different trades should exhibit different characteristics, and these not professional, but relating to manners, temper, and habits, we are not quite prepared to say. Nor do we intend here to enquire ; our business on the present occasion being simply with the fact itself ; not with its source or origin ;—with effects, not causes.

Amongst the trades most distinctly and broadly marked by such characteristics as those we allude to is the mason. Surely every body knows what sort of a person the mason is.

Every one surely knows that he is a grave, heavy, sagacious, thoughtful-looking man ; very like a philosopher in a leather apron.

The mason is generally steady and industrious. There is not, however, much activity in his industry. It is more remarkable for its plodding perseverance than for its alacrity, nothing smart or lively about it.

The mason is a man of temperate and regular habits ;—an excellent family man, and is given to no sort of vagaries or irregularities.

You never see a mason in a street brawl, or having any thing to do with such scenes of violence. Rarely, indeed, is he found taking any share in any public demonstration of feeling of any kind.

A quiet, peaceable, plodding, tobacco-chewing race are masons, almost without exception.

But who have we here ? Ah, the tailor ! The ubiquitous, the mercurial, the speechifying, the all-accomplished tailor !

As regards physicals, the tailor is generally of rather slender form, lively and alert of step, with a queer suppleness about the knees.

Somewhat slight of form, as already said, for the most part, the tailor is, and somewhat slight of form he ought to be ;—never, at any rate, much the reverse. Whenever we see a robust member of the profession, we feel a difficulty in believing *him* to be a tailor, and cannot at all associate him with his calling. He is a moving exemplification of an incongruity, a practical solecism, a living lie. A stout man a tailor ! A thumping piece of mortality devoting its energies to the tacking of bits of cloth together ! Great,

broad, muscular paws holding a needle! Poh! it is preposterous!

Has the reader ever observed that the tailor's coat—we mean his dress-coat—the coat that is, for the time, the pride of his heart—is always *too* well made? This may seem paradoxical, but, we think, there is truth in the remark. There is in the tailor's coat a *jimminess*, a mathematical precision of cut, an apparent over-anxiety about the fit, that imparts to it a detestable sort of accuracy. There is something offensive to good taste even in its perfection. It wholly wants the ease and grace of what we would call a well-made coat.

The tailor is a lively, merry fellow, and not unfrequently a witty dog. He is much given to social meetings, and in these distinguishes himself by a great flow of animal spirits, an amusing versatility, and, we may add, volubility of tongue. He sings, spouts, speechifies, talks, and argues, with a spirit and vivacity wholly and peculiarly his own. He is, however, apt to get quarrelsome in his cups—the merry meetings of the profession very often ending in a general row, preceded by a stormy debate, which gives warning of the coming strife.

The tailor is much given to theatricals, and generally prefers *heroic* characters. There is, in truth, a dash of heroism and romance in his composition. He is fond of the warlike, and delights in witnessing, or simulating in his own person, this particular development of the human constitution. The tailor, in short, seems always to have a hankering disposition to “follow to the field some warlike lord,” although we are not sure that he is *more* guilty than his neighbours of actually perpetrating this folly.

Did the reader ever pay any particular attention to his shoemaker's accounts? We mean, did he ever do so, considering them abstractly, and merely as

specimens of caligraphy? If he did, he must have been struck, we think, with their extraordinary sameness as regards the hand-writing, or rather scrawling, and the perfect similarity in the particular of orthography that marks every one of these interesting documents.

Let it be observed, however, that we do not speak of your flashy shoemaker—your fashionable boot and shoe warehouseman, whose windows and doors are radiant with plates and bars of polished brass. We do not speak of *him*, for all *his* business is done after a ship-shape fashion. His bills are as smart as copper-plate and fine writing can make them. They are all right.

Our shoemaker is your respectable old tradesman, who was in business long before shoemakers dreamt of flashy establishments. His shop is a little dingy place, well filled though, and, in despite of its dinginess, exhibiting very marked signs of substantial wealth.

Our friend himself is a little, stout, thick-set, elderly man, of—we must confess it—rather fierce aspect. Have a care of him, ye dilatory payers; he is not a man to be trifled with,—his round, full face, partaking much of the complexion of his own leather, to which it seems, in process of time, to have assimilated, having acquired a sort of light dry brown colour. A leathern apron, a scratch wig, brown also, and a pair of spectacles, raised high on his forehead, completes the picture of *our* shoemaker—our ancient, unpretending shoemaker.

But it is with his accounts, his yearly or half-yearly bills, as the case may be, that we have particularly to do on the present occasion. And we ask, did any man ever see the slightest difference, excepting perhaps in amount, between the account of one such shoemaker, as we have described, and another,

during, if his experience goes so far back, the last half century ; and, however different or distant the parties from whom they emanated might be, are they not all distinguished by precisely the same cramp hand, and all show a similar spirited independence of orthography, as the following ?

	L.	s.	d.
To hailing and souling your Bots,	-	3	10
To too peaces on your Shos,	-	1	3
To pare Shos for the childde,	-	2	0
To pare Bots for yorself,	-	1	10 0
To sowling pare Shoos,	-	2	6
&c. &c. &c.			

We wish we could conveniently exhibit here a fac-simile of this account. If we could, we are very certain the reader would at once recognise it.

But, however ungainly or uncouth our worthy friend's bills may be in appearance, they are always sufficiently correct in the matter of calculation. In this, the main thing, the old boy makes few mistakes. His summations are correct to a farthing. Catch *him* erring there !

Wherefore should the baker be such a reckless, wild, and roving blade ? How does it happen that in this so unlike our *douce* friend, the mason—we find him not only *in* every night-row in the streets, but generally the life and soul of such row ?—a chief, a leader, a prime mover.

Go up to any of those little *conversazioni*, vulgarly called hubbubs, that are to be met with every night in the streets, composed of select parties of watchmen and disputatious gentlemen returning home from somewhat prolonged sederunts, and you may rely on it you shall find a baker in the midst of it. If there is fighting in the case, or any of that emphatic and energetic delivery of sentiment, which indicates an

approach to that interesting climax,—the baker is there beyond all manner of doubt.

See the rakish, dare-devil look the fellow wears below that huge hairy cap of his—said cap made out of the skin of a favourite tortoise-shell tabby of one of his master's old lady customers, which having often seen and admired when delivering the morning rolls, he dexterously abducted from the area one night, and ———. The hairy cap tells the rest.

THE SAVING SYSTEM.

THE title of this paper is one of rather extensive application and comprehensive meaning ; but, on the present occasion, we mean to confine ourselves only to a very small section of the subject:—We mean, in short, to consider the art of saving merely as instanced in the case of individuals of a particular class, and in whose case it presents, we think, some rather amusing features. For though, in the general case, this same art of saving is a grave enough sort of accomplishment, it has, like many other grave things, a ludicrous side.

The individuals, then, to whom we allude, are elderly bachelors of a respectable sort of standing in society. If the reader's acquaintance with this class of persons has been any thing extensive, he will be likely, we think, to have known one or two amongst them who had a way of managing things as regarded the avoiding of all avoidable expenses, and who yet contrived to come in for a fair share of the good things of life, at the cost of others, which was quite remarkable. We, ourselves, have known several worthy gentlemen of

this kind who got on amazingly in the way alluded to, without ever being at a single sixpence of expense ;—who managed to get a place at every public dinner, at every private tavern party, and who were yet never seen or known to contribute a farthing to the cost.

Now, this we consider a very high achievement in the art of saving or managing ; for it involves no sacrifice or privation on the part of the practitioner. Anybody may save by denying themselves the comforts or luxuries of life ;—by secluding themselves from society, and carefully avoiding all sorts of social meetings where expense is likely to be incurred ; but it takes masterly practice in the art to enjoy all these things, and at the same time to escape paying for them.

We have bestowed a good deal of attention to the subject under discussion, and have marked with some care the manner of proceeding by which the particular sort of persons alluded to contrive to secure so much enjoyment at so little cost, and fancy that we have obtained a pretty correct view of their system. We have found, however, that their success is the result rather of a general and uniform course of conduct of a particular kind, than of attention to any special rule or rules, although there are a few observances which it is requisite should be kept in view.

With regard to the general conduct of the practitioner, we have noticed, that it is characterised by great affability. Our friend must make himself well liked, and he knows this, otherwise, of course, he would get no invitations. We have observed, too, that he has contrived—but how, we really do not know—to eradicate from the minds of his acquaintance all idea of his ever paying his share on any occasion, or under any circumstances. They never think

of his doing so ; never expect it ; and never dream of asking him. It has, in fact, become a matter of course that they make up the reckoning amongst them, and that our ingenious friend sits scot-free.

And more extraordinary still, this general understanding that he pays nothing is unaccompanied by any particular feeling of any kind on the part of his entertainers ;—no grudge, no hesitation, no remark. They, in fact, seem to think nothing about it. It is understood, as already said, that *he* does not pay, and on this understanding they make up his share amongst them with the unquestioning resignation of a use and wont to which long custom has reconciled them. Nay, more, they do it, positively, with a degree of alacrity, and, strange to tell, actually court the company of our happy friend, notwithstanding his notorious non-paying propensities.

How he has managed to get matters into this palmy state—how contrived to get himself into this enviable position, to secure this desirable exemption, it would be difficult to say. But so it is.

And how, pray, does our friend act his part, when reckonings are being discharged ? How does he conduct himself at these dread crises in social meetings ? Admirably. We have seen him a thousand times on such interesting occasions, and the coolness, the composure with which he contemplates the appalling process, with the apparent utter absence of all consciousness that he is in the least concerned in it, is really beyond all praise.

He does not appear to see the sudden solemnity of expression, the sudden distortion of countenance, which the announcement of the amount of the reckoning has occasioned. He does not appear to see, or be interested in, the fumbling in pockets that is going on around him ; nor seems to hear the jing-

ling of the reluctant coin that is being showered down on the table by every hand present but his own. Calmly and composedly, and with vacant gaze, cleverly assumed for the occasion, he sits out the annoying process, without even making a show of intention to bear any share of the general burden.

Sometimes our friend cloaks his well-simulated unconsciousness of what is going on in the interesting occasions alluded to, by appearing to be earnestly engaged in concocting a fresh tumbler. At other times, he gets it over by beginning a funny story, just in the nick of time, and with it dexterously filling up the space of time occupied in adjusting and settling the score.

It requires a great deal of presence of mind, and a great deal of what is called front, to do this ; to sit still without offering to pay while all around you are paying. But our friend has these qualities in perfection. It is, in fact, to these he is mainly indebted for the delightful immunity he enjoys from the pains and penalties of landlords' reckonings.

With regard to the few positive observances that help to secure this immunity, we find the two or three following :—

Never on any account propose, however much it may be desired, an adjournment to a tavern ; because, if you propose, you are naturally expected to pay. Let the proposal, then, come from some other of the party, and be you the last to accede to it. Appear even then to go reluctantly ; rather, in fact, resist. This will compel your friends to use gentle violence with you. They will urge you along. A new and advantageous position is thus gained. You go merely to please them, and are thus placed in the situation of a guest. Being thus placed, they cannot well ask or expect you to pay. They have in a manner forced you into the tavern, and cannot add

inhospitality to violence, by permitting you to bear any part of the expense.

Never carry any money in your pocket ; a simple rule this, but very effective. Having no money about you, you, of course, cannot spend any. Moreover, you can always, and with perfect truth, plead this want as a ground of exemption ; doing so, however, with many expressions of regret. " So sorry, so awkward," &c. &c., adding the assumption of an air of painful perplexity.

As a leading maxim, never have any thing to do with proposals or suggestions about getting up entertainments, public or private. Never approach them while in this embryo state ; any connection with them at such stage being extremely dangerous, from its exposing you to the chance of being hooked in as a principal, in which character there is hardly any possibility of avoiding at least your own share of the expense.

Keep aloof, then, till all is settled and arranged. Lay yourself by, in fact, for an invitation ; or, if you prefer more active measures, throw yourself in the way of one. In other words, go fishing about for it.

Even in the case of an invitation, say to a tavern dinner, cautiously look at all the bearings of the case, carefully calculate all the probable and possible chances of being lugged in for a share of the expense, before you accept ; since circumstances may occur that will render it utterly impossible for you to avoid this fatal result.

A little local reputation in science, literature, or art, is an excellent thing for helping a man to good eating and drinking, at the expense of his friends and acquaintance ; and for securing him in immunity from these most detestable of all things—reckonings.

SATURDAY NIGHT.

I do not know what degree of enjoyment it may afford to other people, or whether it affords any, to ramble through the streets of a large and populous town on Saturday night; but *I* have always found it both an interesting and entertaining recreation. There is no occasion, perhaps, on which a greater variety of character and incident, illustrative of the habits, dispositions, and circumstances of the humbler classes of society, is displayed to the curious observer, than on a Saturday night, in a crowded town or city; and on no occasion, probably, in which these are exhibited in a more striking light. The person, therefore, who goes abroad on such a night with the view of making the most of what comes under his observation, will not fail to meet with much to interest him, much to amuse him, and not a little to affect him with some melancholy feelings. Saturday night, then, it is, so let us begin with a glance at the butcher-market. What a bright and cheerful place it is; crowded with respectable trades people, catering for the Sunday's dinner. It is pleasant to see these decent folks all so quiet and orderly, and, apparently, in such comfortable circumstances. But here is, if not so pleasant, at least a more interesting object.

You see that tall, thin woman there, in the shabby genteel dress, with the little thinly and poorly clad girl in her hand, and the little ragged boy at her heels. There is a sad tale of misery and suffering there—she could only venture abroad after dark, for her bonnet and gown are unfit to be seen in daylight. Heaven knows how she contrives to support herself and these miserable children! But she has evident-

ly seen better days, whatever may have been the cause of her present destitution, and with that we have nothing to do. Observe the deep and settled melancholy of her thin, wan countenance and sunken eye. She is the last wreck of a once respectable family—one long since lost sight of by the world, and who can do little, indeed, for the support of a family; yet one who would be ashamed to beg. You perceive she is now making her miserable purchase—a trifling scrap it is, and of the worst description; for it is only of two or three pence value. She higgles none with the butcher, for she has long since abandoned every idea of making any thing like resistance to the world, and rarely speaks above her breath. All that she says on this occasion, therefore, is timidly to inquire if he will not make it some trifle less than what he first demanded. Having made her little purchase, she glides from the market-place, followed by her little ones, and is seen no more; for no one either knows or cares where or how she lives, and she rarely comes abroad. Where, however, did she get even the trifle which she has just now expended? Ah! *that* is a secret within her own breast—the world must not know it. Not that she *fears* that it should, for it was honestly obtained; but she would sink through the earth with shame if the fact were told. It was a pitiful, a humiliating, a deplorable shift, and this is all that ought to be said about it.

Let us now take a peep of the subordinate traffickers, the dealers in shoe-ties, lollipops, horn spoons, caps, frills, tin-ware, and matches, that beset all the avenues to the butcher-market on a Saturday night. A number of these are sober, industrious, decent-looking people, you see, and seem, in a small way, tolerably well to do in the world. Others of them, again, appear to be rather loose characters; squalid and dis-

sipated-looking. But here is a subject better worth studying than either of them. Do you see that poor decent widow sitting on one of the steps of that stair there, with a basket before her, and a paper lantern with a bit of candle stuck in it? That humble trafficker has a sore struggle to maintain herself and her three fatherless children; she works hard all day, and it is at night only that she comes out with her little basket. You may observe that she does not, like many others in a similar line, solicit custom; she is too modest for that. She patiently awaits the pleasure of the passers-by, trusting to the temptation of her wares to secure her a portion of the floating capital with which she is surrounded. And what are the temptations from which she expects, or rather hopes for, this result? Why, they are a small assortment of brass breast-pins with coloured glass centres, another ditto of needles and pins, three or four combs, and as many small looking-glasses with bright red frames, some gingerbread, and half-a-dozen pewter tea-spoons, all neatly disposed on a clean white towel, with which the basket has been temporarily lined. The value of the whole stock is about half-a-crown. There has she sat for three long hours, and has sold nothing, and there will she sit for three long hours more, and then return home a happy woman, with a clear net profit, probably, of ninepence. The gains are small, but it is an honest shift.

Here, again, is a poor little girl, also with a basket and paper lantern. Let us see what she has got to dispose of. Ay, some tapes, some shoe-ties, and two or three dozen of apples. Her parents furnished her with this little store; and, humble though it be, it is the hard-earned savings of an entire month. But they supplied her with this little stock, not so much from an idea that the profits she could realise

would be of any consequence, as to gratify the little warm-hearted girl's longing desire to contribute, in some way or other, to the maintenance of the numerous family, a desire often and anxiously expressed. This is the first night of her appearance in this character, and a proud night it is to her. Joyful and bright are the hopes and anticipations at this moment of that simple, innocent little girl. Not so splendid or ambitious are they as those of the Persian pedlar, but infinitely more beautiful, and infinitely more pure and spiritual. She reckons on being *now* soon able to provide for her father and mother, and for her little brothers and sisters; and this is the summit of her ambition, the great end which she proposes and hopes to accomplish. Observe with what a modest air she sits beside her little basket—see the gentle look of invitation with which she gazes in the face of each passer-by. But, above all, mark the look of pride and delight with which she ever and anon turns to contemplate her treasures, her little stock in trade. See, too, with what pains she every now and then alters and re-arranges the miscellaneous store, so as to produce the best effect. There, that cake of gingerbread was too much sloped; it did not take the eye readily; but she has now raised it nearer to the perpendicular, and it is better seen. That apple, too, the brightest side was in the shade; she has made this discovery; and is now, you see, turning it round, to bring its ruddy cheek full into public view. Surely so tempting a sight cannot be long resisted; somebody must buy it immediately. Why, I rather think I must purchase it myself, and some trifle besides, and make that little heart one of the happiest in the city, for she has sold nothing yet; nobody would buy, and her little spirit was beginning to sink within her; but a sixpenny purchase, taking, of course, only a tenth of its value, just enough

to cover appearances, and do away the idea of its being a charitable donation, and it will rise again to the summit of felicity, and revive the bright visions that are beginning to fade.

See how that provision-shop is thronged! What a crowd, what a bustle! The fellow must have a capital run. Let us have a peep in at the window, to see what is going on, and to see how the shop looks inside. Mercy on us, what a variety of edibles! The whole interior is one mass of food—bacon, butter, cheese, ham, potatoes, bread, herrings, red and white, salt fish, eggs, flour, meal, barley, and peas. I declare the customers have to wait their turns as if they were intending to solicit favours instead of making purchases; and you may perceive something in the independent air of the great man himself, the shopkeeper, that, in the fulness and surety of custom, he is more than half disposed to look upon it absolutely in that light. His manner is not uncivil by any means, but neither is it remarkable for the opposite. There is no bowing, no smirking or smiling; he feels that there is no necessity for it, and he, therefore, wisely saves himself the trouble. He goes through his business coolly, composedly, and gravely. He is firm and determined; that is, determined to make hay while the sun shines. Really, it is delightful to see the ready sleight of hand with which he deals out the multifarious articles of his ample stores to suit the various demands of his customers. A loaf here, a pound of ham there; a quarter of a pound of butter to this person, a whole pound of cheese to that—all transacted in the twinkling of an eye, and exact in weight to the five-hundredth part of an ounce! It is truly beautiful, if not absolutely sublime. Nothing can surpass the harmony, the smooth regularity with which the complex system is wrought. Butter passes ham, and ham cheese, and bacon all the three,

with the velocity of lightning, yet without jarring, or ever once coming in contact. Perhaps the most beautiful part of the whole operation is Mr Cheeseley's manner of handling eggs. This he does, you see, with the hand and the eye of a master, boldly, freely, and fearlessly; yet he does not break one in a month. The very temerity with which they are handled seems to be their safety. Now, were either you or I to try it, we would, to a dead certainty, smash nine out of every dozen, at least. Did you observe how neatly, yet with what rapidity and dexterity, he picked out that dozen from the basket? His fingers move about them with a lightness of touch and a suppleness of joint that is truly admirable. See, too, the masterly manner in which he counters them before the customer—not one of them chipped in the operation; and yet he threw them down, to all appearance, as fearlessly and carelessly as if they had been made of cast-iron. He is really, altogether, an artist of the highest order.

Singing! Who is this singing? Whose feeble silvery tones are those which fall upon my ear? They proceed from two miserable-looking little creatures—brother and sister. I am sure they are not more than five or six years of age, and yet, poor helpless things, they are attempting to make a livelihood by the captivations of song. Hear how they are stretching their little feeble voices to compass the difficult parts of the tune, and, of course, utterly failing in the attempt! Yet in their simplicity they hope to charm you with their vocal powers, and to excite your sympathy by their little efforts; and sympathy they do, they must excite, not by their excellence in singing—for it is impossible even to guess at the tune the little creatures are aiming at, or to understand a word of the verses they are endeavouring to repeat, for they can hardly yet pronounce the simplest words

—but by the helplessness of their condition, and the very wretchedness of their infantile efforts. A hard beginning is theirs in the world. Well may they inquire, wherefore were they born? seeing that a degree of suffering and misery, which would appal the stoutest heart, has been so soon their lot. They seem, however, to be kindly fitted to bear their hard destiny with patience, and with less of actual pain than might be imagined, from their miserable appearance. The slender, supple little stem on which their spirit hangs bends to the blast, which would rend and overturn the rigid, resisting trunk of riper years. So doth “God temper the wind to the shorn lamb!”

Of all miserable things in this world of woe, one, perhaps, of the most miserable is that of singing on the streets for a livelihood—singing with a sorrowful heart—singing under the pain and pressure of cold, famine, and perhaps sickness; exposed to the chilling rains of a winter’s night; drenched, starving, naked, and houseless. Yet sing they must. No other earthly means are left to them to earn a subsistence; and if this be not employed, they must starve.

FINIS.

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