

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Days and Nights in London; Or, Studies in Black and Gray, by J. Ewing Ritchie

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Days and Nights in London; Or, Studies in Black and Gray

Author: J. Ewing Ritchie

Release date: July 10, 2011 [EBook #36683]

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DAYS AND NIGHTS IN LONDON; OR,
STUDIES IN BLACK AND GRAY ***

Transcribed from the 1880 Tinsley Brothers edition by David Price, email ccx074@pglaf.org

DAYS AND NIGHTS IN LONDON;

OR,

STUDIES IN BLACK AND GRAY.

BY

J. EWING RITCHIE,

AUTHOR OF

"THE NIGHT SIDE OF LONDON," "RELIGIOUS LIFE OF LONDON,"
"BRITISH SENATORS," ETC.

LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

1880.

[*All rights reserved.*]

CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,
CRYSTAL PALACE PRESS.

p. iv

PREFACE.

p. v

London has vastly altered since the Author, some quarter of a century ago, described some of the scenes which occurred nightly in its midst of which respectable people were ignorant, which corrupted its young men and young women, and which rendered it a scandal and a horror to civilisation itself. The publication of his work, "The Night Side of London"—of which nearly eight thousand copies were sold—did something, by calling the attention of Members of Parliament and philanthropists to the subject, to improve the scenes and to abate the scandal. As a further contribution to the same subject, the present volume is published. Every Englishman must take an interest in London—a city which it has taken nearly two thousand years to build; whose sons, to enrich which, have sailed on every sea and fought or traded on every land; and which apparently, as the original home and centre of English-speaking people, must grow with the growth and strengthen with the strength of the world.

p. vi

CONTENTS.

p. vii

	PAGE
I. THE WORLD OF LONDON	1
II. THE AMUSEMENTS OF THE PEOPLE	24
III. OUR MUSIC-HALLS	39
IV. MORE ABOUT MUSIC-HALLS	54
V. SUNDAYS WITH THE PEOPLE	90
VI. THE LOW LODGING-HOUSE	117
VII. STUDIES AT THE BAR	155
VIII. IN AN OPIUM DEN	170
IX. LONDON'S EXCURSIONISTS	182
X. ON THE RIVER STEAMERS	196
XI. STREET SALESMEN	208
XII. CITY NUISANCES	225
XIII. OUT OF GAOL	261
XIV. IN A GIPSY CAMP	271
XV. THE STREET BOYS OF LONDON	280

p. viii

I.—THE WORLD OF LONDON.

p. 1

London, for a "village," as old Cobbett used to call it, is a pretty large one; and, viewed from the lowest stand-point—that of the dull gospel according to Cocker—may well be described as truly wonderful. It eats a great deal of beef, and drinks a great deal of beer. You are staggered as you explore its warehouses. I stood in a granary the other day in which there were some eighty thousand sacks of wheat; and in the Bank of England I held in my hand, for a minute—all too brief—a million of pounds. It is difficult to realise what London is, and what it contains. Figures but little assist the reader.

p. 2

Perhaps you best realise what the city is as you come up the Thames as far as London Bridge. Perhaps another way is to stand on that same bridge and watch the eager hordes that cross of a morning and return at night, and then, great as that number is, to multiply it a hundredfold. A dozen miles off gardeners tell you that there are plants that suffer from London air and London fog. Indeed it is difficult to say where London begins and where it ends. If you go to Brighton, undoubtedly it is there in all its glory; when yachting far away in the western islands of Scotland and the Hebrides, the first signature I found in the strangers' book at a favourite hotel was that of Smith, of London. There he was, as large as life, just as we see him any day in Cheapside. One bitter cold winter day I revisited, not exactly my childhood's happy home, but a neighbouring sea port to which I was once much attached. "Oh," said I to myself, as I rushed along in the train, "how glad people will be to see me; how bright will be the eyes into which I once loved to look, and how warm the clasp of the hand which once thrilled through all my being!" Alas! a generation had risen who knew not Joseph. I dined sadly and alone at the hotel, and after dinner made my way to the pier to mingle my melancholy with that of the melancholy ocean. The wind was high; the sand in clouds whirled madly along the deserted streets. At sea even nothing was to be seen; but at the far end of the pier, with his back turned to me, gazing over as if he wanted to make out the coast of Holland—some hundred and fifty miles opposite—was a short man, whom I knew at once from his apoplectic back—Brown, of Fleet Street—come there all the way from the congenial steak puddings and whisky toddy of The Cheshire Cheese for a little fresh air! I felt angry with Brown. I was ready almost to throw him over into the raging surf beneath, but I knew that was vain. There were "more to follow." Nowadays London and London people are everywhere. What is London? It covers, says one, within a fifteen-miles' radius of Charing Cross, so many hundred square miles. It numbers more than four million inhabitants. It comprises a hundred thousand foreigners from every quarter of the globe. It contains more Roman Catholics than there are in all Rome; more Jews than there are in all Palestine; and, I fear, more rogues than there are even in America. On a Sunday you will hear Welsh in one church, Dutch in another, the ancient dialect of St. Chrysostom in another; and on a Saturday you may plunge into low dancing-houses at the East-End which put to shame anything of the kind in

p. 3

p. 4

p. 5

Hamburg or Antwerp or Rotterdam. In many of the smoking-rooms bordering on Mark Lane and Cheapside you hear nothing but German. I know streets and squares inhabited by Dutch and German Jews, or dark-eyed Italians, or excitable Frenchmen, where

The tongue that Shakespeare spake

is as little understood as Sanscrit itself. At any moment I like I can rush away from all European civilisation, and sit in a little room and smoke opium with the heathen Chinese—whose smile all the while is “childlike and bland”—as if I were thousands of miles away. On the other side of St. Paul’s I have supped with hundreds of thieves at a time, who carry on their work as if there was no such institution as that of the police; I have listened to the story of the crowded lodgers, and I can believe anything you like to tell me of the wealth, of the poverty, of the virtue, of the vice of London. People say the metropolis has seven thousand miles of streets. I have no doubt it has. People say it has on Sunday sixty miles of shops open, and they may be right; at least I have neither the time nor the inclination to test these figures. It also rejoices, I hear, in as many public-houses as, if set in a line, would reach from Charing Cross to Portsmouth. The people of London read or write in the course of a year as many as two hundred and forty millions of letters. All these letters are written, all these public-houses supported, all these streets lined with houses inhabited by men who more or less are connected with the city. It is there they live, if they sleep fifty miles away, and it is a hard life some of them have assuredly. A little while ago a poor woman was charged with pawning shirts entrusted to her to make by an East-End merchant clothier. The woman pleaded that her children were so hungry that she was tempted to pawn some of the work in the hope of being able to redeem it by the time the whole was completed. The work was machine-sewing. She hired the machine at half-a-crown a week, and was paid by the prosecutor a shilling a dozen for his shirts.

p. 6

p. 7

“Nonsense,” said the magistrate; “that is only a penny each.”

“And that is all it is, sir,” said the poor woman.

“And you have to work a long day to make twelve. And is it really a fact,” said the magistrate, turning to the merchant clothier, “that this kind of work has fallen into such a deplorable condition that you can get it done at so poor a rate?”

“Your worship,” was the reply, “if I wanted a hundred hands at the price I could get ‘em by holding up my finger.”

p. 8

Nowhere does life run to such extremes;—nowhere is there such pauperism as in London; nowhere is there such wealth; nowhere does man lift a sublimer face to the stars; nowhere does he fall so low. In short, London may be described as “one of those things which no fellah can understand.”

In beauty London now may almost vie with fair bewitching Paris. In all other respects it leaves it far behind. It is the brain of England, the seat of English rule, whence issue laws which are obeyed in four quarters of the globe, and the fountain of thought which agitates and rules the world. London is the head-quarters of commerce. Tyre and Sidon and Carthage, the republics of Italy, the great cities of the Hanseatic Confederation, Flemish Ghent or Bruges, or Antwerp or busy Amsterdam, never in their canals, and harbours, and rivers, sheltered such burdened argosies; in their streets never saw such wealthy merchants; in their warehouses never garnered up such stores of corn and wine and oil. London prices rule the globe, and are quoted on every exchange. It is a city of contrasts. It has its quarters where pale-eyed students live and move and have their being, and factories where the only thought is how best to drag out a dull mechanical life. It has its underground cells where misers hide their ill-gotten gains, and its abodes of fashion and dissipation where the thoughtless and the gay dance and drink and sing, as if time past taught them no lesson, and as if time to come could have no terrors for them. It is a city of saints and sinners, where God and Mammon have each their temples and their crowds of worshippers. Here lie in wait the traffickers in men’s bodies and souls; and here live those whose most anxious care is how best to assuage the pangs of poverty, how best to cure the delirium of disease, how most successfully to reclaim the fallen and the prodigal, how most assiduously to guard the young from the grasp of the destroyer—how, in the language of the poet, to “allure to brighter worlds and lead the way.” If there be a fire in Chicago, a famine in India, a tornado in the West Indies, a wail of distress from the North or the South, or the East or the West, London is the first city to send succour and relief.

p. 9

p. 10

In speaking of London we sometimes mean Smaller London and sometimes Greater London. To avoid confusion we must clearly understand what is meant by each. Smaller London comprises 28 Superintendent Registrars’ Districts, 20 of them being in Middlesex, 5 in Surrey, and 3 in Kent; viz. Kensington, Chelsea, St. George, Hanover Square, Westminster, Marylebone, Hampstead, Pancras, Islington, Hackney, St. Giles, Strand, Holborn, London City, Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, St. George in the East, Stepney, Mile End and Poplar in Middlesex; St. Saviour, Southwark, St. Olave, Southwark, Lambeth, Wandsworth, and Camberwell in Surrey; and Greenwich, Lewisham, and Woolwich in Kent. It had an estimated population in the middle of 1878 of 3,577,304. Greater London comprises in addition to the above 14 Superintendent Registrars’ Districts, 6 of them being in Middlesex, 4 in Surrey, 2 in Kent, and 2 in Essex; viz. Staines, Uxbridge, Brentford, Hendon, Barnet, and Edmonton in Middlesex; Epsom, Croydon, Kingston, and Richmond in Surrey; Bromley and Bexley in Kent; and West Ham and Romford in Essex. It comprises the whole of Middlesex, and such parishes of Surrey, Kent, Essex, and Herts

p. 11

p. 12

as are within 12 miles of Charing Cross. These additional districts had an estimated population of 872,711 in the middle of the year 1878, so that Greater London has therefore at the present time a population of 4,450,015. The population of the United Kingdom in the middle of 1878 was estimated at 33,881,966. Greater London had therefore considerably more than an eighth of the population of Great Britain and Ireland, and more than a sixth of the population of England and Wales. This large population is constantly and rapidly increasing; the estimated increase in 1878 being 82,468. It is important to note that the increase is not equal in all parts. The population is decreasing within the City; within Smaller London it goes on increasing but at a decreasing rate, and in the outer ring the population increases steadily at an increasing rate. The population of the outer circle has increased more than 50 per cent. in the last ten years.

Even in its narrowest definition—as the small plot of ground between Temple Bar and Aldgate pump—what a history London has! Of what scenes of glory and of shame it has been the theatre! What brave men and lovely women have played their part, heroic or the reverse, upon its stage! When the City's greatest architect dug deep into the earth to build the foundations of his matchless cathedral, he laid bare the remains of nations and generations that one after another had held the City as its own. First he uncovered the graves of the early medieval Londoners; then he came to the remains of our Saxon forefathers, of Ethelbert and St. Augustine; next were found the remains of Romans and ancient Britons, and last of all were found the mouldering remains of those who knew not Cæsar and the city they call Rome. Again, the London of Victoria faintly resembles the London of Queen Anne, as faintly perhaps as does the Jerusalem of to-day represent the city in which our Saviour dwelt. No wonder that our old chroniclers romanced not a little, and that many of them did believe, as Geoffrey of Monmouth writes, that London was founded by Brute, a descendant of Eneas, eleven hundred years before Christ, and that he called it Troy Novant, whence came the name of the people to be called Trinobantes. Equally widespread and equally unfounded was the belief that from London were shipped away eleven thousand—some say seventy thousand—British virgins (as an admirer of the virtues of my countrywomen I stick to the highest figure)—whose bones may yet be seen in Cologne—to the British warriors compelled to settle in Armorica. What is clear, however, is that in London Diana had a temple, that the Saxons won the city from the Britons, that the Tower of London is one of the oldest buildings in Christendom, and that here Roman and Dane, and Saxon and Norman have all more or less left their mark. Our early monarchs trembled as they saw how the great city grew. When that slobbering James came to the throne—whom his courtiers denominated the British Solomon—of whom bishops and archbishops testified that his language was that of inspiration, he exclaimed, "England will shortly be London, and London England," as he saw how people were adding house to house and street to street, and flocking to them from all parts of England and Scotland; yet the London of the Stuarts, neither in extent or magnificence or wealth, bore the faintest resemblance to the London of to-day.

Londoners are well looked after in the matter of taxes. The ratable value of the metropolis, or rather the district of the Metropolitan Board, is £23,960,109. Last year it raised in this way £477,835. The School Board rate was something similar. Besides, there is a sewer rate of twopence in the pound; a paving, watering, etc. rate of probably ninepence; a lighting rate of threepence; then there are rates to pay interest on the debts of extinct paving trusts; a rate for baths and wash-houses, police rate and county rate, making a total of almost five shillings and sixpence in the pound on the value of a house. While it has an excess of beer-shops, gin-palaces, and music-halls, it has a great deficiency as regards church and chapel accommodation. In Inner London it is calculated 955,060 sittings are required. In Larger London the deficiency, it is estimated, is much more.

The number of police, according to the last return, was 10,336 in the metropolis, showing an increase of 0.5 per cent. over last year; and in the City 798, being seven over the last returns. The metropolitan police are in the proportion of one for every 397 of the population of the metropolitan police district; the City police of one for every 93 of the population, as enumerated on the night of the census of 1871. The cost of the metropolitan police was £1,077,399, of which 39.9 per cent. was contributed from public revenue; the cost of the City police was £85,231, towards which no contribution was made. From the criminal returns it appears that for the metropolitan police district, with the City, the number of known thieves and depredators, receivers of stolen goods, and suspected persons, was 2,715, or one in 1,431 of the population, showing an increase of 3.9 per cent. on the returns of the previous year. The rule which has been followed now for 14 years, that persons known to have been living honestly for one year at least subsequently to their discharge after any conviction, should not be returned in the class of known thieves and depredators, has been adhered to. The return of houses of bad character in the metropolis, exclusive of those of ill-fame and of those returned to Parliament under the Contagious Act, is 215, of which 66 are houses of receivers of stolen goods, showing a decrease of 22 in the year. The total number of cases tried at the Central Criminal Court was 10,151. From a classification of offences determined summarily we learn that there were 5,622 persons proceeded against in the City, of whom 1,093 were discharged, and the remainder convicted or otherwise dealt with. There were 191 offences against the Adulteration of Food Act in the metropolitan police district, 7 in the City; 5,874 against the Elementary Education Act, none in the City; 1,234 cases of cruelty to animals in the metropolitan district, 823 in the City; 33,520 persons were drunk and disorderly in the metropolitan district, 431 in the City, being an increase over the numbers for the last year of about 1,000 in the first instance, and 35 in the second.

From the prison returns we gather that the total of commitments to Newgate for the year ended September 29th, 1877, was 1,394 males, and 218 females, being in the case of the males a

reasonable decrease from the last year's numbers; to Holloway, 1,896 males, 281 females, the latter returns including 841 males and 45 females to the civil side for debt. Under the heading of expenses we have £127 19s. for new buildings, alterations, etc., in Newgate; and in Holloway, £199; ordinary repairs in Newgate came to £149 11s. 4d., rent, rates, taxes, etc., £121 7s.; Holloway repairs, £121 4s. 5d., rent and taxes, £74 2s. 11d., with various other charges, making a total of expenses at Newgate of £6,514 5s. 3d.; Holloway, £10,314 9s. 9d. From the table of funds charged with prison expenses we learn that at Holloway the net profit of prisoners' labour was £2,038 1s. 9d. The county or liberty rates contributed £83 16s. 8d. to Newgate; the City rate was £5,632 1s. 3d., the latter rate was, in respect to Holloway, £6,239 5s. The Treasury paid £347 0s. 9d., proportion of the charge for convicted prisoners at Newgate, £1,438 17s. 6d. for those at Holloway.

p. 20

The charitable contributions of England are to-day in excess of what the whole revenue of the British Crown was under the Stuarts, only two hundred years ago; over £600,000 per annum is derived from all such sources by the medical charities of London alone; more than 1,200,000 persons, exclusive of paupers, are annually recipient of assistance from those medical charities.

In other ways also is London truly wonderful. It seems as if the earth toiled and moiled to simply supply her wants. Sail up the Baltic and ask whither those vessels laden with tallow and corn and flax are steering, and the answer is, The Thames. Float down the Mediterranean, and the reply to the question would be still the same. Ascend the grand rivers of the New World, and the destination of the stores of beef and cheese and wheat is still the same. Canada supplies us with our deals; America with half our food; Australia with our wool; the Cape with our diamonds; the Brazils with coffee. Havannah sends her choice cigars, China her teas, Japan her lacquered and ingenious ware, Italy her silks; and from the vineyards of France, or the green hills that border the Rhine and the Moselle, we are supposed to draw our supplies of sparkling wine. Spain sends her sherry, Portugal her port. For us the spicy breezes blow soft on Ceylon's isle, the turtle fattens languidly under burning suns, the whale wallows in the trough of frozen seas, the elephant feeds in African jungles, and the ostrich darts as an arrow across the plain. In the country village, in the busy mill, on sea or on land, it is the thought of London that fires the brain and fills the heart, and nerves the muscle and relieves the tedium of nightly or daily toil. As Cowper writes:

p. 21

p. 22

Where has commerce such a mart,
So rich, so thronged, so drained, and so supplied,
As London—opulent, enlarged, and still
Increasing London? Babylon of old
Not more the glory of the earth than she,
A more accomplished world's chief glory now.

It is not our province to speculate as to the future. There are men who tell us that Babylon is about to fall, and that it is time for the elect to be off. It may be so. Time, the destroyer, has seen many a noble city rise, and flourish, and pass away; but London, it must be admitted nevertheless, never more truly in any sense deserves the epitaph of "wonderful" than at the present time.

p. 23

II.—THE AMUSEMENTS OF THE PEOPLE.

p. 24

The Middlesex magistrates have shut up the Argyle Rooms. Mr. Bignell, who has found it worth his while to invest £80,000 in the place, it is to be presumed, is much annoyed, and has, in some respects, reason to be so. Year after year noble lords and Middlesex magistrates have visited the place, and have licensed it. Indeed, it had become one of the institutions of the country—one of the places which Bob Logic and Corinthian Tom (for such men still exist, though they go by other names) would be sure to visit, and such as they and the women who were *habitués* will have to go elsewhere. It is said a great public scandal is removed, but the real scandal yet remains. It is a scandal that such a place ever flourished in the great metropolis of a land which professes Christianity—which pays clergymen and deans, and bishops and archbishops princely sums to extirpate that lust of the flesh and lust of the eye and pride of life, which found their lowest form of development in the Argyle Rooms. It was a scandal that men of position, who have been born in English homes and nursed by English mothers, and been consecrated Christians in baptism, and have been trained at English public schools and universities, and worshipped in English churches and cathedrals, should have helped to make the Argyle a flourishing institution. Mr. Bignell created no vice—he merely pandered to what was in existence. It was men of wealth and fashion who made the Argyle what it was. The Argyle closed, the vice remains the same, and it will avail little to make clean the outside of the whitened sepulchre if within there be rottenness and dead men's bones. Be that as it may, there are few people who will regret the defeat of Mr. Bignell and the closing of the Argyle. It was not an improving spectacle in an age that has sacrificed everything to worldly show, and that has come to regard brougham as the one thing needful—as the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace—as a charter of respectability to everyone who rides in it, whether purchased by the chastity of woman or the honour of man—to see painted and bedizened females, most of them

p. 25

p. 26

driving up in broughams from St. John's Wood or Chelsea or Belgravia, with their gallants, or "protectors," to the well-known rendezvous, at a late hour, to leave a little later for the various oyster-rooms in the district, through a dense crowd of lookers-on, drunk or sober, poor or rich, old or young, as the case might be. In no other capital in Europe was such a sight to be seen. The lesson taught by such a spectacle was neither moral nor improving at first sight, and it was not well that a young, giddy girl, with good looks, and wishing, above all things, for fine dresses and gay society—sick at heart of her lowly home and the dreary drudgery of daily poverty—should there practically have learnt that if she could but make up her mind to give her virtue to the winds, there awaited her the companionship of men of birth and breeding and wealth, and the gaudy, if short-lived, pomps and splendours of successful vice. It is true that in the outside crowd there were, in rags and tatters, in degradation and filth, shivering with cold, pale with want, hideous with intemperance and disease, homeless and friendless and destitute, withered hags old before their time, whom the policeman shrank from touching as he bade them move on, who once were the admired of the Argyle, and the pets and *protégées* of England's gilded youth; and here and there in the crowd, with boots in holes and broken hat, and needy coat buttoned as far as possible to the chin to conceal the absence of a shirt, with hands thrust in empty pockets, sodden in face and feeble of limb, were men who had been hauled from the Argyle to Bow Street and the gaol. It is true thus side by side were the bane and the antidote; but when did youth, flushed with wine and pleasure, pause on the road to ruin? Young says:

All men think all men mortal but themselves,

and in like manner each man or woman in the glow of youth feels confident that he or she can never fall, and thus rushes madly on, ignoring the eternal truth that there is a Nemesis ever tracking the steps of the wrongdoer, one from whose grasp we can never escape, that the pleasures of sin are but for a season, and that the wages of sin are death. By the beery dissipated crowd outside, I say, this obvious fact had been lost sight of. What they wanted to see was the women and the men as they turned out into the streets or drove away. Well, that sight exists no longer, and to a certain extent it is a gain. The Haymarket in these latter days was very different and a much more sober place than it was when the Marquis of Waterford played his drunken pranks at Bob Croft's, or when the simple Windham was in the habit of spending his time and wasting his money and degrading an honoured name at such a place as Barns's or The Blue Posts. Men not far advanced in life can remember the Piccadilly Saloon, with its flashy women and medical students and barristers from the Temple, and men about town and greenhorns from the country—who in the small hours turned out into the streets, shouting stentoriously, "We won't go home till morning," and putting their decision into execution by repairing to the wine and coffee rooms which lined both sides of the Haymarket and existed in all the adjacent streets. In some there was a piano, at which a shabby performer was hired to keep up the harmony of the evening and to give an appearance of hilarity to what was after all a very slow affair. In others the company were left to their own resources. At a certain hour the police inspector, with a couple of constables, would look in, and it was comic to see how unconscious he was apparently that every trace of intoxicating drink had been removed, as nothing remained on the tables but a few harmless cups of coffee. It was not till the industrious world had risen to the performance of its daily task that the rag-tag and bob-tail of the Haymarket retired to roost; and by the time that earls and holy bishops and godly clergy were ready to drive down the Haymarket to take part in meetings at Exeter Hall to send the Gospel to the heathen abroad, not a trace was left of the outrageous display the night before of the more fearful and sadder forms of heathenism at home. Undoubtedly the Haymarket thirty or forty years ago was an awful place; undoubtedly it will be a little quieter now that the Argyle Rooms are closed, and as the glory of Windmill-street has fled. Undoubtedly we have gained a great deal externally by magisterial action. Yet it is evident we need something more than magisterial sanction for the interference of the police. I am not partial to the men in blue. I doubt their efficacy as agents for moral reform or the introduction of the millennium. They can remove the symptoms, but they cannot touch the disease. It seems to me that they often interfere—especially in the case of poor women—when there is no occasion to do so; and no one, when it is requisite, can be more stolidly blind and deaf and dumb than your ordinary policeman. Police surveillance must mean more or less police bribery. It was once my fate to live in a country town and to belong to a library, which was also supported by the superintendent of police. On one occasion I had a book which had previously been in that gentleman's hands. In opening it a letter fell out addressed to him. I did what I ought not to have done, but as it was wide open, I read it, as anyone would. It was from a publican in the town, begging the superintendent's acceptance of a cask of cider. Of course, on the next licensing-day no complaint would be heard as to the character of that house. A journeyman engineer, in his "Habits and Customs of the Working Classes," gives us similar testimony as he describes a drinking party during prohibited hours disturbed by the appearance of a policeman, but reassured when told by the landlord that he is one of "the right sort;" which means, continues the author, that "he is one of that tolerably numerous sort who, provided a publican 'tips' them a 'bob' occasionally, and is liberal in the matter of drops of something short when they are on night duty, will not see any night-drinking that may be carried on in his establishment as long as it is done with a show of decency." I need say no more on that head; human nature is the same all the world over. Out of the heart are the issues of life, and no policeman or magistrate can make a drunken people sober, or a low, sordid, and sensual race of men and women noble and pure in thought and beautiful in life. For that we look to the Christian Church in all its branches. To its ministers especially we appeal. Let them leave theological

p. 27

p. 28

p. 29

p. 30

p. 31

p. 32

p. 33

p. 34

wrangling, and the cloister where no living voice is heard, and the well-lined study in which human nature, when it puts in an appearance, has learned to assume a decent and decorous mask, and see what are the amusements of the people, not so much on the Sabbath-day, but on the week-night. The Argyle was but one place out of many. In our great cities there are tens of thousands who live only for amusement, whether they be the working classes or in the higher walks of life. A glance at some of these places of resort may help us to understand what are the amusements of the people, and whether the Church does well and wisely in stamping them with her approval, or regarding them with her frown. It is how a man spends his money, and not how he makes it, that is the true index to his character. It is really impossible to imagine amusements more foolish or more indicative of a low tone of mind morally and intellectually than those which are most patronised at the present day. What pleasure can there be in watching a man walking for a bet, or in a woman risking her neck on a trapeze? Yet thousands go to see such a sight. Even the theatres delight in displays equally revolting, perhaps more so from a moral point of view.

p. 35

When General Grant was in Moscow lately, an acrobat placed four bottles on a high table, and on top of these a chair, which he balanced sideways while he stood on his head on one corner of it. He kept repeating this, adding one chair at a time, until he got five on top of each other, and still showed no signs of stopping; but General Grant got up and walked away, saying he would rather read the death in the papers than witness it. Our music-hall audiences are far more appreciative of the amusements provided for them.

The stage, I have said, may not escape censure. It has its illustrious exceptions, but, as Mr. Chatterton has shown us, Shakespeare means bankruptcy, and the majority of adaptations from the French are, it is admitted on all hands, not of an improving character. The way also in which the powers of the licenser are administered is, to say the least, puzzling. It is impossible to represent some subjects on the stage without injury to the morals and the manners of the spectators. In Mr. Arthur Matthison's adaptation of "Les Lionnes Pauvres," the sin of adultery was, it is true, held up to execration; but the license was withheld because it was deemed undesirable to turn the English theatre into a spectacular divorce court. Another prohibited play was founded on "La Petite Marquise," in which faithlessness to the marriage vow becomes a fine art, and virtue and honour and purity in woman is held up to ridicule. A lady who has married a man very much her senior, is represented as encouraging the advances of a seducer, who, when she throws herself in his arms, to avoid the expense of having to keep her, sends her back to her husband; and yet the man who forces this filth on the stage complains that he is badly treated, and questions whether the world has ever given birth, or ever will give birth, to any conception as obscene as that of the old man in "The Pink Dominoes"—a play which, it must be remembered, has had a most successful run upon the stage. At the theatre, the same writer observes, "I have beheld a young man hidden in a chest spring out upon a woman half dressed, while from her lips broke words I shudder to repeat. In peril I have watched with bated breath an attempt to commit a rape elaborately represented before the public. In 'Madame! attend Monsieur,' I have seen a woman take a shirt in one hand, and a shift in the other, and, standing in the very centre of the stage, walk up to the float, deliberately put the two together, then with a wild shriek, etc.;" and here the writer stops short. No one, of course, expects people will stop away from the theatre; but why cannot the tone of the place be a little higher, and the whole style of the amusement more worthy of a civilised community? Why cannot we have a less liberal display of legs and bosoms, and more generally in the matter of wit? There have always been admirers of good acting. Why should they be ignored, and the stage lowered to the level of the country bumpkin, the imbecile youth of the day, and his female friends?

p. 36

p. 37

p. 38

III.—OUR MUSIC-HALLS.

p. 39

I fear the first impression made upon the mind of the careful observer is that, as regards amusements, the mass of the people are deteriorating very rapidly, that we are more frivolous and childish and silly in this way than our fathers. One has no right to expect anything very intellectual in the way of amusements. People seek them, and naturally, as a relief from hard work. A little amusement now and then is a necessity of our common humanity, whether rich or poor, high or low, sinner or saint; and of course, in the matter of amusements, we must allow people a considerable latitude according to temperament and age and education, and the circumstances in which they are placed. In these days no one advocates a Puritanical restraint and an abstinence from the pleasures of the world. We have a perfect right to everything that can lighten the burden of life, and can make the heart rejoice. It was not a pleasant sign of the times, however, when the people found an amusement in bull-baiting, cock-fighting, boxing, going to see a man hanged; nor is it a pleasant sign of the times when, night after night, tens of thousands of our fellow-countrymen are forced into shrieks of laughter by exhibitions as idiotic as they are indecent. A refined and educated people will seek amusements of a refining character. If the people, on the contrary, rejoice in the slang and filthy innuendoes, and low dancing and sensational gymnastics of the music-hall, what are we to think? The music-hall is quite an invention of modern days. In times not very remote working men were satisfied with going into a public-house—having there their *quantum suff.* of less adulterated beer than they can get now—and sometimes they got into good society at such places. For instance, we find Dr. Johnson himself a kind of chairman of an ale-house in Essex Street, Strand, where, for a small fee, you

p. 40

p. 41

might walk up and see the Doctor as large as life and hear him talk. At a later day the bar-parlour, or whatever it might be called, of the public-house, was the place in which men gathered to talk politics, and to study how they could better themselves. When Bamford, the Lancashire Radical, came to town in 1817, the working men were principally to be found discussing politics in all the London public-houses. One such place he visited and describes: "On first opening the door," he writes, "the place seemed dimmed by a suffocating vapour of tobacco curling from the cups of long pipes, and issuing from the mouths of the smokers in clouds of abominable odour, like nothing in the world more than one of the unclean fogs of the streets, though the latter were certainly less offensive and probably less hurtful. Every man would have his half-pint of porter before him; many would be speaking at once, and the hum and confusion would be such as gave an idea of there being more talkers than thinkers, more speakers than listeners. Presently, 'order' would be called, and comparative silence restored; a speaker, stranger, or citizen would be announced with much courtesy or compliment. 'Hear, hear, hear,' would follow, with clapping of hands and knocking of knuckles on the tables till the half-pints danced; then a speech with compliments to some brother orator or popular statesman; next a resolution in favour of Parliamentary reform, and a speech to second it; an amendment on some minor point would follow; a seconding of that; a breach of order by some individual of warm temperament, half-a-dozen would rise to set him right, a dozen to put them down; and the vociferation and gesticulation would become loud and confounding." Such things are out of fashion nowadays. Political discussion requires a certain amount of intellectual capacity. In London there are but few discussion forums now, and the leading one is so fearfully ventilated and so heavily charged with the fumes of stale tobacco and beer, that it is only a few who care to attend. I remember when there were three very close together and well attended. I remember also when we had a music-hall in the City. It was not a particularly lively place of resort. We used to have "The Bay of Biscay" and "The Last Rose of Summer," and now and then a comic song, while the visitor indulged in his chop or beef-steak and the usual amount of alcoholic fluid considered necessary on such occasions. But now we have changed all that, and the simple-hearted frequenter of Dr. Johnson's Tavern half-a-century back would be not a little astonished with the modern music-hall, which differs *in toto cælo* from the public-house to which in old-fashioned days a plain concert-room was attached.

p. 42

p. 43

p. 44

A glance at the modern music-hall will show us whether we have improved on our ancestors. In one respect you will observe it is the same. Primarily it is a place in which men and women are licensed to drink. The music is an after-thought, and if given is done with the view to keep the people longer in these places and to make them drink more. Externally the music-hall is generally a public-house. It may have a separate entrance, but it is a public-house all the same, and you will find that you can easily go from one to the other. In the music-hall itself the facilities for drink are on every side. There are generally two or three bars at which young ladies are retained to dispense whatever beverages may be required. In the stalls there are little tables on which the patrons of the establishment place their glasses of grog or beer. A boy comes round with cigars and programmes for sale. All the evening waiters walk up and down soliciting your orders. It is thus to the drink, and not to the payment made for admission, that the proprietor looks to recoup himself for his outlay—and that is considerable. A popular music-hall singer makes his forty pounds a week; not, however, by singing at one place all the week, but by rushing from one to the other, and the staff kept at any music-hall of any pretensions is considerable. Internally, the music-hall is arranged as a theatre—with its stage, orchestra, pit, galleries, and boxes.

p. 45

"Don't you think," said the manager of one of the theatres most warmly patronised by the working classes, to a clerical friend of mine, "don't you think I am doing good in keeping these people out of the public-houses all night?"

p. 46

My clerical friend was compelled to yield a very reluctant assent. In the case of the music-hall nothing of the kind can be said in extenuation. It is only a larger and handsomer and more attractive kind of drinking shop. In one respect it may be said to have an advantage. Mostly of a night, about the bars of common public-houses and gin-palaces, there are many unfortunate women drinking either by themselves or with one another, or with their male companions. In the music-hall "the unfortunate female" element—except in the more central ones, where they swarm like wolves or eagles in search of their prey—is absent, or, at any rate, not perceptible. The workman takes there his wife and family, and the working man the young woman with whom he keeps company. There can be no harm in that? you say. I am not quite sure. Let me give one case as an illustration of many similar which have come under my own observation.

p. 47

A girl one evening went with a friend, an omnibus conductor, to a music-hall. She was well plied with drink, which speedily took an effect on her brain, already affected by the gas and glare, and life and bustle of the place. The girl was a fine, giddy, thoughtless girl of the maid-of-all-work order. In the morning when she awoke she found herself in a strange room with her companion of the preceding night. What was the result? She dared not go back to her place. She was equally afraid to go home. I need not ask the reader to say what became of her. Let him question the unfortunate women who crowd the leading thoroughfares of a night how they came to be what they are. It is a fact, I believe, that no censorship is applied to music-hall performances, and that the only censorship is that of the audience. The audience, be it remembered, begins to drink directly the doors are opened, and remains drinking all the time till they are closed; and you may be sure that in a mob of two, or sometimes, as is the case, three thousand people, that the higher is the seasoning and the lower the wit, and the more abundant the *double entendre*, the greater is the applause, and the manager, who sits in an arm-chair at

p. 48

the back of the orchestra and in front of the audience, takes note of that. In the days of the Kembles, Mrs. Butler notes how the tendency of actors was not so much to act well as to make points and bring down the house. Especially does she deplore Braham's singing as much to be censured in this respect, and as unworthy of his high powers and fame. In the music-hall this lower style of acting and singing becomes a necessity. The people go to be amused, and the actor must amuse them. If he can stand on his head and sing, immense would be the applause. If he is unequal to this, he must attempt something equally absurd, or he must have dogs and monkeys come to his aid; and perhaps after all he will find himself outrivalled by a Bounding Brother or a wonderful trapeze performer. If the music-hall proprietor in a northern city had prevailed on Peace's mistress, Miss Thompson, to have appeared on his stage, what a fortune he would have made.

p. 49

The other night I went into one of the largest of our music-halls, not a hundred miles away from what was once Rowland Hill's Chapel. There must have been more than three thousand people present. Not a seat was to be had, and there was very little standing room. I paid a shilling for admission, and was quite surprised to see how entirely the shilling seats or standing places were filled with working men, many of whom had their wives and sweethearts with them. The majority, of course, of the audience was made up of young men, who, in the course of the evening spent at least another shilling in beer and "baccy." In these bad times, when people, in the middle ranks of life are in despair at the hard prospect before them, here were these working men spending their two hundred pounds a night at the least at this music-hall.

p. 50

When I managed to squeeze my way in it was about the hour of ten, when men who have to get up early to work ought to be in bed. The performances were in full swing, and the enthusiasm of the audience, sustained and stimulated by refreshment, was immense. A female or two were the worse for liquor, but otherwise by that time the intoxicating stage had not been gained. After some very uninteresting bicycling by riders in curious dress, a man disguised as a nigger sang a lot of low doggerel about his "gal." In the course of his singing he stopped to tell us that his "gal" had a pimple and that he liked pimples, as they were signs of a healthy constitution. He then, amidst roars of laughter, pretended to catch a flea. He liked fleas, he said; a flea came in the daylight and looked you in the face like a man as it bit you; but a bug he hated. It crawled over your body in the dark and garroted you. Then he went on to speak in a mock-heroic style of the rights of women. He "spotted" some naughty ones present—an allusion received with laughter. He loved them all, male or female, married or single, and advised all the young men present to get married as soon as possible and then hang themselves. Ballet dancing of the usual character followed, and I came away.

p. 51

p. 52

It is said a paper recently sent a special correspondent to describe a London music-hall; the description was refused admission into the paper on the ground of indecency, and I can well believe it.

As to the profit made by the music-halls there can be no doubt. Take for instance the London Pavilion. I find the following newspaper paragraph: Sir Henry A. Hunt, C.B., the arbitrator in the case of the London Pavilion Music Hall, has sent in his award. M. Loibl claimed £147,000 for the freehold and goodwill, the building being required for the new street from Piccadilly to Oxford Street. The award is £109,300. The freehold cost M. Loibl £8,000, and his net profits in 1875 were £10,978; in 1876, £12,083; and in 1877, £14,189. Let me give another illustration. When the proprietor of Evans' Supper Rooms was refused his license, his loss was estimated at £10,000 per annum. It surely evidently is more ready to pay liberally for the gratification of its senses, than for the promotion of its virtues.

p. 53

IV.—MORE ABOUT MUSIC-HALLS.

p. 54

The journeyman engineer tells us one day as he was walking along with a mate in the country, he spoke of the beauty of the surrounding scenery and of the magnificent sight which met their eyes. "Oh, blow the sights of the scenery," said his companion, "the sight for me is a public-house." It is the same everywhere. I was once travelling in a third-class carriage from Newry to Belfast, when I heard the most atrocious exclamations from a party of young men seated at the other end, all offering to break each other's heads in the name of the Holy Father. On my intimating that it was a pity young men should thus get into that state to a respectable farmer by my side, his only reply was, "Sure, what's the good of a drop of drink if it don't raise something?" Once upon a time I spent a Sunday in a little village inn in North Wales. To my disgust there stumbled into the little parlour a young man, dressed respectably, who had evidently been heavily drinking. As he lay there with his stertorous snore, all unconscious of the wonder and the beauty of the opening day, it seemed to me that it was a sad misuse of the term to say, as his friends would, that he had been in search of amusement. As a reverend divine took his seat in a train the other day there stumbled into it a couple of young fellows, one with his face very much bruised and cut about—who soon went off to sleep—while his companion explained to the minister that they had both of them been enjoying themselves. In the more densely populated and poorer districts of the metropolis there is an immense deal of this kind of enjoyment.

p. 55

p. 56

To see the people enjoying themselves, I went the other night down the Whitechapel and Commercial Road district. As I turned the corner of Brick Lane I asked a tradesman of the better

class if he could direct me to a very celebrated music-hall in that neighbourhood. "It is over that way," said he with a strong expression of disgust. "It's a regular sink of iniquity," he added. As I was not aware of that, I merely intimated my regret that it was so largely patronised by working men, and that so much money was thus wasted, which might be applied to a better purpose. "Well, you see," said my informant, "they don't think of that—they know there is the hospital for them when they are ill." On my remarking that I was going to Brick Lane prior to visiting the music-hall, he intimated that I had better button up my coat, and when I said that when out on such expeditions as I was then engaged in, I never carried a watch and chain worth stealing, he remarked that if the people did not rob me, at any rate they might knock me down. However, encouraged by his remarks that the people were not so bad as they were, I went on my way.

p. 57

Apparently the improvement of which my informant spoke was of a very superficial character. Coming from the Aldgate Station at the early hour of six, I found every drinking shop crammed, including the gaudy restaurant at the station, and descending to the filthiest gin-palace, there were the men drinking, and if they were not drinking they were loafing about in groups of by no means pleasant aspect. When at a later hour I returned, the sight was still sadder, as hordes of wild young girls, just emancipated from the workshop, were running up and down the streets, shrieking and howling as if mad. As most of the shops were then closed, the streets seemed almost entirely given over to these girls and their male friends. In the quarter to which I bent my steps the naval element was predominating, and there were hundreds of sailors cruising, as it were, up and down, apparently utterly unconscious that their dangers at sea were nothing to those on land. Men of all creeds and of all nations were to be encountered in search of amusement, while hovered around some of the most degraded women it is possible to imagine—women whose bloated faces and forms were enough to frighten anyone, and to whom poor Jack, in a state of liquor, is sure to become a prey. To the low public-houses of this district dancing-rooms are attached, and in them, as we may well suppose, vice flourishes and shows an unabashed front. I must say it was with a feeling of relief that I found a harbour of refuge in the music-hall. Compared with the streets, I must frankly confess it was an exchange for the better. On the payment of a shilling I was ushered by a most polite attendant into a very handsome hall, where I had quite a nice little leather arm-chair to sit in, and where at my ease I could listen to the actors and survey the house. The place was by no means crowded, but there was a good deal of the rough element at the back, to which, in the course of the evening's amusement, the chairman had more than once to appeal. From the arrangements made around me, it was evident that there was the same provision which I have remarked elsewhere for the drinking habits of the people. There was a side bar at which the actors and actresses occasionally appeared on their way to or from the stage, and affably drank with their friends and admirers. The other day I happened to hear a thief's confession, and what do you think it was? That it was his mingling with the singers off the stage that had led to his fall. He was evidently a smart, clever, young fellow, and had thought it a sign of his being a lad of spirit to stand treat to such people. Of course he could not afford it, and, of course, he had a fond and foolish mother, who tried to screen him in his downward career. The result was he embezzled his employer's money, and, when that was discovered, imprisonment and unavailing remorse were the result. To the imagination of raw lads there is something wonderfully attractive in the music-hall singer, as, with hat on one side and in costume of the loudest character, and with face as bold as brass, he sings, "Slap, bang! here we are again!" or takes off some popular theatrical performer or some leading actor on a grander stage. On the night in question one singer had the audacity to assume as much as possible the character of the Premier of our day, not forgetting the long gray coat by which the Earl of Beaconsfield is known in many quarters. Comic singing, relieved by dancing, seemed to be the staple amusement of the place, and when one of the female performers indecently elevated a leg, immense was the applause. All the while the performances were going on, the waiters were supplying their customers with drink, and one well-dressed woman—evidently very respectable—managed a couple of glasses of grog in a very short while. But mostly the people round me were quiet toppers, who smoked and drank with due decorum, and who seemed to use the place as a kind of club, where they could sit comfortably for the night, and talk and listen, and smoke or drink, at their pleasure. It is hardly necessary to say that the majority of the audience were young men. The attendance was not crowded. Perhaps in the east of London the pressure of bad times is being felt. The mock Ethiopian element, next to the dancing, was the feature of the evening's amusements which elicited the most applause. It is a curious thing that directly a man lampblacks his face and wears a woollen wig, and talks broken English, he at once becomes a popular favourite.

p. 58

p. 59

p. 60

p. 61

p. 62

A few nights after I found myself in quite another part of London—in a music-hall that now calls itself a theatre of varieties. It was a very expensive place, and fitted up in a very costly manner. You enter through an avenue which is made to look almost Arcadian. Here and there were little rustic nooks in which Romeo and Juliet would make love over a cheerful glass. Flunkeys as smart almost as Lord Mayors' footmen took your orders. It was late when I put in an appearance, and it was useless to try and get a seat. It was only in the neighbourhood of the refreshment bar that I could get even standing room, and being a little taller than some of the stunted half-grown lads around me, could look over their heads to the gaudy and distant stage. I did not hear much of the dialogue. Old Astley, who years before had lived in that neighbourhood, and knew the art of catering for the people, used to remark when the interest of the piece seemed to flag, "Cut the dialogue and come to the 'osses," and here the stage direction evidently was to set the ballet-girls at work, and it seemed to me that the principal aim of the piece was to show as many female arms and legs as was possible. I am not of Dr. Johnson's opinion that it is indecent for a woman to expose herself on the stage, but I was, I own, shocked with the heroine of the evening, whose

p. 63

too solid form in the lime-light—which was used, apparently, to display all her beauties—was arrayed in a costume, which, at a distance, appeared to be of Paraisaical simplicity, more fitted for the dressing-room of the private mansion than for the public arena of the stage. There was, I doubt not, animated dialogue, and the swells in the stalls, I daresay, enjoyed it; but for my shilling I could see little, and hear less; and weary of the perpetual flourish of female arms and legs, I came away. What I did most distinctly hear were the orders at the bar for pale ale and grog, and the cry of the waiter, as he pushed on with his tray well filled, of “By your leave,” to the crowd on each side—all of whom had, of course, a cigar or short pipe in their mouths, and were evidently young men of the working class. That evening’s amusement, I am sure, must have taken some two or three hundred pounds out of their pockets. But I saw no one the worse for liquor, though the public-houses all round were crowded with drunken men and women; for the morrow was Sunday, and who can refuse the oppressed and over-taxed working man his right to spend all his week’s wages on a Saturday night?

p. 64

p. 65

One night last winter I was at a meeting held in the Mission Hall, Little Wild Street, at which some three hundred thieves had been collected together to supper. One of them, who had seen the evil of his ways, said: “The greatest curse of my life was the music-halls. They have been the means of my ruin;” and the way in which that speech was received by his mates evidently testified to the fact that the experience of many was of a similar character. I said to him afterwards that I knew the music-hall to which he referred, and that I had calculated that on an average each man spent there two shillings a night. “Oh sir,” was the reply, “I spent a great deal more than that of a night.” If so, I may assume that he spent as much as four shillings a night—and that, as the place was his favourite haunt after office-hours, he was there every night in the week, this would make an expenditure of one pound four shillings—a sum, I imagine, quite as much as his wages as a poor clerk. What wonder is it that the silly youth became a thief, especially when the devil whispers in his ear that theft is easy and the chance of detection small? The one damning fact which may be charged against all music-halls is that their amusements are too high in price, and that every device is set to work to make people spend more money than the cost of the original admission. In the theatre you may sit—and most people do sit all the evening—without spending a penny. In the music-hall a man does not like to do that. He drinks for the sake of being sociable, or because the waiter solicits him, or because he has drunk already and does not like to leave off, or because he meets doubtful company at the bar, or because the burden of every song is that he must be a “jolly pal” and that he must enjoy a cheerful glass. I can remember when at one time the admission fee included the cost of a pint of beer or some other fluid. Now drink is an extra, and as the proprietor of the music-hall, to meet the competition all round him, has to beautify his hall as much as possible, and to get what he calls the best available talent, male or female—whether in the shape of man or ass, or dog or elephant, or monkey—he is of course put to a considerable extra expense; and that of course he has to get out of the public the best way he can. No one loves to work for nothing, and least of all the proprietor of a music-hall.

p. 66

p. 67

Talking of “pals” and “a cheerful glass” reminds me of a scene which made me sick at the time, and which I shall not speedily forget. On the night of the Lord Mayor’s Show, I entered a music-hall in the north of London—in a region supposed to be eminently pious and respectable, and not far from where Hick’s Hall formerly stood. As I saw the thousands of people pushing into the Agricultural Hall, to see the dreary spectacle of an insane walking match, and saw another place of amusement being rapidly filled up, I said to myself: “Well, there will be plenty of room for me in the place to which I am bound;” and it was with misgiving that I paid the highest price for admission—one shilling—to secure what I felt, under the circumstances, I might have had at a cheaper rate. Alas! I had reckoned without my host. The hour for commencing had not arrived, and yet the place was full to overflowing. Mostly the audience consisted of young men. As usual, there were a great many soldiers. It is wonderful the number of soldiers at such places; and the spectator would be puzzled to account for the ability of the private soldier thus to sport his lovely person did not one remember that he is usually accompanied by a female companion, generally a maid-of-all-work of the better class, who is too happy to pay for his aristocratic amusements, as she deems them, on condition that she accompanies him in the humble capacity of a friend. Soldiers, I must do them justice to say, are not selfish, and scorn to keep all the good things to themselves. As soon as they find a neighbourhood where the servant “gal” is free with her wages, they generally tell each other of the welcome fact, and then the Assyrian comes down like the wolf on the fold.

p. 68

p. 69

Well, to continue my story. On the night, and at the place already referred to, they were a very jolly party—so far as beer and “baccy” and crowded company and comic singing were concerned. They had a couple of Brothers, who were supposed to be strong in the delineation of Irish and German character, but as their knowledge of the language of the latter seemed simply to be confined to the perpetually exclaiming “Yah, yah!” I had misgivings as to their talents in that respect, which were justified abundantly in the course of the evening. Dressed something in the style of shoeblacks, and wearing wooden shoes, which made an awful noise when they danced, the little one descries his long-lost elder brother, to whom his replies are so smart and witty that the house was in a roar of laughter, in which I did not join, as I had heard them twice already.

p. 70

After they had finished we had a disgustingly stout party, who was full of praise of all conviviality, and who, while he sang, frisked about the stage with wonderful vivacity and with as much grace as a bull in a china-shop, or a bear dancing a hornpipe. As he sang, just behind me there was all at once a terrible noise; the chairman had to call out “Order,” the spectators began howling,

p. 71

"Turn him out;" the singer had to stop, the roughs in the gallery began to scream and cheer, and the bars were for a wonder deserted. In so dense a crowd it was so difficult to see anything, that it was not at once that I discovered the cause of the disorder; but presently I saw in one of the little pews, into which this part of the house was divided (each pew having a small table in the middle for the liquor) a couple of men quarrelling. All at once the biggest of them—a very powerful fellow of the costermonger type—dealt his opponent—a poor slim, weedy lad of the common shop-boy species—a tremendous blow. The latter tried to retaliate, and struggled across the table to hit his man, but he merely seemed to me to touch his whiskers, while the other repeated his blow with tremendous effect. In vain the sufferer tried to get out of the way; the place was too crowded, and with a stream of blood flowing from his nose he fell, or would have fallen, to the earth had not some of the bystanders dragged him a few yards from his seat. Then as he lay by me drunk, or faint, or both, unable to sit up or to move, with the blood pouring down his clothes and staining the carpet all round, I saw, as the reader can well believe, a commentary on the singer's Bacchanalian song of a somewhat ironical character; but business is business, and at the music-hall it will not do to harrow up the feelings of the audience with such sad spectacles. Perfectly insensible, the poor lad was carried out, while a constable was the means of inducing his muscular and brutal-looking opponent to leave the hall. Order restored, the stout party bounded on to the stage, and the hilarity of the evening—with the exception of here and there a girl who, evidently not being used to such places, was consequently frightened and pale and faint for awhile—was as great as ever. The comic singer made no reference to the unfortunate incident; all he could do was to say what he had got by heart, and so he went on about the cheerful glass and the fun of going home powerfully refreshed at an early hour in the morning, and much did the audience enjoy his picture of the poor wife waiting for her husband behind the door with a poker, assisting him upstairs with a pair of tongs, and after she had got him sound asleep meanly helping herself to what cash remained in his pocket. p. 72

For my part, I candidly own I felt more inclined to sympathise with the wife than with her husband; but the music-hall is bound to stand up for drinking, for it is by drinking that it lives. If people cared for music and the drama, they would go to the theatre; but that declines, and the music-hall flourishes. Astley's Theatre is a case in point. That has been an old favourite with the public. At one time, I should imagine, few places paid better—does not Ducrow sleep in one of the most magnificent monuments in Kensal Green, and did he not make his money at Astley's?—but now there are two flourishing music-halls one on each side of Astley's, and as I write I see one of the proprietors, as a plea why he should be given more time for the payment of a debt, admits that sometimes they lose at Astley's as much as forty pounds a week. If Astley's is to be made to pay, evidently the sooner it is turned into a music-hall the better. p. 74

Will the London School Boards raise the character of the future public? is a question to be asked but not to be answered in our time. The real fact is that amusements have a deteriorating effect on the character of those who devote themselves to them, and become more frivolous as they become more popular. This is the case, at any rate, as regards music-halls. A gentleman the other day, as we were speaking of one of the most successful of them, said how grieved he was on a visit to it lately to see the generally lowered tone of entertainment. At one time the attempt was made to give the people really good music, and there were selections of operas of first-rate character. Now all that is done away with, and there is nothing but silly comic singing of the poorest kind. p. 75

In another respect also there has been a deterioration—that is, in the increased sensationalism of the performance. A music-hall audience requires extra stimulus—the appetite becomes palled, and if a leap of fifty feet does not "fetch the public," as Artemus Ward would say, why then, the leap must be made a hundred; and really sometimes the spectacles held up for the beery audience to admire are of the most painful character. I have said that the doubtful female element is not conspicuous in the music-hall—that is the case as regards those on the outskirts of London, but the nearer you approach the West-End the less is that the case; and there is more than one music-hall I could name which is little better than a place of assignation and rendezvous for immoral women, and where you may see them standing at the refreshment bars soliciting a drink from all who pass. Such music-halls are amongst the most successful of them all, and the proprietor reaps a golden harvest. p. 76

I presume it is impossible to tell the number of our metropolitan music-halls, or to give an idea of the numbers who frequent them, and of the amount of money spent in them during the course of a single night. Apparently they are all well supported, and are all doing well. If you see a theatre well filled, that is no criterion of success. It may be, for aught you know, well filled with paper, but the music-hall is a paying audience, and it is cash, not paper, that is placed in the proprietor's hands. In the east of London I find that both as regards the theatres and music-halls the proprietors have a dodge by means of which they considerably increase their profits, and that is to open a particular entrance a little before the time for admission, and to allow people to enter on payment of a small extra fee. It was thus the other night I made my way into a music-hall. I paid an extra twopence rather than stand waiting half an hour outside in the crowd. Another thing I also learned the other night that must somewhat detract from the reputation of the theatre, considered in a temperance point of view, and that is the drinking customs are not so entirely banished as at first sight we may suppose. The thousands who fill up the Vic., and the Pavilion in Whitechapel, perhaps do not drink quite as much as they would had they spent the evening at a music-hall, but they do drink, nevertheless, and generally are provided with a bottle of liquor which they carry with them, with other refreshment, down into the pit, or up where the gods live and lie reclined. p. 77

If it is impossible to reckon the number of music-halls in London, it is equally impossible to denote the public-houses with musical performances. In Whitechapel the other night I discovered two free-and-easies on my way to one of the music-halls of that district. They were, in reality, music-halls of a less pretentious character, and yet they advertised outside the grand attractions of a star company within. Prospects may be cloudy, trade may be bad, and, as a slang writer remarks, things all round may be unpromising, but the business of the music-hall fluctuates very little. Enter at any time between nine and ten and you have little chance of a seat, and none whatever of a good place. As to numbers it is difficult to give an idea. Some of the officials are wisely chary in this matter, and equally so on the subject of profits. The Foresters' Hall in Cambridge Heath Road advertises itself to hold four thousand people, and that does not by any means strike me as one of the largest of the music-halls. Last year the entire British public spent £140,000,000, or eight shillings a week for each family, in drink, and the music-halls help off the drink in an astonishing way. As I went into a music-hall last autumn I saw a receipt for £51 as the profit for an entertainment given there on behalf of the Princess Alice Fund, and if the attendance was a little greater, and the profit a little larger than usual, still a fair deduction from £51 for bad nights and slack times will make a pretty handsome total at the end of the year after all. Now and then the music-hall does a little bit of philanthropy in another way, which is sure to be made the most of in the papers. For instance, last year Mr. Fort, of the Foresters' Music Hall, invited some of the paupers from a neighbouring workhouse to spend the evening with him. I daresay he had a good many old customers among the lot, whereupon someone writes in *Fun* as follows: "The Bethnal Green Guardians showed themselves superior to the Bath Guardians the other day, and in response to the offer of Mr. Fort, proprietor of the Foresters' Music-hall, rescinded the resolution prohibiting the paupers from partaking of any amusement other than that afforded within the workhouse walls. So the inmates of the union had a day out, and, we trust, forgot for awhile their sorrows and troubles. It is whispered that, in addition to pleasing the eye and the ear, the promoter of the entertainment presented each of his visitors with a little drop of something of an equally Fort-ified character." I may add that the Foresters' Music-hall claims to be a celebrated popular family resort, and that evening I was there the performance was one to which a family might be invited. Of course the family must have a turn for drink. They cannot go there without drinking. There is the public-house entrance to suggest drink, the bar at the end of the saloon to encourage it, and the waiters are there expressly to hand it round, and a good-natured man of course does not like to see waiters standing idle, and accordingly gives his orders; and besides, it is an axiom in political economy that the supply creates the demand.

p. 79

p. 80

p. 81

p. 82

Here are some of the verses I have heard sung with immense applause:

The spiritualists only can work by night,
They keep it dark;
For their full-bodied spirits cannot stand the light,
So they keep it dark;
They profess to call *spirits*, but I call for *rum*
And *brandy* or *gin* as the best medium
For raising the spirits whenever I'm glum;
But keep it dark.

The utter silliness of many of the songs is shown by the following, "sung with immense success," as I read in the programme, by Herbert Campbell:

p. 83

I've read of little Jack Horner,
I've read of Jack and Jill,
And old Mother Hubbard,
Who went to the cupboard
To give her poor dog a pill;
But the best is Cowardy Custard,
Who came to awful grief
Through eating a plate of mustard
Without any plate of beef.

Chorus.

Cowardy Cowardy Custard, oh dear me,
Swallowed his father's mustard, oh dear me—
He swallowed the pot, and he collared it hot;
For, much to his disgust,
The mustard swelled, Cowardy yelled,
Then Cowardy Cowardy bust.

This is supposed, I presume, to be a good song. What are we to think of the people who call it so? It is difficult to imagine the depth of imbecility thus reached on the part of singer and hearers, and is a fine illustration of the influence of beer and "baccy" as regards softening the brain. The music-hall singer degrades his audience. Even when he sings of passing events he panders as much as possible to the passions and prejudices of the mob. His words are redolent of claptrap and fury, and are a mischievous element in the formation of public opinion. Heroes and patriots are not made in music-halls. But rogues and drunkards and vagabonds—and lazy, listless lives, destitute of all moral aim. There are respectable people who go to music-halls—

p. 84

women as well as men—but they get little good there. Indeed, it would be a miracle if they did.

But the great fact is that the music-hall makes young men indulge in expensive habits—get into bad company, and commence a career which ends in the jail. Amusement has not necessarily a bad effect, or else it would be a poor look-out for all. It is as much our duty to be merry as it is to be wise. It is the drinking at these places that does the mischief. It is that that leads to a low tone of entertainment, and deadens the conscience of the young man who thinks he is enjoying life, and makes the working man forget how the money he squanders away would make his home brighter, and his wife and children happier, and would form a nice fund to be drawn on when necessary on a rainy day. The great curse of the age is extravagant and luxurious living, always accompanied with a low tone of public intelligence and morality and thought. In the present state of society we see that realised in the men and women who crowd our music-halls, and revel in the songs the most improper, and in the dances the most indelicate.

p. 85

As I write, another illustration of the pernicious influence of music-halls appears in the newspapers. At the Middlesex Sessions, John B. Clarke surrendered to his bail on an indictment charging him with attempting to wound his wife, and with having wounded George Marshall, police constable, in the execution of his duty. When Marshall was on duty in Jubilee Street on the night of November 28th, he heard loud cries of "Murder" and "Police," and went to the prisoner's house. He found the prisoner and his wife struggling in the passage, and the wife, seeing him, cried out, "Policeman, he has a knife and has threatened to cut my throat." The police-constable closed with the prisoner and endeavoured to wrest the knife from him, when the prisoner made two stabs at his wife which fortunately missed her, and another stab which cut the hand of Marshall, who succeeded in wresting the knife from the prisoner, and took him to the station. In cross-examination it was elicited that prisoner's wife had gone to a music-hall; that her husband, returning home, found her with two or three young men and women sitting together in his parlour; that one of the young men kissed her, and that the prisoner, seeing this, became mad with jealousy, and seized the first thing that came to his hand. A gentleman, in whose employment the prisoner was, gave him an exceptionally high character for more than eighteen years, and expressed his perfect willingness to have him back into his service and to become security for his good behaviour. The jury convicted the prisoner of causing actual bodily harm, strongly recommending him to mercy, and expressing their belief that he had no intention to wound the policeman. Mr. Prentice said this was a peculiarly sad and painful case. To wound or even obstruct a policeman in the execution of his duty was a serious offence; but looking at all the circumstances of the case, the finding of the jury, and their recommendation to mercy, he sentenced him to one month's hard labour, and accepted his employer's surety that he would keep the peace for the next three months. The grand jury commended Marshall for his conduct in the case.

p. 86

p. 87

p. 88

Another thing also may be said. The other evening I was dining with a lawyer with a large police practice, in what may be called, and what really is, a suburb of London. My friend is what may be described as a man of the world, and of course is anything but a fanatic in the cause of temperance. I spoke of a music-hall in his immediate neighbourhood, and said I intended dropping in after dinner. "Well," he said, "the worst of the place is that if we ever have a case of embezzlement on the part of some shop-boy or porter, it is always to be traced to that music-hall. A lad goes there, is led into expenses beyond his means, thinks it manly to drink and to treat flash women, and one fine morning it is discovered that he has been robbing the till, and is ruined for life."

p. 89

With these words of an experienced observer, I conclude.

V.—SUNDAYS WITH THE PEOPLE.

p. 90

It is said—and indeed it has been said so often that I feel ashamed of saying it—that one half the world does not know how the other half lives. I am sure that whether that is true or not, few of my City readers have any idea of what goes on in the City while they are sitting comfortably at home, or are sitting equally comfortably at church or chapel (for of course the denunciations of the preacher when he speaks of the depravity of the age do not refer to them). Suppose we take a stroll in the eastern part of the City, where the dirt is greatest, the population most intense, and the poverty most dire. We need not rise very early. On a Sunday morning we are all of us a little later at breakfast than on ordinary occasions. We sit longer over our welcome meal—our toilette is a little more elaborate—so that we are in the City this particular Sunday about half-past nine—a later hour than most of the City-men patronise on the week-day. In the leading thoroughfares shops are shut and there are few people about, and in the City, especially these dark winter mornings, when the golden gleam of sunshine gilds the raw and heavy fog which in the City heralds the approach of day, very few signs of life are visible, very few omnibuses are to be seen, and even the cabs don't seem to care whether you require their services or whether you let them alone. Here and there a brisk young man or a spruce maiden may be seen hastening to teach at some Sunday school; otherwise respectability is either asleep or away.

p. 91

p. 92

As we pass along, the first thing that strikes the stranger is a dense unsavoury mob to be met outside certain buildings. We shall see one such assemblage in Bell Alley, Goswell Street; we shall see another in Artillery Street; there will be another at the Cow Cross Mission Hall, and

another in Whitecross Street, and another in a wretched little hovel, you can scarcely call it a building, in Thaul Street. Just outside the City, at the Memorial Hall, Bethnal Green, and at the Rev. W. Tyler's Ragged Church in King Edward Street, there will be similar crowds. Let us look at them. It is not well to go too near, for they are unsavoury even on these cold frosty mornings. Did you ever see such wretched, helpless, dirty, ragged, seedy, forlorn men and women in all your life? I think not. Occasionally on a week-day we see a beggar, shirtless and unwashed and unkempt, shivering in the street, but here in these mobs we see nothing else. They have tickets for free breakfasts provided for them under the care of Mr. J. J. Jones and the Homerton Mission. How they crowd around the doors, waiting for admission; how sad and disconsolate those who have not tickets look as they turn away! What a feast of fat things, you say, there must be inside. My dear sir, it is nothing of the kind. All that is provided for them is a small loaf of bread, with the smallest modicum of butter, and a pint of cocoa. Not much of a breakfast that to you or me, who have two or three good meals a day, but a veritable godsend to the half-starved and wretched souls we see outside. Let us follow them inside. The tables and the long forms on which they are seated are of the rudest kind. The room, as a rule, is anything but attractive, nor is the atmosphere very refreshing. A City missionary or an agent of the Christian community, or a devoted Christian woman or a young man, whose heart is in the work—is distributing the materials of the feast, which are greedily seized and ravenously devoured. Let us look at them now they have taken their hats off. What uncombed heads; what dirty faces; what scant and threadbare garments! There are women too, and they seem to have fallen lower than the men. They look as if they had not been to bed for months; as if all pride of personal appearance had long since vanished; as if they had come out of a pigstye.

p. 93

p. 94

Well, the world is a hard one for such as they, and no one can grudge them the cheap meal which Christian charity provides. It seems a mockery to offer these waifs and strays of the streets and alleys and disreputable slums of the City a Gospel address till something has been done to assuage the pangs of hunger, and to arouse in them the dormant and better feelings of their nature. It is thus these mission-halls are enabled to do a little good, to go down to the very depths, as it were, in the endeavour to reform a wasted life, and to save a human soul. As you look at these men and women you shudder. Most of them are in what may be called the prime of life; able-bodied, ripe for mischief, fearing not God, regarding not man. It must do them good to get them together at these Sunday morning breakfasts, where they may realise that Christian love which makes men and women in the middle and upper classes of society have compassion on such as they.

p. 95

Getting out into the open air, or rather into the open street, I heard a band of singers advance. It is a procession, but not a very dangerous one. The leader walks with his back to us, an act rarely exercised out of royal circles. It is thus he guides the vocalists before him, who go walking arm-in-arm singing with all their might; while at the rear a pleasant-looking man follows, giving papers to the people. I take one, and learn that this is Mr. Booth's Allelujah Band, and that a seat is kindly offered me in his tabernacle, where I can hear the Gospel. I don't accept the invitation; I can hear the Gospel without going to Whitechapel, and Mr. Booth's extravagances are not to my taste. Apparently this Sunday morning the people do not respond to the invitation. It is evident that in this part of the City the novelty of the thing has worn off.

p. 96

I scarce know whether I am in the City or not. I plunge into a mass of streets and courts leading from Artillery Street to King Edward Street at one end, and Bethnal Green at the other. Here is a market in which a brisk provision trade is carried on, and men and women are purchasing all the materials of a Sunday dinner. Outside Rag-fair a trade similar to that which prevails there seems also to be carried on. I see no policemen about, and the people apparently do just as they like; and the filth and garbage left lingering in some of the narrow streets are anything but pleasant. As a rule, I observe the policemen only patronise the leading thoroughfares, and then it seems to me they act in a somewhat arbitrary manner. For instance, opposite the Broad Street Terminus a lad is cleaning a working man's boots. While he is in the middle of the operation the policeman comes and compels him to march off. I move on a dozen steps, and there, up Broad Street—just as you enter the Bishopsgate Station of the Metropolitan Railway—is another lad engaged in the same work of shoe or boot cleaning. Him the policeman leaves alone. I wonder why. Justice is painted blind, and perhaps the policeman is occasionally ditto. In Bishopsgate Street itself the crowd was large of idle boys and men, who seemed to have nothing particular to do, and did not appear to care much about doing that. They took no note of the Sabbath bells which called them to worship. To them the Sunday morning was simply a waste of time. They had turned out of their homes and lodgings, and were simply walking up and down the street till it was time to open the public-house. In that street, as the reader may be aware, there is the Great Central Hall, and as its doors were open, I went in. The audience was very scanty, and apparently temperance does not find more favour with the British working man than the Gospel. Mr. Ling was in the chair. There was now and then a hymn sung or a temperance melody, and now and then a speech. Indeed, the speeches were almost as numerous as the hearers. It seems the society keeps a missionary at work in that part of the City, and he had much to say of the cases of reformation going on under his care. The best speech I heard was that of a working builder, who said for years he had been in the habit of spending eight shillings a week in the drink, and how much better off he was now that he kept the money in his pocket. I wished the man had more of his class to hear him. Of course he rambled a little and finished off with an attack on the bishops, which the chairman (Mr. Ling) very properly did not allow to pass unchallenged, as he quoted Bishop Temple as a teetotaler, and referred to the hearty way in which many of the clergy of the Church of England supported the temperance cause.

p. 97

p. 98

p. 99

I hasten to other scenes. I next find myself in Sclater Street, and here up and down surges a black mob, sufficient at any rate, were it so disposed, to fill St. Paul's Cathedral. This mob is composed entirely of working men—men who are amused with anything, and hurry in swarms to a hatter's shop, who simply throws out among them pink and yellow cards, indicating the extraordinary excellence and unparalleled cheapness of the wares to be sold within.

p. 100

Foreigners say Sunday is a dull day; that then there is no business doing in London; and that everyone is very sad on that day. In Sclater Street they would soon find out their mistake. There, it is evident, little of Sunday quiet and Sunday dulness exists. On each side of me are shops with birds; and if there is not a brisk trade going on, it is certainly not the fault of the tradesmen. We have just had what the bird-catchers call the November flight of linnets, and in Sclater Street the market overflows with them. The London and suburban bird-catchers, who are not to be put down by Act of Parliament, have had a fine time of it this year. The principal part of the linnets are bred on the wild gorse lands, and it is the wild weather such as we have had of late that drives them into the nets of the suburban fowler, who this year has been so lucky as to take five dozen of them at one pull of the clap-net. Goldfinches also are abundant, in consequence of the provision of the Wild Birds Preservation Act. On Sunday a bird-dealer offers me them at threepence each, or four for a shilling. It is sad to see the poor little things shut up in their bits of cages in the dirty shops of Sclater Street. The proprietor with his unwashed hands takes them out one by one and holds them out in vain. The British workman crowds round and admires, but he does not buy, as he is keeping his money in his pocket till 1 P.M., when the "public" opens its congenial doors, and his unnatural thirst is slaked. It is really shocking, this display of these beautiful little songsters. What crime have they committed that they should be imprisoned in the dirt and bad air and uncongenial fog of Sclater Street? What are the uses of the Wild Birds Preservation Act if the only result is the crowding the shops of the bird-dealers in Sclater Street? I felt indeed indignant at the sight thus permitted, and at the trade thus carried on. Cocks and hens, ducks and rabbits, are proper subjects of sale, I admit, though I see no particular reason why, when other shops are closed, shops for the sale of them are permitted to remain open; but blackbirds, linnets, thrushes, goldfinches, bullfinches—the ornaments of the country, the cheerful choristers of the garden and the grove—deserve kinder treatment at our hands, even if the result be that Sclater Street does less business and is less of an attractive lounge to the British operative on a Sabbath morn. Away from Sclater Street and Bishopsgate Street the crowd thins, and the ordinary lifeless appearance of the Sunday in London is visible everywhere. Here and there a gray-headed old gentleman or an elderly female may be seen peeping out of a first-floor window into the sad and solitary street, but the younger branches of the family are away. Now and then you catch a crowd of workmen who are much given to patronise the showy van which the proprietor of some invaluable preparation of sarsaparilla utilises for the sale of his specific for purifying the blood and keeping off all the ills to which flesh is heir. Such shops as are open for the sale of cheap confectionery I see also are well patronised, and in some quarters evidently an attempt made to dispose of ginger-beer. On the cold frosty morning the hot-chestnut trade appears also to be in demand, though I question whether all who crowd round the vendors of such articles are *bonâ-fide* buyers; rather, it seems to me, that under the pretence of being such they are taking a mean advantage of the little particle of warmth thrown out by the charcoal fire used for the purpose of roasting chestnuts. Well, I can't blame them; it is cold work dawdling in the streets, and if I were a British workman I fancy I should find a little more interest in church than in the idle walk and talk of some, or in the habit others have of standing stock still till The Pig and Whistle or the Blue Lion open their doors. It is well to be free and independent and your own master, but that is no reason why all the Sunday morning should be spent in loafing about the streets.

p. 101

p. 102

p. 103

p. 104

But what about the many? Well, the public-houses are open, and it is there the British workman feels himself but too much at home. And then there is the Hall of Science, in Old Street, which is generally crowded by an audience who pay gladly for admission to hear Mr. Bradlaugh, who is a very able man, lecture, in a style which would shock many good people if they were to hear him. I must candidly admit that in that style he is far outdone by Mrs. Besant, who takes the Bible to pieces, and turns it inside out, and holds up to ridicule all its heroes and prophets, and kings and apostles, and Christ himself, with a zest which seems perfectly astonishing when we remember how much Christianity has done for the elevation of the people in general and woman in particular. Mrs. Besant is a very clever woman, and she means well I daresay, still it is not pleasant to see the Hall of Science so well filled as it is on a Sunday night.

p. 105

The Hall of Science in the Old Street Road is not an attractive place outside, and internally it is less of a hall and more of a barn than any public building with which I chance to be familiar. And yet, Sunday night after Sunday night, it is well filled, though the admission for each person is from threepence to a shilling, and there is no attempt by music or ritual to attract the sentimental or the weak. The lectures delivered are long and argumentative, and it is worth the study, especially of the Christian minister who complains that he cannot get at the working man, how it is that the people prefer to pay money to hear the lectures at Old Street, while he offers them the Gospel without money and without price and often with the additional attraction of a free tea. With that view I went to hear Mrs. Besant one Sunday night. I know little of Mrs. Besant, save that she has been made the subject of a prosecution which, whatever be its results, whether of fine or imprisonment to herself or of gain to her prosecutors, is one deeply to be deplored. If a clergyman of the Established Church of England established or attempted to establish the fact that mankind has a tendency to increase beyond the means of existence, a woman, on behalf of the sex that has the most to suffer from the misery of overpopulation, has a right in the interests of humanity to call attention to the subject. In a very old-fashioned couplet

p. 106

p. 107

it has been remarked of woman—

That if she will, she will, you may depend on't;
And if she won't, she won't, and there's an end on't.

To that class of female Mrs. Besant emphatically belongs. She is one of those rare ones who will say what she thinks. There is a great deal of firmness in her face. Such a woman always goes her own way. It was a pleasant change from the strong meat of the Hall of Science—the withering scorn and contempt there poured on all that the best men in the world have held to be best—to the mild excitement of a Shakespearian reading in a public-house. Could there be a fitter teacher for the people who do not go to church, and, let me add, also for those who do? There could be no negative reply to such a question, and surely if Shakespeare is quoted in the pulpit on a Sunday morning, the people may hear him read on a Sunday evening.

p. 108

“Sunday evening readings for the people!” Only think of that! What a gain from the tap-room and the bar-parlour. Such was the announcement that met my eye the other night in a street not a hundred miles from King’s Cross railway station. Mr. So-and-So, the bill proceeded to state, had the pleasure to inform his friends that, with a view to oblige the public, he had secured the services of a celebrated dramatic reader, who would on every Sunday evening read or recite passages from Shakespeare, Thackeray, Dickens, Hood, Thornbury, Sketchley, etc. Further, the bill stated that these readings would commence at a quarter-past seven, and terminate at a quarter-past ten. Could I resist such an intellectual treat? Could I deny myself such an exquisite gratification? Forgive me, indulgent reader, if for once I made up my mind I could not. The difficulty was where to find the place, for, in my delight at finding a publican so public-spirited—so ready to compete with the attractions of St. George’s Hall—I had unfortunately failed to make a note of the house thus kindly thrown open to an intelligent public. The difficulty was greater than would at first sight appear, for on Sunday night shops are mostly closed, and there are few people in a position to answer anxious inquirers. Great gin-palaces were flaring away in all their glory, and doing a roaring trade at the time when church-bells were ringing for evening service, and decent people were hastening to enter the sanctuary, and for awhile to forget earth with its care and sin. In vain I timidly entered and put the query to the customers at the crowded bar, to potman over the counter, to landlord, exceptionally brilliant in the splendour of his Sunday clothes. They knew nothing of the benevolent individual whose whereabouts I sought; and evidently had a poor opinion of me for seeking his address. Sunday evening readings for the people! what cared they for them? Why could I not stand soaking like the others at their bar, and not trouble my head about readings from Shakespeare and Dickens? Such evidently was the train of thought suggested by my questions. Just over the way was a police-station. Of course the police would know; it was their duty to know what went on in all the public-houses of the district. I entered, and found three policemen in the charge of a superior officer. I put my question to him, and then to them all. Alas! they knew as little of the matter as myself; indeed, they knew less, for they had never heard of such a place, and seemed almost inclined to “run me in” for venturing to suppose they had. What wonderful fellows are our police! I say so because all our penny-a-liners say so; but my opinion is, after all, that they can see round a corner or through a brick wall just as well as myself or any other man, and no more. Clearly this was a case in point, for the public-house I was seeking was hardly a stone’s-throw off, and I was directed to it by an intelligent greengrocer, who was standing at his shop-door and improving his mind by the study of that fearless champion of the wrongs of the oppressed and trodden-down British working man, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*. It was he who put me on the right scent—not that he was exactly certain—but he indicated the house at which such proceedings were likely to take place, and as he was right in his conjecture, I take this opportunity of publicly returning him my thanks. Had it not been for him I should have had no Shakespeare, no Thackeray, no Hood, no Dickens, no feast of reason and flow of soul that Sunday night. As it was, it turned out as I expected, and I had very little of either to reward my painful search. As I have said, the nominal hour at which proceedings commenced was a quarter-past seven; in reality, it was not till nearly half-past eight that the celebrated dramatic reader favoured us with a specimen of his powers. It was true he was in the house, but he was down in the bar with a select circle, indulging in the luxuries generally to be found in such places. In the meantime I took stock leisurely of the room upstairs in which we assembled, and of its occupants. At that early hour the latter were not numerous. A little foreigner with his wife was seated by the fire, and him she led off before the dramatic readings commenced. Reasons, which a sense of delicacy forbids my mentioning, suggested the wisdom and the prudence of an early retirement from a scene rather dull—at any rate, quite the reverse of gay and festive. As to the rest of us, I can’t say that we were a particularly lively lot. A stern regard to truth compels me reluctantly to remark that we were unprepossessing looking rather than otherwise. The majority I of us there were lads with billycock hats and short pipes, who talked little to each other, but smoked and drank beer in solemn silence. The cheerfulest personage in the room was the potboy, who, as he stalked about with his apron on and his shirt-sleeves tucked up, seemed to be quite at home with his customers. Some of the lads had their sweethearts with them; at any rate I presume they were such from the retiring way in which they sat—she, after the manner of such young people in a large room, chiefly occupied in counting the ten fingers of her red and ungloved hands, while her male admirer sat smoking his short pipe and spitting on the sanded floor in a way more suggestive of perfect freedom than of grace. I could see but two decent-looking girls in the room, which, by the time the entertainment was over, contained as many as sixty or seventy. Evidently the class of customers expected was a low one, greengrocers’ and costermongers’ boys apparently, and such like. The tables were of the commonest order, and we had no chairs,

p. 109

p. 110

p. 111

p. 112

p. 113

p. 114

nothing but long forms, to sit on. In the middle by the wall was a small platform, carpeted; on this platform was a chair and table, and it was there the hero of the evening seated himself, and it was from thence that at intervals he declaimed. As to the entertainment, if such it may be called, the less said about it the better. A more fifth-rate, broken-down, ranting old hack I think I never heard. Even now it puzzles me to think how the landlord could have ever had the impudence to attach the term "celebrated" to his name. It seemed as if the reader had an impediment in his speech, so laughable and grotesque was his enunciation, which, however, never failed to bring down an applause in the way of raps on the tables which caused the glasses to jingle—to the manifest danger of spilling their contents. We had a recitation about Robert Bruce, and other well-known readings; then he bellowed and tossed his arms about and screamed! How dull were his comic passages! How comic was his pathos! Surely never was good poetry more mangled in its delivery before. I can stand a good deal—I am bound to stand a good deal, for in the course of a year I have to listen to as much bad oratory as most; but at last I could stand it no longer, and was compelled to beat a precipitate retreat, feeling that I had over-estimated the public spirit of the landlord and his desire to provide intellectual amusement for his friends—feeling that these readings for the people are nothing better than an excuse for getting boys and girls to sit smoking and drinking, wasting their time and injuring their constitutions, on a night that should be sacred to better things, in the tainted atmosphere of a public-house.

p. 115

p. 116

VI.—THE LOW LODGING-HOUSE.

p. 117

Is chiefly to be found in Whitechapel, in Westminster, and in Drury Lane. It is in such places the majority of our working men live, especially when they are out of work or given to drink; and the drinking that goes on in these places is often truly frightful, especially where the sexes are mixed, and married people, or men and women supposed to be such, abound. In some of these lodging-houses as many as two or three hundred people live; and if anything can keep a man down in the world, and render him hopeless as to the future, it is the society and the general tone of such places. Yet in them are to be met women who were expected to shine in society—students from the universities—ministers of the Gospel—all herding in these filthy dens like so many swine. It is rarely a man rises from the low surroundings of a low lodging-house. He must be a very strong man if he does. Such a place as a Workman's City has no charms for the class of whom I write. Some of them would not care to live there. It is no attraction to them that there is no public-house on the estate, that the houses are clean, that the people are orderly, that the air is pure and bracing. They have no taste or capacity for the enjoyment of that kind of life. They have lived in slums, they have been accustomed to filth, they have no objection to overcrowding, they must have a public-house next door. This is why they live in St. Giles's or in Whitechapel, where the sight of their numbers is appalling, or why they crowd into such low neighbourhoods as abound in Drury Lane. Drury Lane is not at all times handy for their work. On the contrary, some of its inhabitants come a long way. One Saturday night I met a man there who told me he worked at Aldershot. Of course to many it is convenient. It is near Covent Garden, where many go to work as early as 4 A.M.; and it is close to the Strand, where its juvenile population earn their daily food. Ten to one the boy who offers you "the Hevening Hecho," the lass who would fain sell you cigar-lights and flowers, the woman who thrusts the opera programme into your carriage as you drive down Bow Street, the questionable gentleman who, if chance occurs, eases you of your pocket-handkerchief or your purse, the poor girl who, in tawdry finery, walks her weary way backwards and forwards in the Strand, whether the weather be wet or dry, long after her virtuous sisters are asleep—all hail from Drury Lane. It has ever been a spot to be shunned. Upwards of a hundred years ago, Gay wrote in his "Trivia"—

p. 118

p. 119

p. 120

Oh, may thy virtue guard thee through the roads
Of Drury's mazy courts and dark abodes.

It is not of Drury Lane itself, but of its mazy courts that I write. Drury Lane is a shabby but industrious street. It is inhabited chiefly by tradespeople, who, like all of us, have to work hard for their living; but at the back of Drury Lane—on the left as you come from New Oxford Street—there run courts and streets as densely inhabited as any of the most crowded and filthy parts of the metropolis, and compared with which Drury Lane is respectability itself. A few days since I wanted to hear Happy William in a fine new chapel they have got in Little Wild Street. As I went my way, past rag-shops and cow-houses, I found myself in an exclusively Irish population, some of whom were kneeling and crossing themselves at the old Roman Catholic chapel close by, but the larger number of whom were drinking at one or other of the public-houses of the district. At the newspaper-shop at the corner, the only bills I saw were those of *The Flag of Ireland*, or *The Irishman*, or *The Universe*. In about half an hour there were three fights, one of them between women, which was watched with breathless interest by a swarming crowd, and which ended in one of the combatants, a yellow-haired female, being led to the neighbouring hospital. On his native heather an Irishman cares little about cleanliness. As I have seen his rude hut, in which the pigs and potatoes and the children are mixed up in inextricable confusion, I have felt how pressing is the question in Ireland, not of Home Rule, but of Home Reform. I admit his children are fat and numerous, but it is because they live on the hill-side, where no pestilent breath from the city ever comes.

p. 121

p. 122

In the neighbourhood of Drury Lane it is different; there is no fresh air there, and the only flowers one sees are those bought at Covent Garden. Everywhere on a summer night (she “has no smile of light” in Drury Lane), you are surrounded by men, women, and children, so that you can scarce pick your way. In Parker Street and Charles Street, and such-like places, the houses seem as if they never had been cleaned since they were built, yet each house is full of people—the number of families is according to the number of rooms. I should say four-and-sixpence a week is the average rent for these tumble-down and truly repulsive apartments. Children play in the middle of the street, amidst the dirt and refuse; costermongers, who are the capitalists of the district, live here with their donkeys; across the courts is hung the family linen to dry. You sicken at every step. Men stand leaning gloomily against the sides of the houses; women, with unlovely faces, glare at you sullenly as you pass by.

p. 123

The City Missionary is, perhaps, the only one who comes here with a friendly word, and a drop of comfort and hope for all. Of course the inhabitants are as little indoors as possible. It may be that the streets are dull and dirty, but the interiors are worse. Only think of a family, with grown-up sons and daughters, all living and sleeping in one room! The conditions of the place are as bad morally as they are physically.

It is but natural that the people drink more than they eat, that the women soon grow old and haggard, and that the little babes, stupefied with gin and beer, die off, happily, almost as fast as they are born. Here you see men and women so foul and scarred and degraded that it is mockery to say that they were made in the image of the Maker, and that the inspiration of the Almighty gave them understanding; and you ask is this a civilised land, and are we a Christian people?

p. 124

No wonder that from such haunts the girl gladly rushes to put on the harlot’s livery of shame, and comes here after her short career of gaiety to die of disease and gin. In some of the streets are forty or fifty lodging-houses for women or men, as the case may be. In some of these lodging-houses there are men who make their thirty shillings or two pounds a week. In others are the broken-down mendicants who live on soup-kitchens and begging. You can see no greater wretchedness in the human form than what you see here. And, as some of these lodging-houses will hold ninety people, you may get some idea of their number. When I say that the sitting-room is common to all, that it has always a roaring fire, and that all day, and almost all night long, each lodger is cooking his victuals, you can get a fair idea of the intolerable atmosphere, in spite of the door being ever open. It seemed to me that a large number of the people could live in better apartments if they were so disposed, and if their only enjoyment was not a public-house debauch. The keepers of these houses seemed very fair-spoken men.

p. 125

I met with only one rebuff, and that was at a model house in Charles Street. As I airily tapped at the window, and asked the old woman if I could have a bed, at first she was civil enough, but when I ventured to question her a bit she angrily took herself off, remarking that she did not know who I was, and that she was not going to let a stranger get information out of her.

p. 126

As to myself, I can only say that I had rather lodge in any gaol than in the slums of Drury Lane. The sight of sights in this district is that of the public-houses and the crowds who fill them. On Saturday every bar was crammed; at some you could not get in at the door. The women were as numerous as the men; in the daytime they are far more so; and as almost every woman has a child in her arms, and another or two tugging at her gown, and as they are all formed into gossiping knots, one can imagine the noise of such places.

D.D.—City readers will know whom I refer to—has opened a branch establishment in Drury Lane, and his place was the only one that was not crowded. I can easily understand the reason—one of the regulations of D.D.’s establishment is that no intoxicated person should be served. I have reason to conclude, from a conversation I had some time ago with one of D.D.’s barmen, that the rule is not very strictly enforced; but if it were carried out at all by the other publicans in Drury Lane I am sure there would be a great falling off of business. Almost every woman had a basket; in that basket was a bottle, which, in the course of the evening, was filled with gin for private consumption; and it was quite appalling to see the number of little pale-faced ragged girls who came with similar bottles on a similar errand. When the liquor takes effect, the women are the most troublesome, and use the worst language.

p. 127

On my remarking to a policeman that the neighbourhood was, comparatively speaking, quiet, he said there had been three or four rows already, and pointed to a pool of blood as confirmation of his statement. The men seemed all more or less stupidly drunk, and stood up one against another like a certain Scotch regiment, of which the officer, when complimented on their sobriety, remarked that they resembled a pack of cards—if one falls, down go all the rest.

p. 128

Late hours are the fashion in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane. It is never before two on a Sunday morning that there is quiet there. Death, says Horace, strikes with equal foot the home of the poor and the palace of the prince. This is not true as regards low lodging-houses. Even in Bethnal Green the Sanitary Commission found that the mean age at death among the families of the gentry, professionalists, and richer classes of that part of Loudon was forty-four, whilst that of the families of the artisan class was about twenty-two.

Everyone—for surely everyone has read Mr. Plimsoll’s appeal on behalf of the poor sailors—must remember the description of his experiences in a lodging-house of the better sort, established by the efforts of Lord Shaftesbury in Fetter Lane and Hatton Garden. “It is astonishing,” says Mr. Plimsoll, “how little you can live on when you divest yourselves of all fancied needs. I had plenty of good wheat bread to eat all the week, and the half of a herring for a relish (less will do, if you

p. 129

can't afford half, for it is a splendid fish), and good coffee to drink, and I know how much—or, rather how little—roast shoulder of mutton you can get for twopence for your Sunday's dinner."

I propose to write of other lodging-houses—houses of a lower character, and filled, I imagine, with men of a lower class. Mr. Plimsoll speaks in tones of admiration of the honest hard-working men whom he met in his lodging-house. They were certainly gifted with manly virtues, and deserved all his praise. In answer to the question, What did I see there? he replies:

"I found the workmen considerate for each other. I found that they would go out (those who were out of employment) day after day, and patiently trudge miles and miles seeking employment, returning night after night unsuccessful and dispirited, only, however, to sally out the following morning with renewed determination. They would walk incredibly long distances to places where they heard of a job of work; and this, not for a few days, but for many, many days. And I have seen such a man sit down wearily by the fire (we had a common room for sitting, and cooking, and everything), with a hungry, despondent look—he had not tasted food all day—and accosted by another, scarcely less poor than himself, with 'Here, mate, get this into thee,' handing him at the same time a piece of bread and some cold meat, and afterwards some coffee, and adding, 'Better luck to-morrow; keep up your pecker.' And all this without any idea that they were practising the most splendid patience, fortitude, courage, and generosity I had ever seen."

Perhaps the eulogy is a little overstrained. Men, even if they are not working men, do learn to help each other, unless they are very bad indeed; and it does not seem so surprising to me as it does to Mr. Plimsoll that even such men "talk of absent wife and children." Certainly it is the least a husband and the father of a family can do.

The British working man has his fair share of faults, but just now he has been so belaboured on all sides with praise that he is getting to be rather a nuisance. In our day it is to be feared he is rapidly degenerating. He does not work so well as he did, nor so long, and he gets higher wages. One natural result of this state of things is that the class just above him—the class who, perhaps, are the worst off in the land—have to pay an increased price for everything that they eat and drink or wear, or need in any way for the use of their persons or the comfort and protection of their homes. Another result, and this is much worse, is that the workman spends his extra time and wages in the public-houses, and that we have an increase of paupers to keep and crime to punish. There is no gainsaying admitted facts; there is no use in boasting of the increased intelligence of the working man, when the facts are the other way. As he gets more money and power, he becomes less amenable to rule and reason. Last year, according to Colonel Henderson's report, drunk and disorderly cases had increased from 23,007 to 33,867. It is to be expected the returns of the City police will be equally unsatisfactory. As I write, I take the following from *The Echo*: In a certain district in London, facing each other, are two corner-houses in which the business of a publican and a chemist are respectively carried on. In the course of twenty-five years the houses have changed hands three times, and at the last change the purchase money of the public-house amounted to £14,300, and that of the chemist's business to only £1,000. Of course the publican drives his carriage and pair, while the druggist has to use Shanks's pony.

But this is a digression. It is of lodging-houses I write. It seems that there are lodging-houses of many kinds. Perhaps some of the best were those of which Mr. Plimsoll had experience. The Peabody buildings are, I believe, not inhabited by poor people at all. The worst, perhaps, are those in Flower and Dean Street, Spitalfields, and the adjacent district. One naturally assumes that no good can come out of Flower and Dean Street, just as it was assumed of old that no good could come out of Nazareth. This was illustrated in a curious way the other day. One of the earnest philanthropists connected with Miss Macpherson's Home of Industry at the corner, was talking with an old woman on the way of salvation. She pleaded that on that head she had nothing to learn. She had led a good life, she had never done anybody any harm, she never used bad language, and, in short, she had lived in the village of Morality, to quote John Bunyan, of which Mr. Worldly Wiseman had so much to say when he met poor Christian, just as he had escaped with his heavy burden on his shoulder out of the Slough of Despond, and that would not do for our young evangelist.

"My good woman," said he sadly, "that is not enough. You may have been all you say, and yet not be a true Christian after all."

"Of course it ain't," said a man who had been listening to the conversation. "You'll never get to heaven that way. You must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then you will be saved."

"Ah," said the evangelist, "you know that, do you? I hope you live accordingly."

"Oh yes; I know it well enough," was the reply; "but of course I can't practise it. I am one of the light-fingered gentry, I am, and I live in Flower and Dean Street;" and away he hurried as if he saw a policeman, and as if he knew that he was wanted.

The above anecdote, the truth of which I can vouch for, indicates the sort of place Flower and Dean Street is, and the kind of company one meets there. It is a place that always gives the police a great deal of trouble. Close by is a court, even lower in the world than Flower and Dean Street, and it is to me a wonder how such a place can be suffered to exist. What with Keane's Court and Flower and Dean Street the police have their hands pretty full day and night, especially the latter. Robbery and drunkenness and fighting and midnight brawls are the regular and normal state of affairs, and are expected as a matter of course. When I was there last a

woman had been taken out of Keane's Court on a charge of stabbing a man she had inveigled into one of the houses, or rather hovels—you can scarcely call them houses in the court. She was let off, as the man refused to appear against her, and the chances are that she will again be at her little tricks. They have rough ways, the men and women of this district; they are not given to stand much upon ceremony; they have little faith in moral suasion, but have unbounded confidence in physical force. A few miles of such a place, and London were a Sodom and Gomorrah.

p. 137

But I have not yet described the street. We will walk down it, if you please. It is not a long street, nor is it a very new one; but is it a very striking one, nevertheless. Every house almost you come to is a lodging-house, and some of them are very large ones, holding as many as four hundred beds. Men unshaven and unwashed are standing loafing about, though in reality this is the hour when, all over London, honest men are too glad to be at work earning their daily bread. A few lads and men are engaged in the intellectual and fashionable amusement known as pitch and toss. Well, if they play fairly, I do not know that City people can find much fault with them for doing so. They cannot get rid of their money more quickly than they would were they to gamble on the Stock Exchange, or to invest in limited liability companies or mines which promise cent. per cent. and never yield a rap but to the promoters who get up the bubble, or to the agent who, as a friend, begs and persuades you to go into them, as he has a lot of shares which he means to keep for himself, but of which, as you are a friend, and as a mark of special favour, he would kindly accommodate you with a few.

p. 138

But your presence is not welcomed in the street. You are not a lodger, that is clear. Curious and angry eyes follow you all the way. Of course your presence there—the apparition of anything respectable—is an event which creates alarm rather than surprise.

In the square mile of which this street in the centre, it is computed are crowded one hundred and twenty thousand of our poorest population—men and women who have sunk exhausted in the battle of life, and who come here to hide their wretchedness and shame, and in too many cases to train their little ones to follow in their steps. The children have neither shoes nor stockings. They are covered with filth, they are innocent of all the social virtues, and here is their happy hunting-ground; they are a people by themselves.

p. 139

All round are planted Jews and Germans. In Commercial Street the chances are you may hear as much German as if you were in Deutschland itself. Nor is this all; the place is a perfect Babel. It is a pity that Flower and Dean Street should be, as it were, representative of England and her institutions. It must give the intelligent foreigner rather a shock.

But *place aux dames* is my motto, and even in the slums let woman take the position which is her due. In the streets the ladies are not in any sense particular, and can scream long and loudly, particularly when under the influence of liquor. They are especially well developed as to their arms, and can defend themselves, if that be necessary, against the rudeness or insolence or the too-gushing affection of the other sex. As to their manners and morals, perhaps the less said about them the better.

p. 140

Let us step into one of the lodging-houses which is set apart exclusively for their use. The charge for admission is threepence or fourpence a night, or a little less by the week. You can have no idea of the size of one of these places unless you enter. We will pay a visit in the afternoon, when most of the bedrooms are empty. At the door is a box-office, as it were, for the sale of tickets of admission. Behind extends a large room, provided at one end with cooking apparatus and well supplied with tables and chairs, at which are seated a few old helpless females, who have nothing to do, and don't seem to care much about getting out into the sun. Let us ascend under the guidance of the female who has charge of the place, and who has to sit up till 3 A.M. to admit her fair friends, some of whom evidently keep bad hours and are given rather too much to the habit of what we call making a night of it. Of course most of the rooms are unoccupied, but they are full of beds, which are placed as close together as possible; and this is all the furniture in the room, with the exception of the glass, without which no one, male or female, can properly perform the duties of the toilette. One woman is already thus occupied. In another room, we catch sight of a few still in bed, or sitting listlessly on their beds. They are mostly youthful, and regard us from afar with natural curiosity—some actually seeming inclined to giggle at our intrusion. As it is, we feel thankful that we need not remain a moment in such company, and we leave them to their terrible fate.

p. 141

p. 142

A few hours later they will be out in the streets, seeking whom they may devour. Go down Whitechapel way, and you will see them in shoals haunting the public-houses of the district, or promenading the pavement, or talking to men as sunk in the social scale as themselves. They are fond of light dresses; they eschew bonnets or hats. Some are half-starved; others seem in good condition; and they need be so to stand the life they have to lead. Let us hope Heaven will have more mercy on such as they than man. It cannot be that decent respectable women live in Flower and Dean Street.

But what of the men? Well, I answer at the first glance, you see that they are a rough lot. Some are simply unfortunate and friendless and poor; others do really work honestly for their living—as dock labourers, or as porters in some of the surrounding markets, or at any chance job that may come in their way; many, alas, are of the light-fingered fraternity. The police have but a poor opinion of the honesty of the entire district—but then the police are so uncharitable! The members of the Christian community and others who come here on a Sunday and preach in more than one of the lodging-houses in the street have a better opinion, and certainly can point to men

p. 143

and women reclaimed by their labours, and now leading decent godly lives. It requires some firmness and Christian love to go preaching in these huge lodging-houses, in which one, it seemed to me, might easily be made away with. Even in the daytime they have an ugly look, filled as they are with idle men, who are asleep now, but who will be busy enough by-and-by—when honesty has done its work and respectability is gone to bed. As commercial speculations I suppose money is made by these places. The proprietor has but little expense to incur in the way of providing furniture or attendance, and in some cases he supplies refreshments, on which of course he makes a profit. But each lodger is at liberty to cater for himself, or to leave it alone if times are bad and money is scarce. At any rate there is the fire always burning, and the locker in which each lodger may stow away what epicurean delicacy or worldly treasure he may possess. I have been in prisons and workhouses, and I can say the inmates of such places are much better lodged, and have better care taken of them, and are better off than the poor people of Flower and Dean Street. The best thing that could happen for them would be the destruction of the whole place by fire. Circumstances have much to do with the formation of character, and in a more respectable neighbourhood they would become a little more respectable themselves.

p. 144

In the lodging-houses at Westminster the inhabitants are of a much more industrious character. In Lant Street, Borough, they are quite the reverse. A man should have his wits about him who attempts to penetrate into the mysteries or to understand the life of a low lodging-house there.

p. 145

For ages the Mint in the Borough has gained an unenviable name, not only as the happy hunting-ground of the disreputable, the prostitute, the thief, the outcast, the most wretched and the lowest of the poor, yet there was a time when it was great and famous. There that brave and accomplished courtier, the Duke of Suffolk, brought his royal bride, the handsome sister of our Henry VIII. It was there poor Edward VI. came on a visit all the way from Hampton Court. It was the goodly gift of Mary the unhappy and ill-fated to the Archbishop of York. Somehow or other Church property seems to be detrimental to the respectability of a neighbourhood, hence the truth of the old adage, "The nearer the church, the farther from God." At any rate this was the case as regards the Mint in the Borough, which in Gay's time had sunk so low that he made it the scene of his "Beggars' Opera," and there still law may be said to be powerless, and there still they point out the house in which lived Jonathan Wild. In the reign of William, our Protestant hero, and George I., our Hanoverian deliverer, a desperate attempt was made to clear the place of the rogues and vagabonds to whom it afforded shelter and sanctuary; but somehow or other in vain, though all debtors under fifty pounds had their liabilities wiped off by royal liberality. The place was past mending, and so it has ever since remained. It is not a neighbourhood for a lady at any time, but to inhabit it all that is requisite is that, by fair means or foul (in the Mint they are as little particular as to the way in which money is made as they are in the City or on the Stock Exchange), you have fourpence to pay for a night's lodging. All round the place prices may be described as low, to suit the convenience of the customer. You are shaved for a penny. Your hair is cut and curled for twopence. The literature for sale may be termed sensational, and the chandlers' shops, which are of the truest character if I may judge by the contents, do a trade which may be described as miscellaneous.

p. 146

p. 147

It is sad to see the successive waves of pauperism rise and burst and disappear. On they come, one after another, as fast as the eye can catch them, and far faster than the mind can realise all the hidden and complex causes of which they are the painful result. One asks, Is this always to be so? Is there to be no end to this supply, of which we see only the surface, as it were? Are all the lessons of the past in vain? Cannot Science, with all its boasted arts, remove the causes, be they what they may, and effect a cure? Is the task too appalling for philanthropy? Some such thoughts came into my head as I looked upon the dense mass of men and women, destitute of work and food, who, at an early hour on the first Sunday in the New Year were collected from all the lodging-houses in the unpretentious but well-known building known as the Gray's Yard Ragged Church and Schools, in a part of London not supposed, like the Seven Dials, to be the home of the wretched, and close by the mansions of the rich and the great. When I entered, as many as seven hundred had been got together, and there was a crowd three hundred strong, equally hungry, equally destitute, and equally worthy of Christian benevolence. On entering, each person, as soon as he or she had taken his or her seat, was treated to two thick slices of bread-and-butter and a cup of coffee, and at the close of the service there was the usual distribution of a pound meat-pie and a piece of cake to each individual, and coffee *ad libitum*. It may be added that the cost of this breakfast does not come out of the funds of the institution, but is defrayed by special subscriptions, and that Mr. John Morley had sent, as he always does, a parcel of one thousand Gospels for distribution. But what has this got to do, asks the reader, with the thought which, as I say, the sight suggested to me? Why, everything. In the course of the morning, Mr. F. Bevan, the chairman, asked those who had been there before to hold up their hands, and there was not one hand held up in answer to the question. There was a similar negative response when it was asked of that able-bodied mass before me—for there were no very old men in the crowd—as to whether any of them were in regular work. This year's pauperism is, then, but the crop of the year. Relieved to-day, next year another crowd will follow; and so the dark and sullen waves, mournfully moaning and wailing, of the measureless ocean of human sorrow and suffering, and want and despair, ever come and ever go. The Christian Church is the lifeboat sailing across this ocean in answer to the cry for help, and rescuing them that are ready to perish. There are cynics who say even all this Christmas feasting does no good. It is a fact that on Christmas week there is a sudden and wonderful exodus from the workhouses around London.

p. 148

p. 149

p. 150

We cannot get improved men and women till we have improved lodging-houses. Recently it was

calculated that in St. Giles's parish (once it was St. Giles's-in-the-Fields), there were no less than 3,000 families living in single rooms. Again, in the parish of Holborn, there were quite 12,000, out of a population of 44,000, living in single rooms. Under such circumstances, what can we expect but physical and moral degradation? Healthy life is impossible for man or woman, boy or girl. A Divine Authority tells us, men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. As I write, however, a ray of light reaches me. It appears nearly 10,000 persons are now reaping the benefit of the Peabody Fund. In the far east there are buildings at Shadwell and Spitalfields; in the far west at Chelsea, in Westminster, and at Grosvenor Road, Pimlico—the latter perfectly appointed edifice alone accommodating 1,952 persons. As many as 768 are lodged in the Islington block, and on the south side of the Thames there are Peabody buildings at Bermondsey, in the Blackfriars Road, Stamford Street, and Southwark Street. One room in the Peabody buildings is never let to two persons. A writer in *The Daily News* says: Advantage has been taken by the Peabody trustees to purchase land brought into the market by the operation of the Artisans and Labourers' Dwellings Act. At the present moment nineteen blocks of building are in course of removal either by the City or the Metropolitan Board of Works. They are situate at Peartree Court, Clerkenwell; Goulston Street, Whitechapel; St. George the Martyr, Southwark; Bedfordbury; Whitechapel and Limehouse, near the London Docks; High Street, Islington; Essex Road, Islington; Whitecross Street; Old Pye Street, Westminster; Great Wild Street, Drury Lane; Marylebone, hard by the Edgware Road; Wells Street, Poplar; Little Coram Street; and Great Peter Street, Westminster. All these are under the control of the Metropolitan Board of Works. The remaining three—at Petticoat Square, at Golden Lane, and at Barbican—are being removed by the Corporation of the City of London. It is estimated that forty-one acres of land will be laid bare by this clearance—a space capable of lodging properly at least as many thousand people. There are of course other helpers in the same direction as the Peabody trustees, without being quite in the same sense public bodies administering a large fund for a special purpose, with the single object of extending its sphere of usefulness in accordance with public policy. Some of the companies, however, work for five per cent. return, and their efforts to construct suitable dwellings for workpeople and labourers are very valuable. The Improved Industrial Dwellings Company has buildings at Bethnal Green Road, at Shoreditch, at Willow Street, and close to the goods station of the Great Northern Railway, besides two blocks near the City Road. The Metropolitan Association has blocks of buildings in Whitechapel, and in many spots farther west, as have the Marylebone Association, the London Labourers' Dwellings Society, and other bodies of similar kind. The success of Miss Octavia Hill in encouraging the construction of dwellings of the class required is well known, as are the buildings erected by Sir Sydney Waterlow, Mr. G. Cutt, and Mr. Newson. It is almost needless to add that the Baroness Burdett-Coutts has taken a warm interest in this important movement, as a building at Shoreditch now accommodating seven hundred persons will testify.

p. 151

p. 152

p. 153

p. 154

VII.—STUDIES AT THE BAR.

p. 155

On Christmas Eve, in the midst of a dense fog that filled one's throat and closed one's eyes, and rendered the vast City one huge sepulchre, as it were, peopled by ghosts and ghouls, I spent a few hours in what may be called studies at the bar.

First, I turned my steps down Whitechapel way. It is there the pressure of poverty is felt as much as anywhere in London, and as it was early in the evening I went there, I saw it under favourable circumstances, for the sober people would be shopping, and the drunken ones would scarcely have commenced that riot and quarrelling which are the result in most cases of indulgence in alcohol. From the publican's point of view, of course, I had nothing to expect but unmitigated pleasure. The stuff they sell, they tell us, is the gift of a good Providence, sent us in order to alleviate the gloom and lighten the cares of life. "It is a poor heart that never rejoices," and on Christmas Eve, when we are thinking of the birth of Him who came to send peace on earth and goodwill amongst men, a little extra enjoyment may be expected. In some bars ample provision had been made for the event; decorations had been freely resorted to, and everything had been done to give colour to the delusion that Christmas jollity was to be produced and heightened by the use of what the publican had to sell. Almost the first glimpse I got of the consequences of adherence to this doctrine was at a corner house in Whitechapel, before I got as far as the church, where from the side-door of a gin-palace rushed out a little dirty woman with a pot of beer in her hand, followed by a taller one, who, catching hold of her, began to hit her. On this the attacked woman took a savage grip of the front hair of her opponent, who began to scream "Murder!" with might and main. A crowd was formed immediately, in the expectation of that favourite entertainment of a certain section of the British public—a free fight between two tipsy women; but, alas! they were too far gone to fight, and, after a good deal of bad language, the woman with the porter pursued her victorious way, while the other, almost too drunk to stand, returned to the bar, to rejoin the dirty group she had left, and to be served again—contrary, as I understand, to the law of the land—with the liquor of which she had already had more than enough. In that compartment everything was dirty—the women at the bar and the man behind it, nor was there a spark of good feeling or happiness in the group. There they were—the wives and mothers of the people—all equally besotted, all equally wretched. Oh heavens, what a sight!

p. 156

p. 157

p. 158

And this reminds me of what I saw at a bar in the Gray's Inn Road, in one of the largest of the many houses opened for refreshment, as it is called. In one compartment there were some thirty

or forty wretched, dirty, ragged people, mostly women. One of them was in a state of elevation, and was dancing to a set who were evidently too far gone to appreciate her performance. With tipsy gravity, however, she continued her self-appointed task. Ah, poor thing! thought I, you are gay and hilarious now—to-morrow you will lie shivering in the cold—possibly crying for a morsel of bread. You have a garret to sleep in, and nothing to look forward to but the hospital or the workhouse. Heaven wills it, says the pietist. Heaven does nothing of the kind. In the mad debauchery I saw in that bar I am sure there must have been spent money that would have given the wretched toppers happier homes, better dinners, and a future far happier than that which I saw hanging over them.

p. 159

In Chancery Lane I came on several illustrations of the joyous conviviality of the season. One poor fellow just before me came down with a tremendous crash. Another nearly ran me down as he steered his difficult way along the slippery street and through the gloomy fog. Another merry old soul had given up all attempt to find his way home, and had seated himself on a doorstep, planted his hat on one side of his head, put his hands in his pockets to keep them warm, and there, asleep, with a short pipe in his mouth, and his legs stretched out, looked as mournful and seedy an object as anyone could desire to contemplate. He had evidently been having a pleasant evening with his companions over a social glass, merely keeping up good old English customs, wishing himself and everyone he knew a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

p. 160

At the gin-palaces near the railway termini, and in those bordering on any place of general marketing, the crowd of customers was enormous, and the class was far superior to those I saw in Drury Lane or Whitechapel, or the Gray's Inn Road. They were real respectable working men and their wives, who had been out marketing for the morrow, and who, proud of their success in that direction, and of the store of good things they had collected for the anticipated dinner, had to treat themselves with a parting glass ere they went home. It was a busy time for the men at the bar. In one large public with four or five compartments, I reckoned there must have been nearly a hundred customers. It was quite an effort for anyone to get served; he had to fight his way through the mob to pay his money and get his glass, and then to struggle back to a quiet corner to drink off its contents with a friend or his wife, but there was no drunkenness.

p. 161

The men and women of the respectable working class are not drunkards. They have too much sense for that, but they were merry, and a little inclined to be too talkative and heedless. For instance, a party of four went straight from a public-house to a railway station at which I happened to be waiting. One couple were going by the train home—another couple had come to see them off. The wife of the travelling party was fat and heavy, and in her jolly, careless mood, induced by the evening's conviviality, as the train came up she missed her step and fell between the wheels and the platform. Fortunately the train had come to a standstill, or that woman and her husband and her family would have had anything but a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

p. 162

In one place, patronised by navvies and their wives, there was such a hideous exhibition of indecency that I may not record it. "Why don't you interfere?" said a gentleman to the pot-boy. "Oh," was the reply, "you can't say anything at this season of the year. It is best to leave them alone."

In such low neighbourhoods as Drury Lane it seemed to me that the men preponderated; indeed, at many places they were the only customers. One could not much wonder to find them in such places. Either they live in the low lodging-houses close by, where they pay fourpence a night for a bed, or they have a room for themselves and families in the neighbourhood. In neither case is there much peace for them in what they call their home. They are best out of doors, and then comes the attraction of the public-house, and on Christmas Eve in the dull raw fog almost the only bright spot visible was the gleam of its gaudy splendour, and as a natural consequence bars were pretty well filled. They always are in poor neighbourhoods of a night, and especially such as have a corner situation. It is always good times with the proprietors of such places, even if trade be bad and men are out of work, and little children cry for bread and old people die of starvation and want. A corner public-house is never driven into the bankruptcy court.

p. 163

But let me change the scene. These low neighbourhoods are really disgusting to people of cultivated minds and refined tastes. I am standing in a wonderfully beautiful hall. On one side is a long counter filled with decanters and wineglasses. Behind these are some lively young ladies, fashionably dressed, and with hair elaborately arranged. The customers are chiefly young men, whom Albert Smith would have described as gents. They mostly patronise what they call "bittah" beer, and they are wise in doing so, as young men rarely can afford wine, and "bittah" beer is not so likely to affect the few brains they happen to have about them. Of course a good deal of wine is drunk, and there is a great demand for grog, but beer is the prevailing beverage; and as to tea and coffee and such things, they are unfairly handicapped, as the Hebe at the bar charges me sixpence for a small cup of coffee, while the gent by my side pays but twopence for his beer; nor can I say that he pays too much, as he has the opportunity thus afforded to him of talking to a young lady who has no refuge from his impertinence, and who is bound to be civil unless the cad is notoriously offensive, as her trade is to sell liquor, and the more he talks the more he drinks. But the mischief does not end here. Many a married man fancies it is fun to loll over the counter and spon with the girls behind. He has more cash than the gent, and spends more. If he is not a rich man he would pass himself off as such; he drinks more than is good for him; he makes the young ladies presents; he talks to them in a sentimental strain, and it may be he has a wife and family at home who are in need of almost the necessaries of life.

p. 164

p. 165

In many cases the end of all this is wretchedness at home and loss of character and means of subsistence; if he is in a house of business he lives beyond his income, and embezzlement is the result. If he be in business on his own account his end is bankruptcy, at any rate his health is not benefited by his indulgence at the bar, and to most men who have to earn their daily bread loss of health is loss of employment and poverty, more or less enduring and grinding and complete. What the gin-shop is to the working man, the restaurant and the refreshment bar are to the middle classes of society. There is no disgrace in dropping in there, and so the young man learns to become a sot. Planted as they are at all the railway termini, they are an ever-present danger; they are fitted up in a costly style, and the young ladies are expected to be as amiable and good-looking as possible, and thus when a young man has a few minutes to spare at a railway terminus, naturally he makes his way to the refreshment bar. p. 166

Dartmoor was full, writes the author of "Convict Life," with the men whom drink had led into crime—from the mean wretch who pawned his wife's boots for ninepence, which he spent in the gin-shop, to the young man from the City who became enamoured "with one of the painted and powdered decoy-ducks who are on exhibition at the premises of a notorious publican within a mile of Regent Circus." At first he spent a shilling or two nightly; but he quickly found that the road to favour was at bottle of Moët, of which his *inamorata* and her painted sisters partook very freely. The acquaintance soon ripened under the influence of champagne till he robbed his employer, and was sent to Dartmoor. "He told me himself," writes our author, "that from the time he first went to that tavern he never went to bed perfectly sober, and that all his follies were committed under the influence of champagne." p. 167

Another case he mentions was even worse. At the time of his conviction the young man of whom he writes was on the eve of passing an examination for one of the learned professions; but he had been an *habitué* of the buffet of let us call it the Royal Grill Room Theatre and a lounge at the stage door of that celebrated establishment, and had made the acquaintance of one of the ladies of the ballet. Under the influence of champagne he also soon came to grief. "In the name of God," says the writer to young men in London, "turn up taverns." p. 168

But what is to be done? The publican, whether he keeps a gin-palace or a refreshment bar, must push his trade. The total number of public-houses, beershops, and wine-houses in the Metropolitan Parliamentary boroughs is 8,973, or one to each 333 persons. This is bad; but Newcastle-on-Tyne is worse, having one public-house to 160 inhabitants, and Manchester has one to every 164 inhabitants. The amount paid in license-fees by publicans in the Metropolitan district last year amounted to £108,316; the total for the kingdom being £1,133,212. But great as is the number of these places, the trade flourishes. A licensed house in one of the finest parts of London (Bethnal Green), lately sold for upwards of £22,000. Another, a third or fourth rate house in North London, sold for £18,000; other licensed houses sell for £30,000, £40,000, £50,000, and even more. As to the refreshment bars, it lately came out in evidence that a partner in one of the firms most connected with them stated his income to be £40,000 a year. It is said one firm, whose business is chiefly devoted to refreshment bars, pays its wine merchants as much as £1,000 a week. p. 169

VIII.—IN AN OPIUM DEN. p. 170

An effort is being made by a band of British philanthropists, of which the Rev. Mr. Turner is secretary, to put down, if not the opium traffic, at any rate that part of it which is covered by the British flag. Opium is to the Chinese what the quid is to the British tar, or the gin-bottle to the London charwoman. But in reality, as I firmly believe, for the purpose of opening the door to all sorts of bribery and corruption, the traffic is prohibited as much as possible by the Chinese Government, for the ostensible object of preserving the health and morals of the people. This task is a very difficult one. A paternal Government is always in difficulties, and once we Christian people of England have gone to war with the Chinese in order to make them take our Indian-grown opium—a manufacture in which a large capital is invested, and the duty of which yields the British Government in India a magnificent revenue. It is a question for the moralist to decide how far a Government is justified in saying to a people: "We know so and so is bad, but as you will use it, you may as well pay a heavy tax on its use." That is the practical way in which statesmen look at it, and of course there is a good deal to be said for that view. But it is not pleasant to feel that money, even if it be used for State purposes, is made in a dirty manner; though I have been in countries where the minister of the religion of holiness and purity is content to take a part of his living from the brothel-keeper and the prostitute. Evidently there are many men as ready to take the devil's money as was Rowland Hill to accept the Bible at his hands. p. 171

But I am touching on questions not to be settled in the twinkling of an eye, or by a phrase or two in print. Perhaps I may best serve the cause of humanity if, instead of saying what I think and feel, I merely content myself with describing what I saw in the East-End of London, one Saturday night, in this year of grace one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five. p. 172

Have my readers ever been in Bluegate Fields, somewhere down Ratcliffe Highway? The glory of the place is departed. I am writing *more Americano*, where the wickedest man in the town is always regarded as a hero. The City missionary and the East London Railway between them have

reformed the place. To the outward eye it is a waste howling spot, but it is a garden of Eden to what it was when a policeman dared not go by himself into its courts, and when respectability, if it ever strayed into that filthy quarter, generally emerged from it minus its watch and coat, and with a skull more or less cracked, and with a face more or less bloody.

p. 173

“Thanks to you,” said a surgeon to a City missionary who has been labouring in the spot some sixteen years, and is now recognised as a friend wherever he goes, “thanks to you,” said the surgeon, “I can now walk along the place alone, and in safety, a thing I never expected to do;” and I believe that the testimony is true, and that it is in such districts the labours of the City missionary are simply invaluable. Down in those parts what we call the Gospel has very little power. It is a thing quite outside the mass. There are chapels and churches, it is true, but the people don’t go into them. I pass a great Wesleyan I chapel. “How is it attended?” I ask; and the answer is: “Very badly indeed.” I hear that the nearest Independent chapel is turned into a School Board school; and there is Rehoboth,—I need not say it is a hyper place of worship, and was, when Bluegate Fields was a teeming mass of godless men and women, only attended by some dozen or so of the elect, who prayed their prayers, and read their Bible, and listened to their parsons with sublime indifference to the fact that there at their very door, under their very eyes, within reach of their very hands, were souls to be saved, and brands to be snatched from the burning, and jewels to be won for the Redeemer’s crown. I can only hear of one preacher in this part who is really getting the people to hear him, and he is the Rev. Harry Jones, who deserves to be made a bishop, and who would be, if the Church of England was wise and knew its dangers, and was careful to avert the impending storm, which I, though I may not live to see the day, know to be near. But let us pass, on leaving Rehoboth, a black and ugly carcass, on the point of being pulled down by the navy. I turn into a little court on my right, one of the very few the railway has spared for the present. It may be there are some dozen houses in the court. The population is, I should certainly imagine, quite up to the accommodation of the place. Indeed, if I might venture to make a remark, it would be to the effect that a little more elbow-room would be of great advantage to all. From every door across the court are ropes, and on these ropes the blankets and sheets and family linen are hanging up to dry. These I have to duck under as I walk along; but the people are all civil, though my appearance makes them stare, and all give a friendly and respectful greeting to the City missionary by my side.

p. 174

p. 175

All at once my conductor disappears in a little door, and I follow, walking, on this particular occasion, by faith, and not by sight; for the passage was dark, and I knew not my way. I climb up a flight of stairs, and find myself in a little crib—it would be an abuse of terms to call it a room. It is just about my height, and I fancy it is a great deal darker and dingier than the room in which a first-class misdemeanant like Colonel Baker was confined. The place is full of smoke. It is not at first that I take in its contents. As I stand by the door, there are two beds of an ancient character; between these beds is a very narrow passage, and it is in this passage I recognise the master of the house—a black-eyed, cheerful Chinaman, who has become so far naturalised amongst us as to do us the honour of taking the truly British name of Johnson. Johnson is but thinly clad. I see the perspiration glistening on his dark and shining skin; but Johnson seems as pleased to see me as if he had known me fifty years. In time, through the smoke, I see Johnson’s friends—dark, perspiring figures curled on the beds around, one, for want of room, squatting, cross-legged, in a corner—each with a tube of the shape and size of a German flute in his hands. I look at this tube with some curiosity. In the middle of it is a little bowl. In that little bowl is the opium, which is placed there as if it were a little bit of tow dipped in tar, and which is set fire to by being held to the little lamps, of which there are three or four on the bed or in the room. This operation performed, the smoker reclines and draws up the smoke, and looks a very picture of happiness and ease. Of course I imitate the bad example; I like to do as the Romans do, and Johnson hands me a tube which I put into my mouth, while, as I hold it to the lamp, he inserts the heated opium into the bowl; and, as I pull, the thick smoke curls up and adds to the cloud which makes the room as oppressive as the atmosphere of a Turkish bath. How the little pig-eyes glisten! and already I feel that I may say: “Am I not a man and a brother?” The conversation becomes general. Here we are jolly companions every one. Ching tells me the Chinese don’t send us the best tea; and grins all across his yellow face as I say that I know that, but intimate that they make us pay for it as if they did. Tsing smiles knowingly as I ask him what his wife does when he is so long away. Then we have a discussion as to the comparative merits of opium and beer, and my Chinese friends sagely observe that it is all a matter of taste. “You mans like beer, and we mans in our country like opium.” All were unanimous in saying that they never had more than a few whiffs, and all that I could learn of its effects when taken in excess was that opium sent them off into a stupid sleep. With the somewhat doubtful confessions of De Quincey and Coleridge in my memory, I tried to get them to acknowledge sudden impulses, poetic inspirations, splendid dreams; but of such things these little fellows had never conceived; the highest eulogium I heard was: “You have pains—pain in de liver, pain in de head—you smoke—all de pains go.” The most that I could learn was that opium is an expensive luxury for a poor man. Three-halfpenny-worth only gives you a few minutes’ smoke, and these men say they don’t smoke more at a time. Lascar Sall, a rather disreputable female, well known in the neighbourhood, would, they told me, smoke five shillings-worth of opium a day. Johnson’s is the clubhouse of the Chinese. He buys the opium and prepares it for smoking, and they come and smoke and have a chat, and a cup of tea and a slice of bread and butter, and go back and sleep on board ship. Their little smoking seemed to do them no harm. The City missionary says he has never seen them intoxicated. It made them a little lazy and sleepy—that is all; but they had done their day’s work, and had earned as much title to a little indulgence as the teetotaler, who regales himself with coffee; or the merchant, who smokes his cigar on his pleasant lawn on a summer’s eve. I own

p. 176

p. 177

p. 178

p. 179

p. 180

when I left the room I felt a little giddy, that I had to walk the crowded streets with care; but then I was a novice, and the effect would not be so great on a second trial. I should have enjoyed a cup of good coffee after; but that is a blessing to which we in London, with all our boasted civilisation, have not attained. I frankly avow, as I walked to the railway station, I almost wished myself back in the opium den. There I heard no foul language, saw no men and women fighting, no sots reeling into the gutters, or for safety shored up against the wall. For it was thus the mob, through which I had to pass, was preparing itself for the services of the sanctuary, and the rest of the Sabbath.

p. 181

IX.—LONDON'S EXCURSIONISTS.

p. 182

Most of my London readers know Southend. It is as pretty a place, when the tide is up and the weather is fine, as you can find anywhere near London. Standing on the cliff on a clear day it is a lovely panorama which greets your eye. At your feet rolls the noble river, to which London owes its greatness, and on which sail up and down, night and day, no matter how stormy the season may be, the commercial navies of the world. On the other side is the mouth of the Medway, with its docks and men-of-war; and farther still beyond rise those Kentish hills of which Dickens was so fond, and on the top of one of which he lived and died. Look to the right, and you see over the broad expanse of waters and the marshy land, destined, perhaps, at some distant day to be formed into docks and to be crowded with busy life. Look at your left, and the old town, with its pier a mile and a quarter long, really looks charming in the summer sun. Or you see the shingly beach, at one end of which—you learn by report of artillery-firing and the cloud of blue smoke curling to the sky—is Shoeburyness. Far away on the open sea, and on the other side, the tall cliffs of the Isle of Sheppey loom in the distance.

p. 183

Lie down on the grass and enjoy yourself. What ozone there is in the atmosphere! What brightness in the scene! What joy seems all around! Is it not pleasant, after the roar and bustle and smoke and dirt of London, to come down here and watch the clouds casting their dark shadow on the blue waters; or to follow the gulls, dipping and darting along like so many white flies; or to see the feathery sails of yachts and pleasure-boats, floating like flakes of snow; or to mark the dark track from the funnel of yon steamer, on her way (possibly with a cargo of emigrants, to whom fortune had been unfriendly at home) to some Australian El Dorado—to which, if I only knew of it, I might probably go myself—

p. 184

Where every man is free,
And none can be in bonds for life
For want of £ s. d.

Well, you say, this is a fairy spot, a real Eden, where life is all enjoyment, where health and happiness abound, if you could live but always there. My dear sir, in a few hours such a change will come over the spirit of the dream, such a diabolical transformation will be effected, so foul will seem all that now is so bright and fair, that you will flee the place, and, as you do so, I indignantly ask, What is the use of British law? and wherein consists the virtue of British civilisation? and of what avail is British Christianity, if in broad daylight, in the principal thoroughfares of the town, your eyes and ears are to be shocked by scenes of which I can only say that they would be deemed disgraceful in a land of savages? Let us suppose it midday, and the usual excursion trains and steamboats have landed some few thousand men, women, and children, all dressed in their best, and determined, and very properly, to enjoy themselves. What swarms you see everywhere! One day actually, I am told, the railway brought as many as eleven thousand. You say you are glad to see them; they have worked hard for a holiday; and, shut up in the factories, and warehouses, and workshops of the East-End, none have more of a right to, or more of a need of, the enjoyment of a sea air. Dear sir, you are right; and for a little while all goes on as you desire. The enjoyment is varied, and seems to consist of wading up to the knees in the sea, in listening to Ethiopian serenaders, in the consumption of oysters and apples, in donkey-riding, in the purchase of useless ware at the nearest caravan or booth, in being photographed, in taking a sail, or in strolling about the beach, and, as regards the male part of the excursionists, smoking tobacco more or less indifferent. But unfortunately the trains do not return before seven or eight o'clock, and of course the excursionists must have a drop of beer or spirits to pass away the time, many of them have no idea of a holiday, and really and truly cannot enjoy themselves without; and the publicans of Southend lay themselves out for the gratification of the excursionist in this respect. They have monster taps and rooms in which the excursionists sit and drink and make merry according to their custom. As the day wears on the merriment becomes greater, and the noise a little less harmonious. The fact is, all parties—men and women alike—have taken a drop too much; the publican begins to feel a little anxious about his property, especially as the two or three policemen belonging to the place—wisely knowing what is coming, and their utter inability to cope with a drunken mob, and the ridiculousness of their attempting to do so—manage to get out of the way, and to hide their diminished heads in a quieter and more respectable quarter of the town.

p. 185

p. 186

p. 187

At length quarrels arise, oaths and coarse language are heard, and out in the street rush angry men to curse, and swear, and fight. The women, it must be confessed, are oftentimes as bad as the men, and I have seen many a heavy blow fall to the lot even of the sucking babe! In the brief

madness of the hour, friends, brothers, relatives rush at each other like so many wild beasts, much to the amusement of the throng of inebriated pleasure-seekers around. No one tries to interfere, as most of the men and cardrivers, who make up the aboriginal population of the place, evidently enjoy the disgusting spectacle. Once I stopped four weeks in this place, and I began to tremble at the very sight of an excursionist. I knew that the chances were that before the day was over my little ones would have to look on the worst of sights. I saw one powerful fellow in three fights in the course of one day; in one he had kicked a man in a way which made him shriek and howl for an hour afterwards; in another case he had knocked a woman down; and I left him on the railway platform, stripped, and offering to fight anyone. I begged a policeman to interfere and take the brute into custody, and in reply was told that their rule was never to take a man into custody unless they saw the assault committed, a thing the Southend police very properly take care never to do; and yet on the occasion to which I refer the landlord of one of the best hotels in the place was in vain, for the sake of his respectable guests, begging the police to put a stop to the scene which he himself rightly described as pandemonium. I must admit the police are not inactive. There was a crowd round the beershop, from which a man hopelessly intoxicated was being ejected.

p. 188

p. 189

“Here, policeman,” said the beershop-keeper, “take this man away, he has insulted me.” And the policeman complied with his request, and the poor fellow, who was too drunk to stand upright, speedily embraces mother earth. On another occasion a policeman displayed unusual activity. He was after a man who had stolen actually an oyster, and for this the policeman was on his track, and the man was to be conveyed at the expense of the country to Rochford gaol. Let me draw a veil over the horrors of the return home of an excursion train with its tipsy occupants, swearing eternal friendship one moment while trying to tear each other’s eyes out the next. It is bad enough to see the excursionists making their way back to the railway station; here a couple of men will be holding up a drunken mate, there are flushed boys and girls yelling and shrieking like so many escaped lunatics. Now let us retrace our steps. You can tell by the disorder and ruin all around where the excursionists have been, their steps are as manifest to the observer as an invading army. Is there no remedy for this state of things? Is a quiet watering-place, to which people go to recover health and strength, to be at the mercy of any drunken swarms who happen to have the half-crowns in their pockets requisite for the purchase of an excursion ticket? Of course this is a free country, and the right of a man to go to the devil his own way is a right of which I would be the last to deprive my fellow citizens; but an excursion train is a monster nuisance, of which our ancestors never dreamed, and for which in their wisdom they made no provision. Of course total abstinence is a remedy; but then the British workman is not a total abstainer, and that is a question which I am not about to discuss. All I want is to call attention to what is a daily scandal in the summer-time; and to bid good people remember—while they are talking of heathenism abroad—that heathenism at home, which, under the influence of strong drink threatens to destroy all that is lovely and of good report in our midst.

p. 190

p. 191

Lest it be said that I exaggerate, that I give an erroneous idea of the drinking customs of the working classes, let me quote the following confession of a working man, when examined before a coroner’s jury, as to the way in which he had spent his holiday last Good Friday:

p. 192

“We went for a walk, and had two pints of beer on the road. We got as far as the Holloway Road Railway Station, and turned back. Deceased saw me home, and then left me.”

“Did he again call on you?”

“Yes; at about twenty minutes to three o’clock.”

“By appointment?”

“Yes, to go to the Alexandra Palace. We left my place about a quarter to three o’clock, and just had time for a drink at the public-house next door to where I am living. We had two half-quaderns of whisky neat. I there changed a sovereign. We then walked up the Holloway Road, and I called on my father-in-law. He asked me to stop to tea, but I said I was engaged to go to the Palace. Deceased and I then got as far as The Manor House, where we had two glasses of bitter beer. We went on farther to The Queen’s Head, which is the next public-house, and had some more drink. From there we went to Hornsey, stopped at a public-house, and had some whisky. We stopped again at The Nightingale, and had half-a-quadern of whisky each. We could see the Palace from where we then were, but did not know how to get there. We inquired the way, and as we were going along we met the deceased’s younger brother, with a lot of other boys, and we said a few words to them. Afterwards we went into a public-house just opposite the Palace gates, and had either some brandy or whisky, I don’t know which. We got chaffing with the man at the pay-office, saying that he ought to let us in at half-price, as it was so late, but he did not do so. We paid one shilling each to go in. We went into the building and strolled about, looking at different things, and had three pints of bitter ale at one of the stands. We then walked about again, and afterwards had some brandy. We then began to get rather stupefied, and after waiting about a little longer we had some more brandy. I know we stopped at almost every buffet there was in the Palace, and had something to drink at each of them. The lights were being put out as we left the Palace. Deceased had hold of my arm, and we went up to one of the buffets for the purpose of getting some cakes, or something to eat, but the barmaid refused to serve us. Deceased said to me, ‘I feel rather tidy, Joe,’ so I took hold of his arm, but in moving away we both fell over some chairs. We left the Palace, and deceased said to me, ‘Have you got any money?’ I said, ‘Yes; what I have got you are welcome to.’ I then gave him a two-shilling piece, out of my purse, which he put with the money he already had of his own. It must have been very

p. 193

p. 194

late then. We lost our way, but I think I said to the deceased, 'This is the way we came in.' Then we both fell down again. I don't remember getting away from there, or how I left deceased. I remember nothing else that took place. I don't know how we got on the steps of the Grand Stand. I cannot remember seeing the boy Braybrook, nor how I got out of the grounds, or to my own home."

p. 195

"You say that you were drunk?"

"Yes, we were both drunk, almost before we got to the Palace."

"You say that the deceased was also drunk?"

"Yes."

"You don't remember leaving the deceased upon the ground?"

"No, I cannot remember how I got my hands cut, or the bruise on the back of my head. I found my hat broken in the next morning, and my wife put it right for me."

X.—ON THE RIVER STEAMERS.

p. 196

One fine summer day a friend agreed with me to go down the river. Sheerness was fixed on, not on account of its beauty, for that part near the harbour is by no means attractive, and like most of our naval and military stations it is full of low public-houses, which by no means add to its attractions, but simply on account of the fact that the place could be reached and the return journey made in the course of a day; that we could be on the water all the while, and that we should have a pleasant breathing space in the midst of a life more or less necessarily of toil. For people who cannot get away for a few weeks, who cannot rush off to Brighton, or Margate, or Scarborough, or Scotland for a month, it is a great treat to be able to go down to Sheerness and back for a day in a luxurious steamer, where everyone has elbow-room. And on the day in question it was a treat to us all in many respects; the day was fine, the boat in which we sailed was that favourite one the *Princess Alice*—now, alas! a name which sends a thrill of tragic horror through the land. To us and the public at that time she was known merely as the safest, and fastest, and pleasantest vessel of her class.

p. 197

We had beautiful views of marshes well filled with cattle, and of fields waving with yellow corn, and with hills and green parks, and gentlemen's seats and churches afar off; the river with its craft great and small going up or coming down is always a source of interesting study; and as the fine fresh air, to be encountered below Gravesend, gave us an appetite, we had a good dinner on board, well served and at a very moderate price; tea and shrimps at a later period of the day were equally acceptable; and many were the ladies and gentlemen who had come and found what they sought, a pleasant outing. There were also many little children who enjoyed themselves much, and the sight of whose pleasure was an unmitigated enjoyment to old stagers, like myself and my friend. Altogether it was a very agreeable day so far as the outward passage was concerned. It was true that there was an unnecessary demand for beer, even from the moderate drinker's point of view, before the dinner hour. Bottled ale and stout may not be taken with impunity on an empty stomach; smoking may also be carried to excess, and as there are many persons who dislike the very smell of it, the mixture in the atmosphere was certainly far more than was desirable; but on a holiday on a Thames excursion boat one must give and take, and not be too prone to find fault. People often act differently abroad to what they do at home; we must allow for a little wildness on such an occasion on the part of the general public. It is not every day a man takes a holiday. It is not everyone who knows how to use it when he has it. To many of us a holiday rarely comes more than once a year, and gentlemen of my profession, alas! often do not get that.

p. 198

p. 199

Altogether we must have had at the least some seven or eight hundred people on board. They swarmed everywhere; indeed, at times there was little more than comfortable standing room, and the only locomotion possible seemed to be that directed towards the cabins fore and aft in pursuit of bottled beer.

In the morning we were not so crowded, but in the evening we began to experience inconvenience of another kind. It was at half-past ten A.M. that we left the lower side of London Bridge; it was nine o'clock in the evening when we arrived there again. All that time we had been on board the steamer, with the exception of an hour and a half spent at Sheerness, and all that time the demand for beer had been incessant. I never in all my life saw such a consumption. I remarked to a friend enough beer had been drunk to have floated apparently the *Princess Alice* herself. Everybody was drinking beer or porter, and the bottles were imperial pints and held a good deal. Of course there were music and dancing; and the girls, flushed and excited, drank freely of the proffered beverage, each moment getting wilder and noisier. Old ladies and old gentlemen complacently sipped their glass. It seemed to do them no harm. Their passions had long been extinct. They had long outlived the heyday of youth. All that the beer seemed to do for them was to give them a bit of a headache, or to make them feel a little more tired or sleepy, that was all. On the deck was a party of thirty or forty men who had come for a day's outing; decent mechanics evidently, very respectably dressed. They kept themselves to

p. 200

p. 201

themselves, had dined on board together, had taken tea together, and now sat singing all the way home, in dreadfully melancholy tones, all the old songs of our grandfathers' days about "Remembering those out," "The Maids of merry, merry England," and then came a yell in the way of a chorus which would have frightened a Red Indian or a Zulu Kaffir. After every song there was a whip round for some more beer, till the seats underneath seemed to be choked up with empty bottles. They were all a little under the influence of liquor, not unpleasantly so, but placidly and stupidly; and as they listened with the utmost gravity while one or another of the party was singing, you would have thought they were all being tried for manslaughter at least. It is true they had a comic man in the party, with a green necktie and a billycock hat, and a shillalagh, who did his best under the circumstances, but he had to fight at tremendous odds, as hilarity was not the order of the day on that part of the deck.

p. 202

I went down into the cabin in search of it there, but was equally unsuccessful. Every table was crammed with bottles of beer. Opposite me was a picture indeed; a respectable-looking man had drunk himself into a maudlin state, from which his friends were in vain endeavouring to arouse him. He was a widower, and was muttering something unpleasant about *her* grave, which did not seem to accord with the ideas of two gaily-dressed females—one of them with a baby in her arms—who hovered around him, as if desirous to win him back to life and love and duty, his male friends apparently having got tired of the hopeless task of making him understand that he had been brought out with a view to being agreeable, and to spending a happy day, and that he had no right to finish up in so unreasonable a manner. Now and then he appealed to me, declaring that he had no friends, or promising in reply to the playful appeal of his female friends to be a good boy and not to give them any more trouble, that it was no use trying. It was the women who stuck to him alone, now and then suggesting lemonade, and then forcing him up on deck with a view to a dance or a promenade. Some of the passengers around, as tipsy as himself, interfered; one of them, evidently a respectable tradesman, with his wife and children around, requesting the widower to sing "John Barleycorn," assuring him that as he had lost his teeth it would have to be sung with a *false set oh*, a joke which the widower could not see, and the explanation of which at one time seemed about to end in a serious misunderstanding. Other parties besides

p. 203

interfered, and the confusion became hopeless and inexplicable. It ended in the weeping widower wildly embracing the female with the baby, and then making a mad rush on deck with a view to jump over—a feat, however, which he was easily prevented from accomplishing; and as I landed I saw the would-be suicide with his male and female friends contemplating a visit to the nearest public-house. It was really a melancholy spectacle, and one that ought not to have been permitted in the cabin of a saloon steamer. Quite as pitiable in its way was the sight of a couple who had unwarrantably intruded into that part of the steamer which is presumed to be kept solely for the use of those who pay first-class fares. One of them was indeed a study; he had been out for a day's pleasure, and he showed in his person traces of very severe enjoyment; his clothes had been damaged in the process, and an eye had been brought into close contact with some very hard substance, such as a man's fist, and the consequence was it was completely closed, and the skin around discoloured and swollen. He had never, so he said, been so insulted in his life, and once or twice he reascended the stairs with a short pipe in his hand, a picture of tipsy gravity, in order that he might recognise the ticket collector, with a view apparently to summon him before the Lord Mayor. His companion was a more blackguard-looking object still. A couple of the officers attached to the ship soon sent him forward, to mingle with a lot of men as disgusting in appearance and as foul in language as himself, but who had sense enough not to intrude where they had no right, and to keep their proper places. And thus the hours passed, and the sun sank lower in the horizon, and we rushed up the mighty river past outward-bound steamers on their way to all quarters of the globe, and found ourselves once more in town. The day had been a pleasant one had it not been for the indulgence in bottled beer, which seems to be the special need of all Londoners when they go up or down the river. If this state of things is to be allowed, no decent person will be enabled to take a passage on a river steamer on a St. Monday or a Saturday, especially if he has ladies or children with him. It does seem hard that people on board river steamers may drink to excess, and thus prove a nuisance to all who are not as beery as themselves. It may be, however, that the steam-packet companies promote this sale of intoxicating liquor in order to promote the cause of true temperance; if so, one can understand the unlimited activity of the ship stewards, as it becomes at once apparent to the most superficial observer that he who tastes the charmed cup has

p. 204

p. 205

p. 206

p. 207

Lost his upright shape,
And downwards falls into a grovelling swine.

If anyone doubts this let him proceed to Sheerness in a river steamer on a people's day.

XI.—STREET SALESMEN.

p. 208

That we are a nation of shopkeepers I believe, not only on the evidence of the first Napoleon, but from what I see and hear every day. There are few people in the City who are born wealthy, compared with the number who do manage in the course of a successful mercantile career to win for themselves a fair share of this world's goods. The other night I was spending the evening at the West-End mansion of a City millionaire. As I left, I asked a friend what was the secret of our host's success, "Why," was the answer, "I have always understood he began life with borrowing

p. 209

ten shillings.”

If that is all, thought I to myself, it is not difficult to make a fortune, after all. Accordingly, I negotiated a loan of a sovereign, thinking that if I failed with ten shillings I should be sure to succeed with double that number. At present, I regret to say, the loan has not been so successful in its results as I anticipated, and fortune seems as far off as ever. Should it turn out otherwise, and my wild expectations be realised, I will publish a book, and let the reader know how a sovereign became ten thousand pounds. And yet I believe such a feat has been often accomplished in the City and by City men. Everybody knows a man who walked up to town with twopence-halfpenny in his pocket, who lived to enjoy a nice fortune himself, and to leave his wife and family well provided for.

I met the other day in the Gray’s Inn Road a master-builder, who told me that he was going to retire from business and pass the evening of his days in quiet. I had known the man since he was a boy. I knew his father and his mother and all his family. If ever a fellow had a chance of going to the bad that poor boy had. His father was a drunkard; the poverty of the family was extreme; of schooling he had none whatever; yet he left the little village in Suffolk where he was born, resolved, as he told me, to be either a man or a mouse; and fortune favoured him beyond his most sanguine expectations. Yes, the streets of London *are* paved with gold, but it is not everyone who has sense to see it or strength to pick it up.

p. 210

It is to be feared the large class who come into the streets to deal are not of the class who mean to rise, but who have seen better days. For instance, I often meet a porter selling Persian sherbet in the City, who seems to have dropped into that situation from mere laziness. He had a fair chance of getting on in life, but he never seems to have had pluck enough to succeed. Another man I know held a respectable situation as clerk; he appeared to me economical in his habits, he was always neatly dressed, he was never the worse for liquor, nor did he seem to keep bad company. All at once he left his situation, and rapidly went to the dogs. For a little while he borrowed of his friends; but that was a precarious source of existence, and now he may be seen dealing in small articles, on which it is to be hoped for his own sake the profits are large, as I fear the demand for them is small. Then there are the restless characters who take up street-selling partly because they like to gammon the public, partly because they dislike steady industry, and partly because I fancy they cherish expectations of another sort. These are the men who give away gold rings, who exhibit mice that have a wonderful way of running up and down the arms, who sell gutta-percha dolls which seem in their hands to have a power of vocalisation which leaves them at once and for ever as soon as you have purchased the puppet and paid for it and made it your own, who deal in cement which will make an old jug better than new, who retail corn-plasters which are an inevitable cure, and who occasionally deal in powders which are a sure means of getting rid of certain objectionable specimens of the insect tribe.

p. 211

p. 212

“But how do you use the powder?” asked a flat of a countryman who had been deluded into the purchase of sixpenny-worth of the invaluable powder. “How do you use it?” repeated the purchaser.

“Well, you see, you catch the animal and hold him by the back of the neck, and then when his mouth opens, just shove in the powder, and he’ll die fast enough.”

p. 213

“But,” said the countryman, “I suppose I could kill the insect at once when I’ve caught him?”

“Well,” said the salesman, “of course you can, but the powder is, I repeat, fatal nevertheless.”

A little while ago there was an illustrated paper presumably more fitted for the moral atmosphere of New York than London. Its chief sale, before it was suppressed by the law, was in the streets, where, with its doubtful engravings, it was a bit of a nuisance. Of course, the sale of *Evening Hechoes*, and *Hextra Standards*, is a thing one is obliged to put up with; nevertheless, one must often regret that so useful a trade cannot be pushed in a quieter and less ostentatious way. The ingenious youth, who devote themselves to the sale of a paper especially devoted to the interests of matrimony, are a real nuisance. How they pester many a lad that passes with their intimation that, by the purchase of their trumpery paper, they can secure an heiress with a thousand a year, as if such bargains were to be had any day, whereas, the truth is, that they are rather scarce, and that—whether with that sum or without—matrimony is a very serious affair. Unprotected females have to suffer a deal of impudence from these fellows. I saw a respectable, decently-dressed, manifest old maid, exceedingly annoyed and shocked by one of these fellows pursuing her half way up Cheapside, with his shouts, “Want a ‘usband, ma’am?” “Here’s a chance for you, ma’am,” “Lots of ‘usbands to be had,” and so on, in a way which she seemed to feel—and I quite understood her feelings—was singularly indelicate. What an insult to suppose that any virtuous and accomplished lady is in seed of a husband, when she has only to raise a finger and she has, such is the chivalry of the age, a score of adorers at her feet!

p. 214

p. 215

The newsboys are, of course, the most prominent of our street salesmen, and they affect the City for many reasons. In the first place, in and around the Mansion House there is a finer opening for business than anywhere else; and in the second place, a City business is often a very remunerative one. City men who have made their thousands on the Stock Exchange or elsewhere are not particular in the matter of change; and a fourpence or a sixpence is often the reward of the lad who is the first to rush up to a City swell as he leaves his office with a “third hediton of the *Hecho*” or a special *Standard* with some important telegram. In wet weather times go very hard with these poor fellows. On the contrary, when it is fine, business is brisk. They rely much on sensational telegrams. A war is a fine thing for them, and so is a case like that of the

p. 216

Claimant, or a spicy divorce case, or an atrocious murder. It is when such things as these occur that they flourish, and that their joy is abounding. They must make a good deal of money, but it goes as fast as it comes. An attempt was made to establish a news-room for these boys, and very nice premises were taken in Gray's Inn Lane. The coffee and bread and butter were excellent, and the arrangements were all that could be desired. Nevertheless the undertaking was a failure, because it was not supported by the class for whose benefit it was especially intended. The news-boys did not like the confinement, the regular hours, the decent behaviour, the cleanliness and attention to little things required. They wanted beer and 'baccy, and other little amusements, more in accordance with their independent position in life. As a rule I fancy they are honest; they certainly never cheat a man if they think they will be found out. I never had any difficulty in getting my change but once, and then I was in an omnibus, and the chances were in the boy's favour. What is wonderful is that they do not meet with more accidents. How they rush after omnibuses as they urge on their wild career! Some of them are great radicals. "Allus reads *The Hecho* of a Saturday," said one of them to me, "to see how it pitches into the haristocracy," when the articles signed "NOBLESSE OBLIGE" were being published. It is to be wondered at now and then that their impertinence does not get them into grief. For instance, to the young man who has any respect for the fair sex, how disgusting to be told of women, good-looking, amiable and accomplished, well-to-do, and apparently possessed of every virtue under heaven, advertising for husbands. I suppose *The Matrimonial News* is a success; but, if so, certainly that is not a pleasant sign of the times. If people will buy it, the newsboys are not to be blamed for hawking it about. They take up what they think the public will buy. Last year they were retailing "The Devil," price one penny, and this year they have taken up *Town Talk*, and an ingenious puzzle, called, "How to find out Lord Beaconsfield." I wonder some of our publishers of real good illustrated literature do not try to push the sale of it in this way. I think it would pay. The public would then have the bane and the antidote side by side. Mr. Smithies might do much to increase the sale of *The British Workman* if he had it hawked about the streets.

p. 217

p. 218

As to the costermongers, their name is legion; and that they are a real service to the community must be evident to anyone who sees what their prices are and what are those of the fruiterers in the shops. They bring fruit within the reach of the community. In the summer-time we naturally require fruit. It is good for grown-up men and women, it is good for little children. In London they have no chance of tasting it were it not for the costermonger who floods the streets with all that is desirable in this respect; one day he has West India pineapples for sale; another bananas or shaddocks; another grapes, and apples, and pears, and apricots, and greengages, and plums. One day he deals in strawberries and another in cherries; and then, when the autumn comes on, what a tempting display he makes of filberts, and walnuts, and chestnuts! The amount of fruit thus poured in upon the market, much of which would have perished had it not been sold off at once, is really prodigious; and infinitely indebted to him are the poor clerks who lay in a pennyworth of apples or pears as they leave the office for the little ones at home. At one time I had a prejudice against these rough and noisy dealers; that prejudice has vanished since I have taken to dining in the City and indulging in "a penny lot" after dinner. What I admire is the way in which they do up strawberries, and cherries, and plums in little paper bags, which seem to contain as much again as they really do. Occasionally a man gets cheated, but that is when there is a woman in the case.

p. 219

p. 220

Oh, the flower-girls of the streets, what deceiving creatures they are! It is not that, like the flower-girls of Paris, they spoil a romance with pecuniary views, but it is that they cheat you through thick and thin, and sell you camellias made of turnips, and roses and azaleas equally fair to see and equally false and vain. Can I ever forget my friend Dr. R. and the little mishap that befell him when he assisted at a little dinner—at which I had the honour to be a guest—given by a Scotch poet to Scotch poets, and press-men, and barristers, in honour of the immortal Robert Burns? Crossing by the Mansion House, in the dim light of a winter evening, the doctor was accosted by a handsome lass, who offered to sell him a camellia. The lady pressed her suit, and the doctor fell. Granite in the discharge of duty, the doctor has a soft place in his heart, and that woman finds out at once. It is the old tale—the woman tempted and the doctor gave way. As he came proud and smiling into the drawing-room, the splendour of the doctor's camellia arrested every eye. A near scrutiny was the result, and at length the doctor had to confess that he had been the victim of misplaced confidence in a London street flower-girl.

p. 221

Then there are the men who deal in what they call pineapple sweetmeat; their barrows are adorned with paintings representing dimly the riches and luxuriance of the East.

Sunday brings with it its own peculiar dealers and trades. One of the sights of poor neighbourhoods is that of a large barrel, painted red, on wheels. At the top is a seat for the driver; at the other end there is a small shelf on which are placed a tray of water and a row of glasses. Some of these glasses look like porter with a head, and are retailed at prices varying from a penny to twopence. Outside, in great gilt letters, I read, "The Great Blood Purifier;" then we have another line, "Sarsaparilla, Hilder, King's Road, Chelsea." Another line is devoted to the announcement of "Dandelion and Sarsaparilla Pills." Another intimates that sarsaparilla is the "Elixir of Life." At the back, the door over the shelf contains a portrait of apparently a fine gay person, female of course, who has received signal benefit from the ardour with which she has swallowed the dandelion and sarsaparilla pills; and around her, as witnesses and approvers of such conduct on her part, shines a row of stars. The salesman is assisted by a small boy, who washes the glasses and places them on the rack, and in other ways makes himself generally useful. The salesman is by no means guilty of the trick of underrating his wares. Accordingly, he lifts up his voice like a trumpet as he deals out his pennyworths of the Elixir of Life. In some

p. 222

p. 223

cases he is familiar, in others argumentative, in others bold as brass; and he gets a good many customers. The race of fools who rush in where angels fear to tread is by no means extinct. As I watched the poor skinny quadruped, groggy and footsore, I felt how hard it was that Sunday should shine no day of rest for him; but he had a good deal more go in him than you would have imagined from his appearance. All at once in the far distance appeared two respected members of the City police; the gentleman with the Elixir of Life closed his door, jumped up into his seat, pulled his small boy up after him, and was off like lightening. This Arab steed could run after him.

p. 224

XII.—CITY NUISANCES.

p. 225

There are some people who are always grumbling. Hit them high or hit them low, you can't please them. I don't think I belong to that class. I like to look on the sunny side, remembering as the poet used to say when I was a good deal younger than I am now—

'Tis wiser, better far.

In the words of a still greater poet—

I take the goods the gods provide me.

And if the lovely Thais sits beside me, provided she does not lay a stress upon my head and purse (I am a married man, and the father of a family, and always hope to behave as such), I don't object. He is not a wise man who quarrels with his bread and butter; he is a fool who expects to find no thorns amongst his roses. What I have gone through, dear madam—for it is to the ladies I appeal—what I have gone through, dear madam, is really astounding, at any rate to myself. How I have survived at all is "one of those things no fellah can understand." Repeatedly ruin has stared me in the face. Repeatedly have my young affections run to waste. Repeatedly have I been crossed in love, and tramped up and down Cheapside and Fleet Street, a blighted being. At this very moment, if I may trust to my medical knowledge, I am now suffering from three distinct diseases, any one of which is mortal; and yet if you were to meet me in the street, or have a chat with me in a quiet café over a cigar, or sit next me at a City dinner, you would swear that I was one of those old fogies whom nothing troubles, without nerves or feelings, who vegetated rather than lived in the little tragi-comedy we call life. It may be that little personal details are uninteresting. I admit they are not matters of transcendent importance. You do not need master them if you are going up for your degree, or going in for a Civil Service examination. I mention these merely to show that I can put up with a good deal—that I am not easily put out of the way; and that I should be one of the last persons in the world to call anything a nuisance, unless it were really such. Under these circumstances, I may claim a right to be heard; and, when I state that I have no private aim, that, laying my hand upon my heart, my only motive is the public good, I believe that I shall not lift up my voice in vain.

p. 226

p. 227

Well, to waste no more words about it, of the nuisances of London it may be said their name is legion. In the first place, there are the streets. If you get out at Farringdon Street Station, and walk towards the Holborn Viaduct, it is of little use your having had your boots cleaned that morning—a little shower of rain, and the pavement is covered with mud. This ought not to be. Let us take another nuisance. All at once, as you walk along, you see a chimney vomiting forth clouds of smoke. This is a great nuisance, especially on a fine summer day, when the atmosphere of the City may be said to be almost clear; and this nuisance is the more unbearable as there is a law to put it down, which law is actually to a certain extent carried out. Let anyone take his stand on some spot where he can get a good view around him, and he will be sure to see some chimney, in spite of the law, darkening the sky and poisoning the air. Then there is the orange-peel, which has shortened many a valuable life, and quenched the light of many a home. Then there is the crowded traffic of the streets, which renders all locomotion impossible, and keeps you sitting, angry and fuming, in a cab, when it may be you are hurrying off to save a bill from being dishonoured, to keep an appointment with a rich aunt or uncle from whom you have great expectations, to have a last fond look at someone whom you dearly love. As to the disputed points as to the pavements, I have nothing to offer. To those who have to live and sleep in the City, asphalte, I should say, must be the greatest boon devised by the art of man. With asphalte you may talk pleasantly to a friend in Cheapside, you may get a reasonable night's sleep in St. Paul's Churchyard, or you may crack a joke without bursting a blood-vessel opposite the Mansion House itself. Be that as it may, as the question as to the comparative merits of asphalte, or granite, or wood will be settled by wiser heads than mine, I say no more; but what I complain of, and what is a nuisance to everyone, is the perpetual tinkering and repairing always going on in the streets, and the consequent blockade for a time of certain important thoroughfares. What with the drainage, and the water, and the gas pipes, and the telegraph wires, there is in most of the City ways as much hustle almost under the street as on it, and an ominous board with a notice from the Lord Mayor turns aside a tremendous traffic, and is a terrible nuisance as long as it lasts. Surely this waste of time and annoyance is, a great deal of it, unnecessary. All that is wanted is a little more contrivance and forethought. I was once discussing the subject with a leading City man and an M.P., as we were travelling together in a railway carriage on our way to a pleasant gathering of City people many miles away beyond the sound of Bow Bells. "Well," said

p. 228

p. 229

p. 230

p. 231

he, with a suggestive wink, "the thing is easily explained; the rule is, for the surveyor's son to marry the contractor's daughter, or something of that sort, and so between them they manage to play into each other's hands, and always have done so." Of course the M.P. was joking. No one could conceive it possible that our civic guardians, our common councilmen, our aldermen, our City officers, would allow themselves to be imposed on, and the public to be robbed in this way; but, alas! it is a pity that there should be ground for such a joke, that it should seem in any way to be founded on a fact. We are not so bad as we were, I admit, but that is no reason why we should not be better. Even now there are parts of London to which Gay's lines are applicable when he writes:

p. 232

Though expedition bids, yet never stray
Where no ranged post defends the rugged way;
Here laden carts with thundering waggons meet,
Wheels clash with wheels, and bar the narrow street,
The lashing whip resounds, the horses strain,
And blood in anguish bursts the swelling vein.

Something like this may be met with any day when the stones are greasy on Fish Street Hill, as the waggons turn up from Thames Street laden with the heavy merchandise of that quarter of the town. As I have quoted Gay, let me give another quotation from him. In one of his fables he writes:

How many saucy airs we meet
From Temple Bar to Aldgate Street.
Proud rogues who shared the South Sea prey,
And spring like mushrooms in a day,
They think it mean to condescend
To know a brother or a friend.
They blush to hear their mother's name,
And by their pride expose their shame.

There are just such men as Gay wrote of to be met in our streets, and they are a nuisance, but the law of libel, in the interest of rogues who live by getting up bubble companies, is hard on the press, and I prefer to quote Gay to making original remarks of my own, remarks which may be true, which may be useful, but for which the proprietor of any paper that would publish them would have to pay heavily, at any rate in the way of costs.

p. 233

Later in the day, one of the nuisances in the streets is "Those horrid boys." They have come home from work, or school; they have had their tea, it is too early for them to go to bed, their fathers and mothers don't know what to do with them at home, and so they loiter about the streets, and carry on their little games in them, much to their own satisfaction, but very much to the annoyance of everyone else. One of their favourite amusements is to run in groups, like so many wild Indians or a pack of wolves, howling and shrieking in a way very alarming. It is no use talking to them. It is no use putting the police on after them. The belated citizen, on his way home to the inevitable suburb, is frightened into fits ere he reaches his much-hoped-for haven of rest. And the small shopkeepers in the quiet streets—which they more especially affect—in terror rush to the door, believing either that there is a fire, or that Bedlam has broken loose, or that the Fenians have come. In some parts, as in Whitechapel, the wild girls of the streets are even worse.

p. 234

There are many local nuisances in London; one of the chief of these is the conduct of the watermen about the landing-places near the Custom House. Females and foreigners, who have to take boats to the large steamers lying in the river, are frightfully plundered in this way. These men feel that they can rob you with impunity, and they abuse their privileges.

"Ah," said one, after he had squeezed a five-shilling piece out of a poor foreigner for rowing him a few yards, "I'll put up with it this time, but don't do it again," as if he, the boatman, and not the poor foreigner, had been the victim of a most atrocious fraud. Such fellows as these should be kept honest somehow. Who does not recollect that chapter in "Vilette," in which Charlotte Brontë has recorded her waterside experiences? How she was landed by the coachman in the midst of a throng of watermen, who gathered around her like wolves; how she stepped at once into a boat, desiring to be taken to the *Vivid*; how she was fleeced by the waterman, as she paid an exorbitant sum, as the steward, a young man, was looking over the ship's side, grinning a smile in anticipation of the row there would have been had she refused to pay. I had an experience somewhat similar myself. Perhaps I got off easily. In those dark wharves on that black river, here and there lit by a distant and dimly-burning lamp—at that midnight hour, when all good people are in bed, it is well that there is nothing going on worse than robbery in such a mild form. Had I been dropped overboard, I am sure few people would have known it; and I am not certain that I have no reason to be grateful to the lot amongst whom I found myself that they attempted nothing of the kind. Late at night there are many dark and lonely spots in the City suggestive of dark deeds. In some one walks with fear and trembling. Suspicious people have a knack of turning up in such dark places; and the police can't be everywhere.

p. 235

p. 236

Then there is the water supply. It is all very well to have a spirited foreign policy abroad, but we do want a little common sense at home; and the sanitary state of the nation is of the first importance. You cannot blame a man that he refuses to drink bad water, and takes beer instead; and if anything be clearer than another, it is that the water supplied to the working man is bad;

p. 237

for whilst the rich man can have his cisterns regularly cleaned out, and his water filtered, the working man, as a rule, uses the water as he can get it, and suffers in consequence, both in person and in pocket. Under the influence of this state of things, it is not surprising to find mothers refusing to allow their children to drink water on the plea that it is bad for their health. Nor are these mothers to be blamed. It is a fact that in England and Wales alone upwards of eight hundred persons die every month from typhoid fever; a disease which is now believed to be caused almost entirely through drinking impure water. It is a fact that in London we have little pure water to drink, the companies are put to a great expense to filter their water, and yet every week we read such reports as the following from Dr. Frankland, the official to whom is entrusted the analysing of such matters: "The Thames water, delivered by the West Middlesex, Southwark, and Grand Junction Companies, was so much polluted by organic matter as to be quite unfit for dietetic purposes." The other day I had to pay my water rates; imagine my disgust at having to do so when the Government inspector in the daily papers informed me that the water supplied by the company was totally unfit for dietetic purposes! The evil is no new one. It has been ventilated in every way; and yet in London, the wealthiest city in the world, we cannot get a cup of pure water. People can have it in Manchester and Glasgow and New York; but in London—which claims to be the capital of commerce, the seat of Legislation, the model city—we have poison in the cup—as science tells us that we cannot take with impunity the living organisms and fungoid growths with which London water more or less abounds. Lately the working men met at Exeter Hall to say that it was time to put a stop to this disgraceful state of things. As Cardinal Manning said, if they wanted to give a subject the slip, the proper way was to get a committee of inquiry, and if they wanted to bury it altogether the right thing to do was to have a Royal Commission. Action is what is wanted. There are ten Parliamentary boroughs, and it was proposed to hold public meetings in each of them, to form a central committee, and thus to create a public pressure to which Parliament would have to give way. As it is, as Sir Charles Dilke pointed out, we have eight water companies in London who have increased the cost of water all round without improving the quality. What is to be asked is, that a body of men be formed in London to have the care of the water supply; and, as Mr. J. Holms, M.P., pointed out, the sooner this is done the better, as every year the companies' properties increase in value, and there will have to be paid to them additional compensation. The importance of the subject was, perhaps, most pointedly brought out by Dr. Lyon Playfair, who argued that, as in each average individual there were 98 lb. of water to 40 lb. of flesh and bone, he calculated that there were before him at that time as many as 25,000 gallons of water; and if that water was impure it must vitiate the blood and lower the health of all. We must have, he said, a good supply of water, pure at the source. We must have good receptacles for storing it, and we must have a constant system of supply.

p. 238

p. 239

p. 240

What great events from little causes spring! Last year a gentleman was run over by a butcher's cart through the careless driving of the butcher; and finding that accidents of that nature were of frequent occurrence and were increasing, he, with other gentlemen, obtained a return of the number of accidents from Sir Edmund Henderson, the chief of the Metropolitan Police, which showed that, in 1878, 124 persons were killed and 3,052 run over in the Metropolitan districts. But this is not all. The return only showed such accidents as came under the knowledge of the Metropolitan police. Accordingly application was made to the Registrar-General of Deaths, and from him it was ascertained that 237 persons were killed by vehicles and 3,399 run over during that year in and around London; and hence the formation of the society for the prevention of street accidents. Further researches made by the secretary among the London hospitals resulted in learning that run-over cases formed the most common class of accidents. The house surgeon of the principal hospital wrote that he computed there was an average of thirty "run-over" cases a week brought there for treatment, which, in that one hospital alone, would make 930 accidents attended to there yearly. The result of the society's operations are satisfactory. At any rate this year the returns show one death less, and a falling off in run-over cases to the number of 517. Such decrease the society claims to be the result of its labours, on the ground that every year during the last ten years has showed an increase of six per cent. If this be so, it was well that the secretary was run over, especially as apparently he was not much hurt by the operation. Physically he is as fine a man as you would wish to see; and though undoubtedly the sensation at the time was not an agreeable one, yet, if it has led to the reduction of street accidents, how much cause have we to rejoice. It seems almost as if Mr. Buckle were right when he questions the beneficial effect of morality on national progress. At any rate, if I were a lover of paradox I would quote Mandeville to show how private vices become public benefits. A butcher boy recklessly ran over Mr. Keevil, and the result is a decrease of street accidents and mortality. Statues have been erected to men who have less benefited the public than that butcher boy.

p. 241

p. 242

p. 243

But accidents will happen, and I fear, as the Lord Mayor truly said at the first annual meeting of the society held in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House, it is to be feared most of them are really accidents, that is, things that cannot be prevented. The society aims to prevent accidents by enforcing existing laws; by petitioning Parliament to amend them; by prosecuting offenders for furious driving; by granting donations or loans to sufferers; by compulsory carriage of a lamp on all vehicles, trimmed and lighted after sunset; by compulsory use of brake-power; and by stationing the society's mounted and other officers in the leading thoroughfares of the metropolis, and other towns, to check and pursue offenders, and to enforce the claims of the society. At its first meeting we had an array of elderly peers and distinguished persons, that was really overpowering. One reverend speaker looked quite pathetic, as, with an arm in a sling, he narrated how he had been the victim of a street accident. Let it not be thought that I am inclined to write of the reverend gentleman and the society with levity. I, too, have suffered. The other

p. 244

night in the fog, in a street-crossing, I experienced a disagreeable sensation on the side of my head—which fortunately nature has made thick enough for ordinary wear and tear—and in the gloaming found that a cab had driven up against me. Fortunately, I escaped with a slight contusion, but it would have been a sad thing for my small home circle had it been a serious matter. Alas! to men every day accidents occur that are serious; and there are women white with terror, and children struck dumb with an undefined sense of impending ill, as the news comes to them that the husband and father is in the hospital. Sometimes the agony is prolonged, as they do not even learn that; and who can tell the bitterness as the weary hours of the night pass away and the cold gray of morn reappears, as the watchful ear tries to fancy in every sound of the passing footstep the return of one never to come home more? By all means let us, if we can, prevent street accidents. Life is not so bright, earth is not so full of joy, that we may neglect, when an opportunity occurs, to save one breaking heart, to prevent one solitary tear. p. 245

Sir Arthur Helps, just before his death, published another of his popular volumes, "Friends in Council," in which certain friends—men of the world and of high position—are supposed to discuss the several problems of the day. The scene is laid in a villa on the banks of the Thames. The host is Sir John Ellesmere—not Mr. Milverton. The subject is "Social Pressure," a subject which may certainly be said to come home to our businesses and bosoms. The aim of all the speeches is how we are to be comfortable; and, as citizens of this great city, as was to be expected, London occupies the chief place in their thoughts, is referred to in all the arguments—in short, points the moral and adorns the tale. Milverton reads an essay on the subject, which lays it down as an indisputable truth that one of the greatest evils of modern life is the existence of great towns. The metropolis is pointed out as an illustration. First we are told the loss of animal power is enormous. Four or five hundred horses are carried to the knacker's yard each week in London. After a day's business it is a pleasure to take a walk in the country; but, it is asked, Who can do that in London, where there are, in several directions, ten continuous miles of houses? Then, as to the pleasures of society, these are destroyed by the immense extent of the metropolis. Even the largest houses are not, relatively speaking, large enough for the town in which they are situated. As regards questions of health, Dr. Arnott, whom Sir Arthur terms one of the greatest sanitary reformers of the age, remarked that though London is a place where the rate of mortality is not exceedingly high, yet it is a place where nobody except butchers' boys enjoy perfect health—the full state of health that they are capable of enjoying. p. 246

In spite of the somewhat extreme notions of the "Friends," who seem to forget that men are driven into cities by the necessity which compels most of them to earn their daily bread, it must be admitted that in the question of air they have hit a blot. The first article of food, namely, fresh air, is that which is least under the command of man. Mr. Milverton says there is no danger of London being starved for want of animal food. There is more and more danger every year of its health being diminished from the want of a supply of fresh air. It is stated, in confirmation of this fact, that every year the hospital surgeons in London find it more difficult to cure wounds and injuries of all kinds to the human body, on account, it is supposed, of the growing impurity of the London air. This bad air kills off the cows. A London cow does not last a third part of the time one does in the country. On this head much more might have been said. The author might have referred to the mournful fate of the fine cattle, who, recently, on the field of their triumph, the Smithfield Club Show, found, not laurels and rewards, but a grave, in consequence of the fog. We read that that famous man, Count Rumford, used to estimate the number of millions of chaldrons of coals which were suspended in the atmosphere of London, and to dwell upon the mischief which was caused to furniture by the smoke when it descended. But there are other special causes of injury, such as dust and chemical emanations of all kinds. The result is that everything in such a city as London soon loses all bloom and freshness, and, indeed, is rapidly deteriorated. The more beautiful the thing, the more swift and fatal is this deterioration. The essayist calculates the injury of property in London, caused, not by reasonable wear and tear, but by the result of the agglomeration of too many people upon one spot of ground, as not less than three or four millions of pounds per annum. It is to be feared the estimate is not exaggerated. p. 247

There is a further illustration. Sir Rutherford Alcock, as we all know, represented our interests in China. While there he visited the Chinese Wall, and brought back two specimens from it in the way of bricks. These bricks must have been many centuries old, but they had kept their form and betrayed no signs of decay in that atmosphere. Sir Rutherford put these two bricks out in the balcony of his house in London. This was about two years ago. One of these bricks has already gone to pieces, being entirely disintegrated by the corrosive influence of the London atmosphere. p. 248

In another way we also suffer. Certain kinds of architecture are out of place in London, says our essayist: "All that is delicate and refined is so soon blurred, defaced, and corroded by this cruel atmosphere, that it is a mockery and a delusion to attempt fine work." There ought to be a peculiar kind of architecture for such a metropolis—large, coarse, and massive, owning neither delicacy nor refinement, and not admitting minute description of any kind. And, again, that coarse work requires to be executed in the hardest material, otherwise the corrosion is so great as to cause the need for constant repair. p. 249

Another danger is pointed out in the following anecdote. At a former time, when this country was threatened with an invasion of cholera, the speaker (Milverton) was one of a committee of persons appointed by Government supposed to have some skill in sanitary science. "We found," he remarks, "that a most deadly fever had originated from the premises of one of the greatest vendors of oysters in the centre of the metropolis. Attached to his premises there was a large subterranean place where he deposited his oyster shells; this place was connected with the p. 250

sewers. The small portion of animal matter left in the under shells became putrescent; and from the huge mass of them that had accumulated in that subterranean place there finally arose a stench of the most horrible nature, which came up through all the neighbouring gratings, and most probably into some of the neighbouring houses.”

p. 252

My readers need not be alarmed. Such a nuisance would not be permitted now; and as oysters are getting dearer and scarcer every day, it is to be questioned whether these shells will be ever again in sufficient numbers as to form a putrid and pernicious heap. But that the air is polluted by noxious substances and trades is one of the greatest and most pressing evils of the ever-threatening perils of such a Babylon as that in which we live. We suggest, advisedly, the removal of all noxious trades from London, in spite of all that the political economists can say to the contrary. This, however, is of course but a small part of the question. The main object is to see what can be done to render this vast agglomeration of animate and inanimate beings less embarrassing and injurious. The first thing that must occur to almost every mind is the necessity for preserving open spaces, and even of creating them, a necessity of which the Corporation of London is at any rate aware.

p. 253

There is more of novelty in the following: “Another evil of great towns is noise. There is the common proverb that half the world does not know how the other half lives, which, perhaps, would be a more effective saying if the word ‘suffers’ were substituted for ‘lives.’ It is probable that there is no form of human suffering which meets with less sympathy or regard from those who do not suffer from it, than the suffering caused by noise. The man of hard, healthy, well-strung nerves can scarcely imagine the real distress which men of sensitive nerves endure from ill-regulated noise—how they literally quiver and shiver under it. Now, of course, the larger the town, the more varied and the more abundant is the noise in it. Even the domestic noises are dreadful to a man of acute nervous sensibility.”

p. 254

In the City we have done much to remove this evil. The asphalt pavement has wrought wonders; the police have been also efficacious in putting a stop to some of our roughest and most discordant cries; and yet there is a volume of noise, ever rising up and filling the air, which must shorten many a life, and which must be a permanent source of misery. There are few of us who have not realised what Sir Arthur Helps describes as the terrors and horrors of ill-regulated noise, or have not wondered that so much intellectual work is done so well as it is in these great cities. Now that Sir Arthur has called attention to the subject, it may be other people will think it worth consideration.

Damascus and Babylon are referred to for the purpose of drawing a comparison to the disadvantage of London. Babylon, we are told, had in its densest parts what is deficient in London. Babylon contained within its walls land sufficient for agricultural purposes, to enable the inhabitants of the city to be fed by those resources during a siege. Well, of course, that is quite out of question as regards London. Then comes Damascus, which, “from the presence of large gardens, forms a most pleasing contrast to London and other large cities;” but Damascus has the plague, and that London, with all its magnitude, escapes. Then we are told London is built so badly that were it to be abandoned by its population it would fall during that time into a state of ruin which would astonish the world. This, it is to be feared, is true of the suburbs, where builders are allowed to scamp their work just as they please, but certainly cannot be said of the City, where there is proper superintendence and most vigilant care. Another evil to which the “Friends” refer, is the absence of raised buildings, partially covered in, which should enable those in the neighbourhood to take exercise with freedom both from bitter winds and driving rains; in fact, an elevated kind of cloister—where it is suggested recreation and amusement might be provided, especially of a musical kind. It is to be feared space is too valuable for this in the City; and, until our roughs are educated under the new School Board, we know no part of the metropolis where such a thing is practicable, even though, as hinted, the attractions of such a place would counteract those of the gin palace. There was a Piazza in Regent Street, which was removed on account of the shelter it gave to improper characters. One suggestion is made, which is really practicable, and which would be a great boon to Londoners. Ellesmere wishes that he were a Lord of the Woods and Forests, as, if he were, he would add to Kew Gardens the eight hundred acres now lying waste between them and Richmond; he wants a vegetable-garden there, and a recreation-ground for the people, and the ground, he argues, is admirably adapted for such purposes.

p. 255

p. 256

p. 257

Ah! these poor Londoners. They fare but poorly at the hands of the “Council.” “Hail a cab in any part of London where there is a large stream of passers-by, you will observe that several grown-up persons and a large number of boys will stop to see you get in the cab. That very commonplace transaction has some charm for them—their days being passed in such continuous dulness.” Thus, says one speaker: “At Dresden or Munich, on their holidays, the whole population flock out to some beautiful garden a mile or two from the town, hear good music, imbibe fresh air, and spend only a few pence in those humble but complete pleasures;” and then this picture is contrasted with that of the head of the family here, who spends his holiday at the neighbouring gin-palace round the corner. Certainly this is a very unfair comparison, as anyone knows who visits our public gardens and parks and health resorts on the occasion of a national holiday. There is another picture, which it is to be feared is more common. It tells of a sanitary reformer who noticed how a young woman who had come from the country and was living in some miserable city-court or alley, made, for a time, great efforts to keep that court or alley clean. But gradually, day by day, the efforts of that poor woman were less and less vigorous, until in a few weeks she became accustomed to and contented with the state of squalor which

p. 258

p. 259

surrounded her, and made no effort to remove it. It is true, as Milverton remarks: "We in London subside into living contentedly amidst dirt, and seeing our books, our pictures, our other works of art, and our furniture become daily more dirty, dusty, and degenerate."

Our grandfathers lived in the City, and were glad to do so. It is a pity one has to waste so much time travelling backward and forward between one's shop and country house, and office and one's home, but if you can't get fresh air in the City—if you can't rear children in its atmosphere—if its soot is fatal to your health—if its fogs carry one off to a premature grave—if its noises wear out your nerves—one has no alternative. Is it a dream to look forward to a time when beggars and rogues shall disappear from its streets—when it shall be the home of a peaceful, virtuous, and enlightened community—when in the summer-time as you look up you will be able to see the sun—when you will be able to drink pure water—when, within the sound of Bow Bells, you shall be able to live to a good old age—and when, on the Sabbath, its churches and chapels, now empty of worshippers, shall be filled with devout men and women? Or is it to go on daily becoming more gorgeous to the eye and more desolate to the heart? Alas! it seems nothing but a deluge can save the City, and as much now as ever the wearied citizen will have to sing:

p. 260

Oh, well may poets make a fuss
In summer time, and sigh *O rus*.

And ask,

What joy have I in June's return?
My feet are parched; my eyeballs burn;
I scent no flowery gust.
But faint the flagging Zephyr springs,
With dry Macadam on its wings,
And turns me dust to dust.

XIII.—OUT OF GAOL.

p. 261

"Shall I wait to bring you back, sir?" said a cabman to me the other morning, as he landed me at an early hour before the gloomy pile, which has hitherto been known as the Middlesex House of Correction, placed, as my readers may know well, on Mount Pleasant, just out of Gray's Inn Road. On a dull, dreary morning, it is anything but pleasant, that Mount, in spite of its name, and yet I dismissed the cabman and got out into the street, not to enjoy the view, or to inhale the raw fog, which threw a misty gloom over everything, nor even to admire the architecture of the substantial plain brick-wall-order of the building, which, erected in 1794, and greatly enlarged since, occupies no less than nine acres, and was devoted to the maintenance of a thousand male persons belonging to the small but thickly-inhabited county of Middlesex. Government, in its wisdom, has altered all that, and it is not exactly clear to what purposes the Middlesex House of Correction will be applied in the future, or to whom it will belong. Imperialism requires centralisation, and thus it is local government gradually disappears.

p. 262

But I am not standing out here in the raw gloomy November morning to write a political disquisition which few will read, and which they will forget the next minute, but I am come to see the prisoners released from gaol. There is a little mob outside, who stand close, apparently to keep each other warm, and who regard me evidently with not a little suspicion as I light up a cigar to keep the cold out and prepare for the worst. Every now and then a "Favourite" omnibus rumbles past with its load of clerks and warehousemen to their places of business, while a perpetual stream of pedestrians, aiming at the same destination, passes on. Evidently, they regard us with pity, and one sees that in the casual glance, even if there be no language escaping from the lips. It does not seem to me that we are a very showy lot. A little way off a dark and dingy brougham drives up as if it were ashamed of the job and only put in an appearance under protest, as it were; but all around me are wretchedly poor, and chiefly of the costermonger class, whose language is more expressive than refined. There are sorrowful women in the group—mothers who have come for sons who have been, not to put too fine a point on it, unfortunate; wives with babies in their arms, perhaps born since the husband was in "trouble," and sisters who wait to take their brothers where they can have something better than prison fare and a lighter life than that which exists within the four walls of a prison. Some of the women are to be pitied—one, in a widow's garb, with a tear-stained face, particularly attracts my attention. She has brought all her family with her as she comes to take back from the hands of justice her erring son, who, let us hope, may yet live to be a comfort to the poor mother, who evidently needs it so much; and who, perhaps, reproaches herself that she has been a little to blame in the matter. It is hard work to train up young ones, whether they be rich or poor; but the children of the latter in the filthy lodging-houses in low districts have little, alas! to lead them right, and much in the way of precept and example to lead them wrong. With Board schools to teach honesty is the best policy, we may expect better things in the days to come; and, if that be done, I feel certain the Board will have deserved well of the country; if it fails in imparting that higher instruction which some of its leading members seem to think the one thing needful, and to be gained for the poor man's child at any cost to the unfortunate ratepayer of the class immediately above. But this is a digression—and it only helps to pass away the time which here this cold, raw morning appears to

p. 263

p. 264

p. 265

have quite forgotten to fly. It seems to me an age since I heard the neighbouring chimes indicate that it was a quarter to nine, and now at length they strike nine, and still the big gates are closed, and we are silent with expectation—as if, at least, we expected the arrival of a Lord Mayor or a Prince of Wales. A few policemen have now come up to keep the crowd back, whilst a quiet, respectable, unassuming individual comes to the gate, ready to give each prisoner a ticket to a little breakfast in a Mission Hall close by. Mr. Wheatley, the individual referred to, has his heart in the work, and I see he has friends and assistants in the crowd, such as Mr. Hatton, of the Mission Hall in Wylde Street, and others. In a few minutes they will be hard at work, for the big gates suddenly are wide apart, and a couple of lads appear with a smile on their pale countenances, for they are free. Face to face with the crowd outside they seem a little amazed, and scarce know which way to turn. Mr. Wheatley gives them a card of invitation, and Mr. Hatton and his friends outside follow it up with pressing remarks, which lead them to march off to a neighbouring Mission Hall. Again the doors are closed, and we are silent. Then the gates fly apart, and out come two or three more, who seem to wish to slink away without being remarked by anyone. However, a little pale-faced girl cries, “Charley!” in a soft trembling voice, and Charley looks, and as the girl leaves the rank he takes her hand, and goes his way rejoicing. A big bullet-headed fellow has no cap as he comes out, and a friend in the crowd chucks him one, which he puts on his head, and is soon lost to sight. Another one appears at the gate, and a pal comes up to him, and offers him a pipe, which he straightway begins to smoke, with a gusto easier imagined than described. One old man as he hobbles out refuses the proffered card, saying that he was quite wicked enough, and did not want none of that. Evidently he is a hardened sinner, and I fear the chaplain has found him rather a bad subject. One man, a bit of a wag, creates a laugh, as, looking at the women in the crowd, he calls out, “Come along, my dears,” and away he goes to his own place.

p. 266

p. 267

Again there is another pause, and then a respectable-looking man makes his appearance. Suddenly his wife clasps his hand, and leads him off. There is irrepressible emotion in her face, though she does not say a word, nor he either. It does not seem to me that he is a hardened criminal, and he may yet retrieve the blot on his character. Order again prevails, and a voice out of the middle of the gate asks if anyone is waiting for Jones and Robinson. That means Jones and Robinson have behaved well—have earned a little money, which is to be handed over to their friends. And thus half an hour passes away, and as I look at the crowd I see that it has partly changed, and is composed more of casual street boys and pedestrians who have stopped to look. I miss almost all the women who were there an hour ago, and most of the costermonger class have disappeared, though a few still linger on. The voice from the closed doors says that there are no more to come out to-day, and slowly the crowd melts away. Some are evidently sad. They had expected a father, a brother, a husband, and now they have to wait awhile. On our right, as we make our way to Gray’s Inn Road, there is a little Mission Hall, and I turn in. Already the place is full, and as the gas falls on their faces as they devour the morning meal provided for them by Mr. Hatton and his friends, it seems to me that I never saw a more ill-favoured lot. There was not a pleasant face among them—not a man or a lad that I would have cared to set to work in my garden or house; and as to their poverty, that was indescribable. These are the men whom none had come to meet—the waifs and strays, without money or friends or work, with that defiant scowl which denotes how low the man has sunk, and how little it matters to him whether he spend his days in the workhouse or the gaol. Mr. Wheatley talks kindly to them, and after singing—not by them, for they all sit glum and silent—Mr. Hatton prays, and the meeting is over. A good many then come forward to sign the pledge, and I leave them as they explain their position and their need. I see Mr. Wheatley gives a few a trifle; but a trifle, alas! won’t keep a man in London long out of gaol.

p. 268

p. 269

p. 270

XIV.—IN A GIPSY CAMP.

p. 271

The other day I was witness to a spectacle which made me feel a doubt as to whether I was living in the nineteenth century. I was, as it were, within the shadow of that mighty London where Royalty resides; where the richest Church in Christendom rejoices in its abbey and cathedral, and its hundreds of churches; where an enlightened and energetic Dissent has not only planted its temples in every district, but has sent forth its missionary agents into every land; where the fierce light of public opinion, aided by a press which never slumbers, is a terror to them that do evil, and a praise to them that do well; a city which we love to boast heads the onward march of man; and yet the scene before me was as intensely that of savage life as if I had been in a Zulu kraal, and savage life destitute of all that lends it picturesque attractions or ideal charms. I was standing in the midst of some twenty tents and vans, inhabited by that wandering race of whose origin we know so little, and of whose future we know less. The snow was on the ground, there was frost in the very air. Within a few yards was a great Board school; close by were factories and workshops, and the other concomitants of organised industrial life. Yet in that small area the gipsies held undisputed sway. In or about London there are, it is calculated, some two thousand of these dwellers in tents. In all England there are some twenty thousand of these sons of Ishmael, with hands against everyone, or, perhaps, to put it more truly, with everyone’s hands against them. In summer-time their lot is by no means to be envied; in winter their state is deplorable indeed.

p. 272

p. 273

We entered, Mr. George Smith and I, and were received as friends. Had I gone by myself I

question whether my reception would have been a pleasant one. As gipsies pay no taxes they can keep any number of dogs, and these dogs have a way of sniffing and snarling anything but agreeable to an unbidden guest. The poor people complained to me that no one ever came to see them. I should be surprised if anyone did; but Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, is no common man; and having secured fair-play for the poor children of the brick-fields—he himself was brought up in a brick-yard—and for the poor and sadly-neglected inmates of the canal boats, he has now turned his attention to the gipsies. His idea is—and it is a good one—that an Act of Parliament should be passed for their benefit, something similar to that he has been the means of carrying for the canal and brick-field children. In a paper read before the Social Science Congress at Manchester, Mr. Smith argued that all tents, shows, caravans, auctioneer vans, and like places, used as dwellings, should be registered and numbered, and under proper sanitary arrangements, with sanitary inspectors and School Board officers in every town and village. Thus in every district the children would have their names and attendance registered in a book, which they could take with them from place to place, and, when endorsed by the schoolmaster, it would show that the children were attending school. In carrying out this idea, it is a pity that Mr. Smith should have to bear all the burden. As it is, he has suffered greatly in his pocket by his philanthropic effort. At one time he had a well-paid situation, which he had to relinquish, as he declined to keep silence when the wrongs of the children of the brick-yards were to be proclaimed and redressed. He not only did this, but he parted with what little property he had rather than the battle should be lost; and I am glad to see that a George Smith Fund has been formed, of which Lord Aberdeen is chairman; and as Mr. Smith is now without business or occupation, or means of livelihood, if I had five pounds to spare—which, alas! I have not—I know where it would go. As to the gipsies, they evidently hail Mr. Smith as a friend in need and a friend indeed.

p. 274

p. 275

It is no joke, going into a gipsy yard, and it is still less so when you go down on your hands and knees and crawl into the gipsy's wigwam; but the worst of it is, when you have done so there is little to see after all. In the middle, on a few bricks, is a stove or fireplace of some kind. On the ground is a floor of wood-chips, or straw, or shavings, and on this squat some two or three big, burly men, who make linen-pegs and skewers, and mend chairs and various articles, the tribe, as they wander along, seek to sell. The women are away, for it is they who bring the grist to the mill, as they tell fortunes, or sell their wares, or follow their doubtful trade; but the place swarms with children, and it was wonderful to see with what avidity they stretched out the dirtiest little hand imaginable as Mr. Smith prepared to distribute some sweets he had brought with him for that purpose. As we entered, all the vans were shut up, and the tents only were occupied, the vans being apparently deserted; but presently a door was opened half-way, and out popped a little gipsy head, with sparkling eyes and curly hair; and then another door opened, and a similar spectacle was to be seen. Let us look into the van, about the size of a tiny cabin, and chock full, in the first place, with a cooking-stove; and then with shelves, with curtains, and some kind of bedding, apparently not very clean, on which the family repose. It is a piteous life, even at the best, in that van; even when the cooking-pot is filled with something more savoury than cabbages or potatoes, the usual fare; but the children seem happy, nevertheless, in their dirty rags, and with their luxurious heads of curly hair. All of them are as ignorant as Hottentots, and lead a life horrible to think of. I only saw one woman in the camp, and I only saw her by uncovering the top and looking into the tent in which she resides. She is terribly poor, she says, and pleads earnestly for a few coppers; and I can well believe she wants them, for in this England of ours, and especially in the outskirts of London, the gipsy is not a little out of place. Around us are some strapping girls, one with a wonderfully sweet smile on her face, who, if they could be trained to domestic service, would have a far happier life than they can ever hope to lead. The cold and wet seem to affect them not, nor the poor diet, nor the smoke and bad air of their cabins, in which they crowd, while the men lazily work, and the mothers are far away. The leading lady in this camp is absent on business; but she is a firm adherent of Mr. George Smith, and wishes to see the children educated; and as she is a Lee, and Lee in gipsy annals takes the same rank as a Norfolk Howard in aristocratic circles, that says a good deal; but then, if you educate a gipsy girl, she will want to have her hands and face, at any rate, clean; and a gipsy boy, when he learns to read, will feel that he is born for a nobler end than to dwell in a stinking wigwam, to lead a lawless life, to herd with questionable characters, and to pick up a precarious existence at fairs and races; and our poets and novelists and artists will not like that. However, just now, by means of letters in the newspapers, and engravings in the illustrated journals, a good deal of attention is paid to the gipsies, and if they can be reclaimed and turned into decent men and women, a good many farmers' wives will sleep comfortably at night, especially when geese and turkeys are being fattened for Christmas fare; and a desirable impulse will be given to the trade in soap.

p. 276

p. 277

p. 278

p. 279

XV.—THE STREET BOYS OF LONDON.

p. 280

One of the comic sights of the City is that of a guardian of the streets making an attack upon a bevy of small boys, who are enjoying themselves in their own wild way in some quiet corner sacred to the pursuits of trade. It may be that the ragged urchins are pretending to be engaged in business, but X. Y. Z. knows better, and, remembering that order is heaven's first law, and that the aim of all good men and true is to make London as much as possible like the New Jerusalem,

he dashes in amongst the chaotic mob in the vain hope that he shall be able to send them about their business. Alas! London in one respect resembles a place not mentioned in ears polite, in that it is paved with good intentions. X. Y. Z. is a case in point. In a fair field the chances would be in his favour. He has long legs, he is well made, he has more than an average amount of bone and muscle, but he is not fairly matched. Indeed, he is as much out of his element in the contest as a bull in a china shop. He can't dodge under horses' bellies; he can't crawl between the wheels of an omnibus or railway waggon; he can't hide his portly form behind a letter pillar; and his pursuit is as vain as that of a butterfly by a buffalo; and generally he does but put to rout the juvenile mob, and resolve it into its component parts only for a time. It is not always so. A. B. C. comes to the aid of X. Y. Z., and captures the small boy, who, to avoid Charybdis, falls a prey to Scylla, and then the precious prize is borne away before the bench, and Old Jewry rejoices, for there is one little pest the less. Of course the policeman is right. He does what I could not do. I am not a millionaire, but it would require a very handsome sum to get me to go boy-hunting down Cheapside or in any of its adjacent streets. X. Y. Z. has less sense of incongruity than I have, or he sees the eternal fitness of things from a different point of view. Let me observe here the boy has also a standpoint differing from either.

p. 281

p. 282

Let me take a single case. Jack Smith, as we will call him, was the son of a Scotch piper. He was born—or he has heard his mother say so—in one of the vast number of the courts that lead out of the Strand. His father was in the army, but on his discharge took to playing in the streets and in public-houses for his living till his death a few years back. As to his mother—hear this, ye sentimentalists who say pretty things about a mother's love!—she deserted the boy, and left him to shift for himself. He took, of course, to selling lights and newspapers. When he got money he lodged in the Mint, when he had not, he slept in the barges off Thames Street. At last one morning he was caught by a policeman, and hauled before the Lord Mayor. The latter let him off that time, but warned the boy that if he were caught again it would be the duty of society to send him to gaol. What can such a boy think of society? Will he be very grateful for its kindness, or very anxious for its welfare? I think not. London, it is calculated, contains ten thousand of these shoeless, homeless, friendless, forsaken, ragged, unwashed, uncombed young urchins of doubtful antecedents. It is difficult to trace their genealogies, and it is still more difficult to understand why they ever came into existence at all. They are not a blessing either to father or mother, and as a rule may be said to deny the existence of parental authority altogether. "Mother dead; father gone for a soldier—a sailor"—as the case may be—is the common result of all inquiry; and, when it is not so, when father and mother do "turn up"—"turn up" from the nearest gin-shop, all redolent of its perfume—it is not always to the boy's advantage. Solomon says, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;" he might have said the same of many who are not children; and what is to be expected of a boy who is born and bred, as it were, in the streets of London? I have known wise fathers have foolish sons. I have seen the children of what are called pious people go astray. In the very city of London many are the ministers' and clergymen's sons who kick over the traces. The crop of wild oats sown by some of these young fellows is really astonishing. It was only the other day that the son of the foremost baronet in Evangelical circles, the last scion as it were of a noble house, stood trembling at the bar of the Old Bailey. But these children of the gutter have never had a chance of going right. No mother has watched their every step—no father has held up to them a living example of truth and integrity and right—no teacher has waited the dawning of their young intellect—no Christian minister has moulded and guided the workings of their young hearts—the atmosphere in which they live and move and have their being as of poverty and crime. Mostly they run away from home, the home of the thief and the harlot and the drunkard, and what they learn they learn in the back streets of Whitechapel, in the filthy courts of Drury Lane, in the purlieu of St. Giles. Like perpetuates its like. The seed of the serpent is always venomous; the tiger's cub is always thirsting for blood. There are gutter children in London who have risen to be merchant princes, but they have come of an honest good family stock. As to those of whom I write, there is a curse on them from their very birth. Happily for them, they are unconscious of it, and yet in some undefined way it treads upon their steps. Like Gray's naughty schoolboys:

p. 283

p. 284

p. 285

p. 286

They hear a voice in every wind,
And catch a fearful joy.

As I say, they are secretly conscious of a war between themselves and all that is deemed respectable. They feel that society, in the shape of the policeman, has its eye upon them. They have very restless eyes and very restless legs. They are as unlike the primitive ploughboy of the fat fields of Suffolk, of the swamps of Essex, of the fens of Lincolnshire, of the Sussex Downs, as can well be imagined. You can scarcely fancy they belong to the same species; yet, at the same time, the street boy of the city is the same all the world over. In Paris, in London, in Edinburgh, in Dublin, and Belfast, the dirty little ragged rascals are intrinsically one and the same—barring the speech. It is wonderful this oneness of sentiment, the bonds of brotherhood. The other day, on the pier at Boulogne, I lit a fusee for the purpose of having a smoke. Before I could say Jack Robinson, I was beset with hordes of ragged, shoeless, unwashed urchins, just the same as those you see in Cheapside; and it was only by bribery and corruption that I could emancipate myself. In London, as is to be expected, we have more of the commercial element; there is less freedom for them here. They must turn traders, and hawk *Echos* and cigar-lights, or sweep crossings. As to miscellaneous and irregular talent, society fosters it no more in the ragged boy than it does in the well-clad man, and so we have got rid of the Catherine-wheel business and dangerous gymnastics of that kind. Many boys have the vices of their breed—the vices engendered by a life of poverty and of fear. They are afraid to be honest in their answers. They are afraid, when you

p. 287

p. 288

talk to them, you have got some end in view. They will watch you, when you question them, to see how they can best please you. If you want to see what they are, catch them flattening their noses against the eating-house shop windows just about pudding time. That's human nature, and a wonderful thing is human nature. It would be well if society would take the trouble to recognise that fact. It was the want of the recognition of that fact in the good old times, when wild lawlessness was tempered with Draconian severity, that has entailed on the present generation the difficult problem as to what is to be done with our street boys.

Two solutions of the problem are offered us—the Reformatory School and the Refuges for Homeless and Destitute Children. According to our statisticians, in the former seventy per cent. are reclaimed and reformed. According to the latter, eighty per cent. are similarly improved. Mr. Williams, of Great Queen Street, claims for his institutions that they have an advantage over the reformatories, inasmuch as the taint of a prison attaches to the former; and that the fact of a boy having been an inmate of one of them exerts very often a most unfavourable influence over his prospects in life, however desirous he may be of acting honestly and industriously. For years and years he becomes marked, and is treated with more or less suspicion; and, when this is the case, it is not to be wondered at if he returns to a life in which the standard of action is very different to that of good society, and in which the most successful criminals are the most highly envied and applauded. The returns of the Great Queen Street Refuge show, however, much may be done to cure the evils arising from suffering the street boys of our day to ripen under the devil's guidance into depravity and crime. Last year, there were admitted there 445 boys, as follows: From various casual wards and other night-shelters, 63; on the application of parties interested in their welfare, 95; on their own application, 98; sent in by the secretary and subscribers from the street, 76; brought in by the boys' beadle (that is, a person employed to hunt up needy cases), 17; sent by magistrates and policemen, as being utterly destitute, 17; sent by London City missionaries, ragged-school teachers, and others, 44; readmitted from the ship, 60; sent from Newsboys' Home, 29. The benefit of such an agency is still more apparent when we remember that it is not much more than five years since the *Chichester* training-ship has been established, and that during that time, upwards of one thousand boys have been placed on board, and in little more than four years and a half the committee have trained and placed out in the Mercantile Marine and Royal Navy as many as seven hundred boys, all of whom, it is to be remembered, were bound to be, from necessity, as it were, the criminal classes of society. But, after all, this is but a drop in the bucket. It is something to do; it is a great deal to do. England requires good sailor lads; and these lads generally, according to the testimony of their masters, turn out such. At Farningham, the secretary, Mr. A. O. Charles, will show you any day three hundred street arabs all growing respectable. England is already overstocked with incapables and scoundrels; and these boys would have been such had not kindly hearts and friendly hands come to the rescue. That they can be trained and made useful we see in the number of well-conducted blacking boys, of whom, I believe, the number is three hundred and sixty-two, and in the little scavengers who pursue their calling almost at the very peril of their life. In 1851 the first Shoe-black Society was formed. There are now eight, and last year the earnings of the boys amounted to upwards of £11,000. Only think of all this money made by London mud!

Clearly the street boy can be elevated in the scale of being. The vices of his early life may be eradicated. The better part of him may be strengthened and called into existence. He is not all bad, nor altogether incurable. He is what you and I might have been, good or bad, had we been left to ourselves. It is hard work winning him over. It requires a patience and a wisdom such as only a few possess, but it can be done, and it must be done, if the future of our country is to be brighter and better than its past. Ah, he is very human, that little unwashed, uncombed, unfed, untended nobody's child. Leave him alone, and he will be cunning as a serpent, cruel as a wolf, like a roaring lion, ever hungering for its prey. Grown up to a man, and not hung, he will cost the State a great deal of money, for no man wastes property like the thief, and to try him and shut him in prison is very costly work. It is infinitely cheaper to make an honest man of him. For ten pounds you may plant him with a Canadian settler, who will make a man of him, in a very few years. At any rate it is unwise to treat him unkindly, to keep him moving on, to chivy him for ever along the streets, much to the disgust of old ladies, who are always "dratting" those horrid boys. It is to be feared their number is on the increase, and this, I regret to write, is the testimony of one who ought to know. What is the reason? My informant tells me it is diminished parental authority. Every day, mothers and fathers come to him with boys of tender years, whom they declare to be utterly unmanageable. Another cause undoubtedly is our cheap and trashy literature. Recently, a great news vendor stated before a committee of the House of Commons, that he sold weekly one hundred of "The Black Monk," one hundred of "Blighted Heart," five hundred and fifty of "Claude Duval," fifty of "The Hangman's Daughter," and three hundred and fifty of "Paul Clifford." If you want to see what these boys read, visit Kent Street or the New Cut. Look at the sensational pictures of the cheap illustrated journals, in which murder, suicide, and crime are the staple commodities treated of. Read some of the journals professedly written for boys, and which you will see the boys read if you happen to pass any large establishment at the dinner hour, and it will not be difficult to understand what street boys, if left to themselves, are sure to become.

THE END.

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with

which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3

below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt

status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.