



VOL. III. NO. II

TORONTO SEPTEMBER 6, 1872

WHOLE NO 63

THE BEGGARS.

From "Scribner's Monthly."

"Hark! Hark! the dogs do bark!"

THE great yellow Schlang with a cold in her throat, The fox-like Spitz with a piercing note, Johnny McCabe's little black-and-tan, And the mangy cur of the rag-cart man; Towser and Carlo and Wince, Whisker and Huon, and Brant and Prince, Bull and Bouncer and Rollo and Spring, Snap and Fido and Dash and Wing, Pompey and Growler and Trusty and Carl, Bruiser and Bingo and Dandy and Saarl; Lap-dogs, covered with hair like flax; China dogs, with no hair to their backs; Dogs that have come from the stormy shore Of rocky and ice-bound Labrador; Collies, expert the flock to guard; Hairy fellows from Saint Bernard; Starveling curs that back lanes hunt; Coach-dogs spotted, and wolf-dogs gaunt; Greyhounds, pointers, setters, terriers, Bulldogs, turnspits, spaniels, harriers, Mostiffs, boarhounds, Eskemo, Poodles, mongrels, beehounds low; Every dog of every kind, Of every temper and every mind, All engaged in the general row— Snap, yelp, growl, ki-yi, bow-wow!

"The beggars have come to town."

Some are low and some are high; Some are blind in either eye; Some are lame and some are sore; Some just crawl from door to door; Some on crutches and some with canes; Some from alleys and some from lanes; Some approach you with a whine; Some with a testimonial line; Some in a manner to make you shiver— The style of a foot-pad— "Stand and deliver!" Some with tales of suffering hoax you; Some with subtle flattery coax you; Some the iciest of mummies; Some are warm as eighteen summers; Some are sober; some are bums; Some with mute solicitation, Some with loud vociferation, Seek for your commiseration; Some with well-feigned hesitation, For your dole make application; Some present their hats to hold Your benefactions manifold; And beg for money or beg for fame, Beg for office, beg for name, Beg for currency, grub to purchase, Beg for checks, to build up churches, Beg for attention to their capers, Beg for a puff in the morning papers, Beg for a show for buccaneering, Beg for a chance for patient hearing, Beg for anything, Everything, nothing, From a million in gold to cast-off clothing, For a chew of tobacco, a glass of gin, A trotting horse and a diamond pin, A country farm and a city garden; And now and then they beg—your pardon.

"Some in rags, and some in tags,"

Some with darns and some with patches, Socks not mated, and gloves not matches; Boots whose leather redly shows out, Brogans ripped, and shoes with toes out, Hats with broad rims, hats with small rims, Hats again with not-at-all rims, High hats, flat hats, hats with low crowns, Hats with bell-crowns, hats with no crowns; Coats as varied as that of Joseph, Coats whose color no one knows of; Coats with small-tails, coats with bob-tails, Coats with skew-tails, coats with lob-tails, Easy coats, greasy coats, great-coats, show-coats, Jackets, warmuses, then again, no coats; Trowsers narrow and trowsers wide, Darned and patched and pinned and tied, Trowsers thrown on rather than put on, With a string for a brace and a skewer for button; Shirts with the dirt of a twelvemonth worn in, But mostly the shirt the beggar was born in; Some close-capped and others with head bare; Ragged and rent and worn and thread-bare, And looked as though they had joined to fill A contract for stock with a paper-mill.

"And some in velvet gowns,"

Those are the fellows who beg the first, And beg the hardest and beg the worst— Brokers who beg your cash for a "margin," With profit at naught and a very huge charge in; Mining fellows with melting-pots; Speculators in water-lots; Smooth-faced gentleman, high in station, Ready to point to an "operation,"

Seedy writers who have an infernal Project of starting a daily journal; Politicians who beg you to run For place in a race can't be won; Lawyers ready your weal to show In a case that speedily proves your woe; And a host of such in the begging line Arrayed in velvet and linen fine, Worse than the locusts that came to harrow The souls of the serfs of the mighty Pharaoh; And so persistent in striking your purse And begging the cost of their plans to disburse, That you wish, losing feeling and temper and ruth, That the fate of Aktaion to-day was a truth, And the dogs that barked when they came to town, Would tear them to pieces and gobble them down.

GENTEEL MISERABLES.

PROBABLY, all things considered, most men and women get the same amount of pleasure and misery out of their lives. But, for all that, there are few who do not, at times, heartily compassionate their neighbours. People are apt to imagine that they could never put up with the kind of life led by many other persons. They are mistaken, of course, for human nature can endure almost anything but an entire stoppage of food supplies. But, though this is the case, there are some existences which seem washed-out and colorless, and one cannot help imagining that the people who live them must be extremely eccentric folk. We allude more especially to a certain section of the middle class, at least they would be placed among the middle class by cursory observers. But in reality, they form a class of themselves, and keep very much to themselves. As a rule their incomes are not large; on the contrary, they are frequently very limited. Nor can the people be classed as bona fide ladies and gentlemen, but they cannot be placed on a level with the common folk. They are generally neatly and primly dressed, and their demeanour is extremely polite, though they are often shy and nervous. They are, apparently, well-educated, though by no means geniuses. They live in small houses, but quiet, respectable neighbourhoods—these respectable neighbourhoods, by the way, have invariably a dreary and depressing air about them. Their domains are kept scrupulously clean, and in apple-pie order. Their children forego romping, and, with the exception of a few black sheep, who are the terror of the district, are more docile and wiser than the children of either the upper, middle, or lower section of the community. They are regular attendants at church and chapel, but scarcely go anywhere else. The theatre does not see them pass its portals very often, and the opera house still less frequently. You would not catch them at race meetings or agricultural shows. In short, they will scarcely be seen anywhere where expense is involved. They may, perhaps, now and then take a sedate little walk, but they will not do this when it is a wet day. They appear to be on terms of social intimacy with few, if any, for the voice of festivity is rarely, if ever, heard in their houses, and they seldom pay visits to other people's. In fact they are almost without friends.

The question arises, is poverty the cause of the eccentric behaviour of those individuals? It is hard to suppose that people would designedly deny themselves what to the vast majority constitute the delights of life. We do not find that the other sections of the community do so. The aristocrats, when they are not being started at in open-mouthed wonder, enjoy themselves in a thorough-going manner. They shoot, hunt, dance, and play croquet and cricket. The middle class, though they, to a large extent, prostrate themselves before the god of fashion and etiquette, follow suit, and the amount of money they spend shows how eagerly they seek amusement. The working class, it is very well known, recklessly drain the cup of pleasure to the dregs, and expend all their energies in doing so. In short, every class, but this genteel class, acts upon the principle that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy—though whether the members of it do more than other people is a question open to considerable doubt. Though these genteel people are comparatively friendless—friendship could not exist in the chilling atmosphere in which they live—none are so frightened of what the world will say of them. They would not be guilty of impropriety for fear they should be found out. They look on horrified when other and more daring souls act in a manner which, all

things considered, judged from the standpoint of the genteel, is a shade on the wrong side. These genteel beings are never entrapped into anything that they ought to keep out of, but for all that they are not appreciated, and their many virtues receive but small acknowledgment. Nobody pretends to entertain any very great love for them. Most people are afraid to enter their domiciles. Their neat, prim rooms, lacking conspicuously that cosy look which most rooms in small houses possess, at once cast a gloom over unlucky visitors. Everything has that stiff, starched look so antagonistic to real comfort. There is a subdued, cold atmosphere, which at once knocks the spirits out of the most exuberant. The conversation of the genteel people is on a par with their surroundings. It is very proper, but dreadfully commonplace. Neither is it well sustained, but consists of a series of spasmodic jerks. It is of that type which does not enlighten you in the slightest as to the real character of the speaker. You know as much about such persons before you begin to talk to them as you do after you have finished. This, at the best, is an unsatisfactory state of things, and it is by no means surprising that the acquaintance of such people is not cultivated. If you dine or take tea with them, the viands appear to partake of the same character. They seem to be all right, but yet you cannot enjoy them. Your hosts appear to be doing the best they can, but they lack heartiness, and the consequence is that you are devoutly thankful when such meals are brought to a conclusion. Very long for the time when you can with decency depart, for never have you felt more like a fish out of water, and nowhere have your conversational powers failed you so utterly. When there are children in such houses they are to be pitied. The poor little beings seem to have all the life and spirits knocked out of them.

We cannot help compassionating these genteel people. They may, perhaps, be as happy as other people, but the kind of life they lead is repugnant to men and women of ordinary susceptibilities. Probably, in the majority of instances, they are people of straightforward means who have a hard task to keep up appearances. All we can say is, that they make a mistake, and throw away the substance in pursuing the shadow. If they expended less in empty display and more in real comfort, they would be far happier, and would not frighten so many of their friends away from them.—Liberal Review.

THE LION NOT THE KING OF BEASTS.

WE sat one afternoon, some on the work-bench, some on boxes, and indulged in that pleasant mood, calm, kindly and confidential, which follows the midday meal. He, as our host, made every effort to amuse his guests. At first, he took town a sad violin from a wooden peg, and rehearsed sonorous reels, such as modern spirits seem to play with bound hands in locked Davenport cabinets, and with which he had long ago galvanized his domestic corn-huskings.

"Tell us a story, Chips!" This was from Sandis, who knew already the carpenter's penchant for story-telling, and had grown tired of the discordant notes which proceeded from the engine of "vile noise," and wished for a relief. The carpenter crossed his legs, which had been at slight variance before, leaned back against his table, and wiped the perspiration from his rugged brow, put his violin tenderly under his arm, said that he didn't know any stories, and commenced:

"You know they call the lion the king of beasts." We assented, inquiringly; the suggestion of a doubt was somewhat startling, for what child does not have the fact indelibly impressed upon its tender mind—does not spell out in his first book of natural history the sentence appended to a woodcut of Africa's monarch. "This is the king of beasts." So we waited, with our ears erect. "Well, I used to think so; but you'll see I was mistaken, and so are you. "Go on, Chips!" "When I was a largish boy, and used to work on a farm and do the chores, there come

a menagery to Bethel. Bethel was about five miles from Palmiry, where I lived, and one day I went over there to get the mare shod. I heard a great talk about lions and zebras, and painters, (not artists), and the barns and taverns were all covered with big sign bills, on which waire pictures of these various animals, as large as life, and every bit as natteral.

"While I was there the agent of the circus driv up, and I can tell you he was as much of a curiosity as his show, and about as important a man as ever you see. I stood reading the show bills, and my head was half bustin' with all the description of cammelleppards, and tigers, and so on, which were told there. You see I had never seen anything on nigh so big before, and it made a great impression on me. All of a sudden an idee struck me, and I got a-talkin' with the agent, although he really did seem to me to be a most too great a man to hender or interrupt in his business. I thought he was condescendin' to speak to me at all. I says to him:

"You say on your show-bills that the lion is the king of beasts?"

"Of course we do, says he; everybody admits that."

"Well, says I, 'I make you a bet of fifty dollars that I can bring a critter that'll lick your lion.'"

"Nonsense," says he.

"Well, says I, 'all you have to do, if you don't believe it, is to take my bet, otherwise you back out.'"

"This rather cornered him; for, of course, you see, he couldn't help betting with me, without resking the success of his show; so he pulled out a big wallet stuffed full of money, took out a fifty dollar note, and handed it to the landlord, whom he chose for stakeholder.

"Fifty dollars warn't much to him, but it seemed a heap of money to me; and I told him he must wait a little while, till I could scare up my part of the stakes. I went away, and I don't think he expected to see me again, although I told him I would be back in about half an hour. I had a little money in the bank, for I was naturally of a savin' turn; but it warn't more than half enough, so I went to a gentleman in the place, for whom I had worked occasionally, and who had allers been friendly with me, and I asked him to lend me the balance, and I agreed to work it out or pay him within the year. I gave him my note, the first I ever writ, and when I said it I actilly felt as if I had committed a state-prison offence. Then I drew (this word Chips pronounced dree-ew, although he had to a great extent laid aside his Oriental idiom) out my money from the bank, and this, with what I borrowed from the gentleman, made out the fifty dollars. I went back to the tavern, and handed over my money without saying much, for I felt a little solemn; and then, having got the mare shod, I rode over home.

"That night I dreamt of all kinds of things you ever did see—agents with lions' heads, who roared at me; monkeys who rode on my back and grinned in my face, and then arrested me for stealin' fifty dollars. It raily did seem as if half-a-dozen menaggeries had broke loose in my room. When mornin' came I realised what I had done, and was almost shaky in my resolution; but there it was, I thought my idee was a good one, and so I concluded to go ahead.

"Meantime the story got round that Bildad Bunker was goin' to have some kind of lion-fight, and a lion-fight in Bethel was not by any means a common occurrence. I found myself as notorious as a fighter trainin', and was the town talk. Some people laughed at me, some thought that at all events I knew what I was about, and some took sides with me or with the agent, according to circumstances.

"In a few days the menagery arrove in a grand procession, with brass bands, and calico horses, and cages on waggons, and the big tents were pitched, and everything prepared for the show. At last the day for the exhibition come. Of course, everybody knew by this time about the fight, for in a place like Bethel such a thing as a secret was never heard on, and a public affair like this brought folks from far and near all through the country. There was a most an enormous crowd, I can tell you.

Inside the tent they had an enclosure built for the fight; and there were seats for the umpires, and everything was in first-rate style. I went to the back of my house where my critters were kept, and, putting one in each pocket of a pair of saddlebags, I slung them over the mare's back, and started.

I am usually strictly punctoal, but this day I was jest a little belated, and when I got to the tent I found that the boys was a-talkin' and wondering why I didn't come, or whether I would come at all. I hitched the mare, took the saddlebags under my arm, and started for the tent-door. Strange to say, the doorkeeper didn't happen to know me, and stopped me as I was going in.

"Ticket, sir," says he.

"Says I: 'I am the man (for I thought I was a man) who has got a critter to fight the lion.'"

"Oh! pass in, sir," says he; 'pass in.' And here Chips bent his body and waved his hand, to show the marked consideration with which he was ushered into the tent.

"In I went, and found the place just packed full of people; and you may believe that their faces were all blurred together, so that I couldn't see one on 'em, for I raily felt unpleasantly conspicuous.

"There was a kind of a hummin' all round the tent, and my head was a-hummin' too; but I was in for it, and you never did hear such shoutin', and cheerin', and laughin', as when I undid one pocket of the saddlebags, and put a big snapping turtle on the ground. The agent was standin' there, and his face grew long when he see this, for you know what savage critters their turtles are, and not easy killed. He objected to the match, and said it was undignified, and that he wasn't going to imposed upon; so the question was left to the umpires, who were chosen for the occasion.

"They decided that the match must go on, so he was obliged to yield his pint, and everybody was glad of it.

"So the turtle was put in the enclose. He stayed very quiet, with his nose just outside his shell, and his eyes every now and then giving a quiet wink. The door of the lion's cage which separated him from the enclose was then opened, and in come the lion, a-roarin' and a-pawin', and when he see my champion he walked forred and put down his nose to him, as if to make his acquaintance.

"No sooner had he did so, however, than he drew back with the horriddest roar that ever was heard, for you see the turtle just deliberately closed his beak into the soft part of the lion's snout and there he hung like a New Zealander's nose-ring.

"It was fearful to see the lion shake and roar; but there the critter hung, and when he did drop off, the lion's nose was a piece shorter. No sooner, however, did his royal highness get rid of his antagonist, than he backed into his cage, and nothin' would induce him to come out again and face the music.

"So, you see, I won my bet. I was more famous then than I have ever been since; but the curiouser thing is, that ever afterward they changed the natteral histories in our parts, and taught the children that the "snapping-turtle, and not the lion, is the king of beasts."

"But a snapping-turtle isn't a beast, Chips!" "Well, it's a critter."

A LIFE POLICY LOST BY DRINK.—An action for £1,200 was brought against the Gresham Life Assurance Society on Monday last at Bristol. The case for the defendants was that at the time the deceased insured his life he was suffering from a severe cough, and had acquired intemperate habits, and that the answer he had given had been entirely untrue in almost every particular. The deceased died, according to the plaintiff, of a severe cold caught a short time before his death, but according to the defendants, of consumption of long standing, accelerated by intemperance. The widow of the deceased and other witnesses proved the case for the defendants, who obtained a verdict. A Bible was produced, in which was an entry by the deceased, as follows:—"Memorandum.—That I purpose from this day and date henceforth to avoid all intoxicating drink as herebefore used as a common beverages. By God's help I intend to follow out that which I purposed on the 7th December, 1868."