

DIOGENES AMONG THE CARMEN.

DIOGENES, having been delivered from his own troubles in the Recorder's Court, was reminded by the Cabmen of his promise to appoint a Special Commissioner to inquire into the Tin Medal grievance. We suggested that a small deputation of the most intelligent of their body should wait upon us and tell us their views of the matter in their own words,—that we would do our own "specialling."

The result of these preliminaries was, that at an early hour this morning a rap at the bottom of our Tub,—turned up as usual on account of the dew,—roused us up to the cares and toils of the day. It was a sharp, decided rap,—not the rap of a dun,—that is a disagreeable, bullying kind of rap,—there is insolence in it, mixed with the dregs of the politeness that tempted you to order that last tweed suit, for which payment was "no object." It was not the baker's rap,—his is a rollicking, devil-may-care rap—a rap which says "there's your rolls old boy—take them in if you like, or leave them if you like." It was not the rap of a friend,—all the Cynic's friends accompany their raps with a jolly greeting and stand with the grin of fellows who have some refreshing thoughts in their heads. No, this rap was that of a man who had business on hand and was waiting, like a paid telegram, for a reply. We wondered who it could be, so we opened the door,—that is, we kicked the "inner circle" of our Tub—which immediately rolled on to its bilge, and certified to the rapper that DIOGENES was at home,—revealing to us at the same time, the good-humoured face of our friend Peter. Peter smiled a good morning to us, as wide as he could smile with due regard for the safety of the "dudheen" which filled the air around with fragrance. Our visitor was accompanied by his dog, which was in the attitude of what Heralds would call, *demi voltigeant*—that is to say, when he saw his master hit the Tub with the butt-end of his whip, he made up his mind that underneath there must be "varmint," and therefore he set himself in the position we have so learnedly described; but when the Tub rolled over, and he saw it was only the Philosopher, he drew back with a look of doubt, and perhaps, disgust; growling at one end as if angry, and wagging the stump of a tail at the other end—signifying thus that he was quite ready to take his morning nip at a rump steak if at all encouraged. DIOGENES objects to these canine familiarities,—for a bite of a dog, as Pantagruel says, is the most severe of tooth-aches. "He won't bite you, sir," said Peter, with a marked emphasis on the pronoun, "he looks pitifully at ye, for he thinks the bobbies will be pisinin of ye for going about without your badge." In fact the dog did look kindly at us, and being satisfied that DIOGENES was not a badger for him to draw, he became a dog *couchant*, wagging the remnant of his tail in a most friendly way.

Peter in the meantime continued his smoke, but this we could not stand; "it's ill speaking between a fou' man and a fasting;" give us a light we said, filling our briar-root pipe, with some of Rattray's best, "and now, friend, tell us your business?"

"We are the Cabmen's deputation, sir," was the reply. "We," DIOGENES said; "you and the dog do you mean?" "Yes, sir,—*Blotcher* has as much right to complain as any one,—havin't them Corporations put tallies upon the dogs too?" Blucher growled, and again wagged his stump of a tail. It was perfectly true, there was one fellow-man proud of his birthright as a free-born Briton—proud of his exalted position as having dominion by Divine Charter over all the beasts of the field, condemned along with his dog—and for no crime—condemned by his fellow-man the Magnates of Smallendom, to wear a "Canada plate" with a number on it, as if he were a convict or an escaped penitentiary bird, and Blucher,—poor Blucher—the dog, the faithful companion of

man—true to him in sorrow or in joy, proud of his poor master's caresses,—no prouder of the rich man's,—he too made ridiculous with a nasty Alderman's badge dangling round his neck!

DIOGENES has not put in a comma in this last sentence. We leave the "nasty" to be applied either to Alderman or badge according to the taste of the reader. If any "Att. for the Plff.," threatens us with legal proceedings, we declare that "nasty" applies to the badge.

DIOGENES smoked thoughtfully. Peter smoked too with a soothed, yet sorrowful look at his fellow deputy; he was indignant at the treatment his old companion was compelled to submit to, but his own tally caught his eye; he said nothing but the "tin had entered his soul." DIOGENES was the first to speak; his heart was full of STERNE and quite sentimental; he thought of the old man and the dead ass, and of Maria and her dog. "It is an abominable shame," said the Philosopher!

"It is a —"

"No Peter, never swear—even at an Alderman!"

"If you had to wear one of these things, with your number on it, you would swear too," said Peter, and he gave a stamp with his foot, to which the dog responded by a wag of his stump. "Would it do any good to swear?" we suggested. "It would be some satisfaction at any rate," said Plooky, who was now a little red in the face. "Yes," he continued, "if a man when he is angry does not swear right out, he swears between his teeth, and that's worse." There was some philosophy in this we thought, for after all that has been said of the latent force of compressed air, how shall we calculate the danger, if compressed with a mixture of suppressed oaths? We felt that Peter had a good plea for abusing the Corporation, and we too were tempted to swear. In fact, we must swear at the dunces who think they have a right to insult a hard-working class of their fellow citizens—we mean the Cabmen, not the dogs. But in scolding we must adopt the plan suggested by Tristram Shandy's Nuns. They agreed, it will be remembered, in the absence of their drunken coachman, who always did the swearing for them, to divide the improper expletive. We proposed this to Peter, but he scorned the compromise. "By golly," says he "I won't go halves at all, I'll swear at the whole pack," (he was thinking of dogs) "as long as I am forced to wear this dirty tin plate outside of me." DIOGENES however feels that it would do him good to rap out a warm expression or two. Many times, in fact, were it not both low and immoral, we would emphasize our sentences in that way, but the impropriety of the thing muzzles us. Others feel as we do,—in fact, in a confidential chat with the *Witness* the other day, he confessed that the want of some pious expletives was a defect in our language.

Bidding Peter to sit down and requesting "*Blotcher*" to look after our "plunder," we went across the way to the *Witness*, and, referring to our recent conversation, read STERNE'S plan for producing all the effect of the sin without committing it. John had never read *Tristram Shandy*; he thinks STERNE a loose character, but the artful dodge of the parson pleased him. We would have proposed the thing to the *Gazette*, or the *Herald*, but they, like Peter, do their own spelling, so we proposed to our dear chum, that, as we had many scruples on the subject, like himself, we should adopt this plan—that when he felt that it would do him good to swear at the *True Witness*, or any other of the evangelicals, his friends, we should shout the first syllable of any wicked word which his memory might suggest, and he could quite innocently shout the second, and *vice versa*. The high contracting parties agreed, and we returned to our Tub and shouted across the street—"This tin plate business is an insult to our