

DE LUNATICO INQUIRENDO.



sent instance, calls for Punch's inmates of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, whose tobacco has recently been stopped by order of the Directors of that institution. In a medical point of view, Punch's opinion is, that the moderate use of tobacco, as a sedative, is rather conducive than otherwise to that state of mental tranquillity which it must surely be the aim of every skilful and humane watcher of the disturbed intellect to induce amongst the patients committed to his charge. Punch speaks from personal experience. Like most men of a high order of intellect, he is subject to occasional depression of spirits. Imps of azure complexion will sometimes hover around his breakfast table, perch on the edge of his teacup, and leave their diabolical little foot-prints on the pats of butter. Nor can this be called "very midsummer madness;" for it is just as likely to supervene when the sleigh-bells are jingling from the frost-silvered horse-trappings, as when the swallows are twittering from the sun-scorched parapets. But the blast of British trumpet never more surely scattered terror in the ranks of a British enemy, than does the first blast of the Meerschauum in those of the blue devils. And as the white cloud curls upward from the amber mouth-piece, away on its convolutions rolls the host of horrors; while beautiful creations, winged like tropical butterflies, arise in the magic mist. Then, on the very principle of *ex fumo dat lucem*, the poor maniacs might surely be permitted to kindle an occasional flash of reason with the embers of a pipe. If Punch's blue devils are transformed to butterflies by the magic incense, might not the serpents and alligators of the lunatic loom up through its fragrant fumes, in the modified and milder form of caterpillars and cockroaches? If nothing better than this, even, came of the moderate use of the pipe, surely the directors would be better consulting the cause of humanity by thus ruling, than by constituting themselves a board of tobacco-stoppers.

Let the lunatics, however, speak for themselves. Punch has received some forcible appeals from them, upon the subject referred to. Some of these productions are in a metrical form, and, for touching simplicity and pathos, will bear a comparison with the ravings of many a poet now at large, and in the full enjoyment of liberty, tobacco and popularity. The following verses, over the signature of "March Hare," remind us much of Emerson, in the wilder and least intelligible passages; while there is a touch of Tennyson in some of the lighter tracery with which the images are embroidered:

O! cut a shred from the fragrant weed,
And place it in my black clay bowl:
Dark is the darkness, light I need.—
Seek it in yon reddening coal.

As the spiry fumes ascend,
See how the serpents twist and bend!
Away they wriggle, cutting and curling,
All for less than a penny sterling.
Brave blue smoke! the imps thou smotherest,
Others follow them,—otherer, otherest!
Travel, travel, imp and devil,
Now they are gone, and my spirit can revel.

This was the song you've heard me sing,
When I a shepherd swain would rove,

ARBITRARY measures have ever called forth the just censure of Punch. Ever has his baton been interposed between the oppressor and the oppressed; and never has he pleaded his hump as an excuse, for refusing to rush into the foremost ranks in the fight of the weak against the strong. For, although no follower in the errand steps of the Knight of La Mancha, yet, like that distinguished individual, if it *must* come to blows, Punch is always ready for a mill. The case of oppression, which, in the pre-

ference, is that of the inmates of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, whose tobacco has recently been stopped by order of the Directors of that institution. In a medical point of view, Punch's opinion is, that the moderate use of tobacco, as a sedative, is rather conducive than otherwise to that state of mental tranquillity which it must surely be the aim of every skilful and humane watcher of the disturbed intellect to induce amongst the patients committed to his charge. Punch speaks from personal experience. Like most men of a high order of intellect, he is subject to occasional depression of spirits. Imps of azure complexion will sometimes hover around his breakfast table, perch on the edge of his teacup, and leave their diabolical little foot-prints on the pats of butter. Nor can this be called "very midsummer madness;" for it is just as likely to supervene when the sleigh-bells are jingling from the frost-silvered horse-trappings, as when the swallows are twittering from the sun-scorched parapets. But the blast of British trumpet never more surely scattered terror in the ranks of a British enemy, than does the first blast of the Meerschauum in those of the blue devils. And as the white cloud curls upward from the amber mouth-piece, away on its convolutions rolls the host of horrors; while beautiful creations, winged like tropical butterflies, arise in the magic mist. Then, on the very principle of *ex fumo dat lucem*, the poor maniacs might surely be permitted to kindle an occasional flash of reason with the embers of a pipe. If Punch's blue devils are transformed to butterflies by the magic incense, might not the serpents and alligators of the lunatic loom up through its fragrant fumes, in the modified and milder form of caterpillars and cockroaches? If nothing better than this, even, came of the moderate use of the pipe, surely the directors would be better consulting the cause of humanity by thus ruling, than by constituting themselves a board of tobacco-stoppers.

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When I a shepherd swain would rove,

Happier than the cannibal king,
Blowing my pipe in the shady grove.
But now, my earthly joys to wipe out,
The sons of guns have put my pipe out.

Airy, fairy Jezebel!
How I love thee none can tell.
Wiery, fiery old Directors,
How I hate ye! Heaven protect us.

On the Board
Wrath be poured.
And so God save you, gentlemen all;
Where you were bred the beer was small.

This is severe. "Poor Tom's a-cold," without his clay pipe for comfort: nevertheless, there is method in his madness. The next lyrical effusion is from an old lady, who styles herself "Queen of Bedlam."

Once, on a bush, I was a thrush,
So merry with my pipe;
Birds of a feather, we flocked together,
Pigeon and woodcock and snipe,
And the meadows they smoked with the thirsty sun,
All were smokers,—every one.

Summer is over,—hawks are about;
The frog to his roost has gone.
And I have no joy, for my pipe is out,
Though a queen am I, alone.
The chimney-pots are high and dry;
They have their smoke;—alone am I.

Nothing, in our opinion, can come up to those chimney-pots; unless, indeed, the directors do, to stop their smoking. Besides the specimens already quoted, there are a few epigrams of undeniable point, but, unfortunately, rather too passionate and personal for our columns. In reading all of them, however, the curious affinity between poetry and insanity has struck us forcibly; indeed, in many instances it would be difficult to define where the poet ends and the madman begins. And if the rule would only work both ways, and four-fifths of our poets could be induced to exchange the lyre for the pipe, Punch has no doubt whatever that their forthcoming volumes would be quite as pleasant and imperishable as any they have already issued.

The greatest of men are liable to err; and should Punch, in the foregoing remarks, have dealt unjustly with the Directors, he only hopes that none of them will be driven, by a strong sense of injury, to take up a permanent refuge within the walls of their asylum. As to the poets, being one of the *genus irritabile* himself, he neither regrets nor retracts any remarks he may have made about them; and with respect to the poor lunatics, he trusts that their intellects may be restored to them, along with their tobacco, and that they may never be put on a short allowance of Punch.

THE "MONTREAL HERALD" v. "MONTREAL GAZETTE."

The *Montreal Gazette* and the *Montreal Herald* have bandied hard words with each other, as to the extent of their respective circulations. From hard words they have come to hard cash, which in these times is the hardest thing Punch knows of. The comparative circulation of these journals is to be decided by wager, for which purpose twenty-five pounds of the circulating medium has been deposited in the hands of Mr. Thomas Ryan, by Mr. Ferres of the *Gazette*. Happy newspaper proprietor!—to possess twenty-five pounds! Punch for some period has looked upon such a sum as fabulous.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BRITISH LEAGUE.

Is the fall of the "English gentleman," John Prince, greater than the fall of Niagara?

AN IMPOSSIBLE EFFORT OF REASON.

A point impossible for mind to reach—
To find the meaning of a Royal Speech.