

"The Corner" London.

Few people are so serious in their amusements and so easy in their business transactions as the English. A Frenchman buys or sells stock or merchandise in gross, with the air of being engaged in a deadly duel; while Capel, who concludes an affair of a thousand pounds with apparent indifference and perfect good humor, is only to be found truly grave and unhappy at a ball or concert.

Even the Germans, the most industrious and penetrating of foreign travellers, who dive into cellars, study life in temperance coffee houses, coal-heavers' taps, and other resorts still less known but not less worthy studying by the common race of travellers generally, miss an exchange or mart, which combines to a large class of Englishmen all the charms of gambling on the Bourse, of lounging on the Boulevards of Paris, the casinos and gardens of Hanaburg and Baden-Baden—at once a place of business and of speculation to the extent of hundreds of thousands; while to an unlimited number who neither buy nor bet it is a regular promenade and lounge at least twice a week.

This place, hitherto overlooked by book-making visitors from abroad, is Tattersall's—the Garraway's of horses, and the Stock Exchange of racing men; where the supporters of two leading national institutions, for hunting and horse-racing, most do congregate.

Piccadilly has been widened and beautified, the Green Park drained, levelled, and cleared of encroaching houses and gardens. St. George's Hospital has risen to keep the monuments of our victories in commemoration, and the mean suburb of Kimbushbridge and the dingy houses of Grosvenor Place are rapidly giving way to palaces as gorgeous as stone and stucco, with much money and little taste, can make them. But one cluster of desultory buildings, stretching their vast length many a road between Belgravia and Constitution Hill, remains unchanged. Take an omnibus from any part of London that will pass Hyde Park Corner. If it be Saturday, Sunday, or Monday in the season, at any hour between one and four p. m., a collection of the red-waistcoated equestrian gentry, who are to be found at the corner of every fashionable street in the London season, will direct your attention to the narrow and sombre avenue which otherwise it would be as easy to pass as any news entrance, and which is technically designated "The Corner." Suppose that it is Monday, the day of the sale of the stud of young Lord Crashington (going abroad), consisting of some forty horses, when everything perfect, from the pony hack to the dozen of thoroughbred hunters, beside two or three worn-out creakers, are to be offered to competition. There is also a celebrated race-horse, sold in consequence of a dispute; a lot of well-bred yearlings; whose owner, having prepared his mind by twenty years of jockeying on the turf, the House of Commons, and the fashionable world, is about to take the military command of a province rather larger than France; and the usual lots of animals for all uses, fit for park, field, or state carriage, brougham, tandem, fly, to breed from; or feed hounds. The sporting aristocracy are so oppressively hampered for time during the rest of the week, that Sunday is the only day they can find to buy horses and to make bets. Their Sabbath desecration we fully recommend to those advocates of Sabbath observance whose attention has been hitherto confined to tea-drinkings and country excursions of pent-up artizans and their stifled families. The

aristocracy may have its Sunday Tattersall's unquestioned; but the labour-ocracy must not have its Sunday Crystal Palace on any terms whatever.

Tattersall's yard—a square ill-paved court, adorned in its centre by a painted cupola, crowned with a painted bust of George the Fourth, over a painted box—is crowded on Sunday with gentle and simple. There is Lord Bullfinch determined to buy Brookjumper, and so is Ginger the horse-dealer, who will run him very hard; Tomkins in search of a pony for his little boy; the Earl of Flower-de-Luce, with his eye on a pair of greys for the Countess's chariot; Mr. Bullion, ready to secure Mr. Welter's cob, although it cost him a check in three large figures; and Nobler, the gaming-house keeper, who is on the look out for a good-looking bit of blood, that he may make useful either to win or lose. There they are, crowded together—the learned and unlearned, high-born and low-born, the capitalist and the adventurer, the new sledged man of fashion, and the broken down gentleman—beside a host of fillers, examining each horse as he is brought out, with an affectation of acuteness that is truly national. Although there are horse-buyers of all grades, the well-dressed are the majority. The slang style of attire has gone out. The green coat and top boots in which Thurtell and other murderers swaggered on the race-course and the betting-race is out of fashion; and, if seen, generally covers some decent north country farmer. Black is the favorite wear. The next-looking quietly dressed man in patent leather boots and closely-cropped whiskers, whom your country cousin takes for a peer, is a horse-dealer. The bearded gentleman, rufed and chained, magnificent in waistcoats and solid jewelry, is an ex-quaker capitalist, and anti-in-arm with the son of a Chapman dissenter; while sporting publicans and keepers of betting-houses affect a sort of dress and demeanor which, five-and-twenty years ago, would have been considered the mark of what in that day was known as "A Methodist."

On Monday, the auctioneer might, as he passes through the crowd to the forum, be taken for a barrister or a physician, or even for a clergyman. "The Pride of Leicestershire" is brought out; a big horse with a scanty mane, and no magnificence of tail, with several marks of scars and bangs on all legs. The Count de Volage, who is intent in carrying back something to out-ritual his friends in the Champs Elysees, is astonished to hear an amount of such unimpeccable appearance introduced to the audience in a very few words, and in a very few minutes, with very little fuss, knocked down for upwards of five thousand francs. The sale goes on; no noise, no fuss, no wrangling; the auctioneer an artocrat, before whom all must give way. To horses of priceless value, succed others within the reach of all pockets—some good, some good for nothing. Volage secures a grey pony, with a flowing mane and tail, that steps along in a perpetual prance, at a tenth part of the price of the *grande bête de chasse de reynard*, and makes an oration to surround him and groom him, which they don't understand and much despise.

Seven or eight thousand pounds' worth of horseflesh is disposed of with as much sober seriousness, and not more unseemly excitement than if it had been a sale of old China or Autographs. There are no disputes; the rule prevents them; the fashion of the place is to be respectable. The English admiration for and imitation of lords comes out in the universal mutation; when lords in top-boots attended fights, drank deep at taverns,

and boxed in the streets, their humble followers did the like. Now black coats and eyeglasses curiously fixed, are considered the correct thing. How can any cad venture to begin a stormy dispute when he goes into Tattersall's gloomy office to pay his money, when, perhaps, a cabinet minister is warning his back at the fire? If any excesses of language are ever permitted, it is in the very ancient tavern that stands within the premises opposite the gates of the sale yard;—a tavern, the like of which for thorough unchangeability of character, is not to be met with even in the neighborhood of Temple Bar. One-storied, with latticed small-paned windows; an ancient bench on each side the narrow portal to accommodate the foot-sore groom or helper out of place, when not occupied by washing tubs or cooking pots. No gin-palatial style has been permitted to deface either the interior or exterior of this primitive tavern; where perhaps the possessor of Highflyer and founder of Hyde Park Corner, formerly smoked the pipe of peace. The counter—grainless of brass, and dark with the beer of three generations—bears the hieroglyphic carvings of feather weights, who have since grown into state coachmen of state dimensions. All is dark, dusky, cobwebby, except the beer, which enjoys the excellence incident to a quick draught, and critical customers. There is an ordinary, laid out in a supplemental apartment adorned with sporting prints, on sale days, but into the refectory I have not ventured to penetrate.

Truly the English love of ancient ways is to be seen in perfection at "the Corner." Had the same amount of business been transacted in any other capital, what an architectural pile, what fountains, what statues, what trezors would have adorned it! What numerous government regulations would have impeded its business. How many infantry, cavalry, and artillery would have guarded it; and, above all, what an elegant *café* would have replaced the dingy alehouse; and what a magnificent lady in silk and lace would have presided over piles of fifty sugar and carafes of liquors ranged on each side her throne!

To return to the peculiar aspect of Tattersall's, which is, in this eminently pious country (where cries of horror meet the proposition for opening gardens and museums on Sundays), both curious and discreditable. On some week days, when sales are not about to take place, solitude reigns in this wilderness of stables, and on others dainty ladies of the highest rank pass in review, without fear of soiling their kid boots, park hats and platon ponies. But on certain special Sundays the yard and avenues are crammed with a multitude on anything but pious thoughts intent. On the day before the Derby or St. Leger races a long line of vehicles and led horses crowd Grosvenor Place. A long line of anxious peers and blebians, butchers; brokers, betting-list keepers and all their parasites, and all their victims; usurers; guardsmen and prize-fighters; costermongers and sporting parsons; Manchester manufacturers, Yorkshire farmers, sham captains, elevated gentlemen, heedless boys, and gray-haired, but not venerable grandfathers, fill the narrow descent, crowd the yards and stables, and especially congregate around a plain-brick barn-like building, which might, in any other situation, pass for a Latter Day Saints' Chapel.

This is the great temple of Meroury or Plutus, the *bourse* of betting men—the exchange where millions change hands in the course of the year. On great days a Cerberus of triple-headed acuteness, assist-