

From "Heads of the People."

THE ENGLISH PEASANT.

"The English Peasant is generally reckoned a very simple, monotonous animal, and most people when they have called him a clown, or a country hob, think they have described him.

"But who says the English Peasant is dull and unvaried in his character? To be sure, he has not the wild wit, the voluble tongue, the reckless fondness for laughing, dancing, carousing, and chit-chatting of the Irish Peasant; nor the grave plodding habits and intelligence of the Scotch one. He may be said to be, in his own phraseology, "betwixt and between." He has wit enough when it is wanted; he can be merry enough when there is occasion; he is ready for a row when his blood is well up; and he will take to his book if you give him a schoolmaster. What is he indeed but the rough block of English character? Hew him out of the quarry of ignorance, dig him out of the slough of everlasting labour, chisel him, and polish him, and he will come out whatever you please. What is the stuff that your armies have chiefly been made of but this English Peasant? How many of them have been carried off to man your fleets, and when they came to shore again were no longer the simple slouching Simons of the village, but jolly tars, with rolling gait, quid in mouth, glazed hats, with crowns of one inch high, and brims of five wide; and as much glib slang and glib money to treat the girls with as any Jack of them all?

"The English Peasant has in his nature all the elements of the English character. Give him ease, and he is readily pleased; wrong him, and who so desperate in his rage?

"In his younger days, before the care of a family weighs on him, he is a clumsy, but a very light-hearted creature. To see a number of young country fellows get into play together, always reminds one of a quantity of heavy cart-horses turned into a field on a Sunday. They gallop, and kick, and scream; there is no malice, but a dreadful jeopardy of bruises and broken ribs. Their play is truly called horse-play. It is all slaps and bange, tripping up, tumbles, and laughter. But, to see the young peasant in his glory, you should see him hastening to the Michaelmas fair, statute, bull-roasting, or mop. He has served his year; he has his money in his pocket, his sweetheart on his arm, or he is sure to meet her at the fair. Whether he goes again to his old place or a new one, he will have a week's holiday. Thus, on old Michaelmas day, he and all his fellows, all the country over, are let loose, and are on the way to the fair: the houses are empty of them: the highways are full of them. There they go, streaming along, lads and lasses in all their finery, and with a world of laughter and loud talk. See, here they come flocking into the market-town! And there, what preparations for them: shows, strolling theatres, stalls of all kinds bearing clothes of all kinds, knives, combs, queen-cakes, and gingerbread, and a hundred inventions to lure those hard-earned wages out of his fob. And he does not mean to be stingy to-day. He will treat his lass, and buy her a new gown into the bargain! See, how they go rolling on together! He holds up his elbow sharply by his side, she thrusts her arm through his, up to the elbow, and away they go, a walking miracle that they can walk together at all. As to keeping step, that is out of the question; but beside this, they wag and roll about in such a way, that keeping their arms tightly linked, it is amazing they do not pull off one or the other. But they do not. They shall see the shows, and stand all in a crowd before them with open eyes, and open mouths, wondering at the beauty of the dancing women, and their gowns all over spangles, and at all the wit, and grimaces and summer-sets of harlequin and clown. They shall have a merry dinner, and a dance, like a dance of elephants and hippopotami, and then—

"To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new."

"And these are the men that become sullen and desperate: that become poachers and incendiaries. How, and why? It is not plenty and kind words that make them so. What then? What makes the wolves herd together, and descend from the Alps and the Pyrenees? What makes them desperate and voracious, blind with fury, and revelling in vengeance? Hunger and hardship! When the English Peasant is gay, at ease, well fed and well clothed; what cares he how many pheasants are in a wood, or ricks in a farmer's yard? When he has a dozen backs to clothe, and a dozen mouths to feed, and nothing to put on the one, and little to put in the other,—then that which seemed a mere playful puppy suddenly starts up a snarling red-eyed monster!—How sullen he grows! With what equal indifference he shoots down pheasants or gamekeepers. How the man, who so recently held up his head and laughed aloud, now sneaks, a villainous fiend, with the dark lantern and the match, to his neighbour's rick! Monster! can this be the English Peasant! 'Tis the same! 'Tis the very man! But what has made him so? What has thus demonized, thus infuriated, thus converted him into a walking pestilence? Villain as he is, is he alone to blame—or is there another?"

Never make a show of learning when you have none to show; when you get knowledge you will know better.

I'VE ANGLED FAR, ETC.

I've angled far and angled wide
On Fannich dyer, by Luichart's side,
Across dark Conan's current;
Have haunted Beanly's silver stream,
Where glimmering thro' the forest, Dream
Hangs its eternal torrent.

Among the rocks of wild Maree,
O'er whose blue billow ever free
The daring eagles hover,
And where, at Gomach's ruffian steep,
The dark stream holds its angered leap,
Many a fathom over.

By Lochy sad, and Laggan lake,
Where Spey uncoils his glittering snake
Among the hills of thunder;
And I have swept my fatal fly,
Where swarthy Fudhorn hurries by
The olden forest under.

On Tummel's solitary bed,
And where wild Tilt and Garry well
In Athol's heathery valleys;
On Earn by green Duneira's bower,
Below Bredalbane's Tay-washed tower,
And Scone's once regal palace.

There have I swept the slender line,
And where the broad Awe braves the brine,
Have watched the gray grilse gambol,
By nameless stream and tarn remote,
With light flies in the breeze afloat,
Holding my careless ramble.

But dearer than all these to me
Is sylvan Tweed; each tower and tree
That in its vale rejoices!
Dearer the streamlets one and all,
That blend with its Eolian brawl
Their own enamouring voices!

EARLY STRUGGLES OF DR. ELLIOTSON.

"When I commenced," says Dr. Elliotson, "my professional career, I determined upon trusting for success to working hard, and to conduct myself as well as the infirmity of human nature would allow. I determined, however long I might wait for success, never to fawn upon and run after my superiors, nor to stoop meanly to my inferiors; never to intrigue for an adventure, nor to employ trumpety artifices for making myself known to the public.

"For many years I toiled, and saw many of my contemporaries, many of my juniors, who worked less, but were wiser in their generation, pass by me. I published work after work, edition after edition, and paper after paper was honoured with a place in the transactions of the first medical society in Europe: I was physician to a large Metropolitan Hospital, and had attended there, and gratuitously out of doors, above 20,000 patients but in vain. In 1828, my profession was not more lucrative to me, and was as short of my actual expenses, as it had been in 1818. At that time, the "Lancet" was pleased, now and then, to publish a clinical lecture delivered by me at St. Thomas's, and my practice at once doubled. The following year it published the greater part as I delivered them, and my practice was doubled again. Last season, the same journal published them all, and my practice was doubled a third time. This astonished me the more, as my clinical lectures were generally delivered with little or no premeditation, while all I published myself had cost me great labour, many a headache, and much midnight oil. It was through the general practitioners, in the large majority of instances—and through general practitioners, for the most part, with whom I had not the honour of any acquaintance,—that the publication of these lectures accomplished my success. To the body of general practitioners, therefore, I owe a debt of gratitude. They have called me forth spontaneously, from no interested motive, and I cannot exert myself too much in the education of their successors."

THE MISER'S HABITATION.

In an old house, dismal, dark, and dusty, which seemed to have grown yellow and shrivelled in hoarding him from the light of day, as he had hoarding his money, lived Arthur Gride. Meagre old chairs and tables of space and bony make, and hard and cold as miser's hearts, were ranged in grim array against the gloomy walls; attenuated presses, grown lank and lantern-jawed in guarding the treasures they enclosed, and tottering, as though from constant fear and dread of thieves, shrunk up in dark corners, whence they cast no shadows on the ground, and seemed to hide and cower from observation. A tall grim clock upon the stairs, with long lean hands and famished face, ticked in

cautious whispers, and when it struck the time in thin and piping sounds, like an old man's voice, rattled as if it 'twas pinched with hunger.

No fireside couch was there, to invite repose and comfort. Elbow-chairs there were, but they looked uneasy in their minds, cocked their arms suspiciously and timidly, and kept upon their guard. Others were fantastically grim and gaunt, as having drawn themselves up to their utmost height, and put on their fiercest looks to stare all comers out of countenance. Others again knocked up against their neighbours, or least for support against the wall, somewhat ostentatiously, as if to call all men to witness that they were not worth the taking. The dark square lumbering bedsteads seemed built for restless dreams; the musty hangings to creep in scanty folds together, whispering among themselves, when rustled by the wind, their trembling knowledge of the tempting wares that lurked within the dark and tight-locked closets.—N. Nickleby.

GALLERY OF NATURAL MAGIC, REGENT'S PARK.—In the Microscope Room, is an Achromatic Solar Microscope, covering a disc of 256 square feet. Here the infinitesimals and larvæ of water beetles, gnats, and other insects, are daily shown: the magnifying powers of this instrument vary, according to the object under examination, from twenty thousand seven hundred and thirty-six, up to four millions six hundred and sixty-five thousand six hundred times. The waters of stagnant pools, with their singular inhabitants, are shown in the greatest perfection.

Among other objects of great interest, we must not omit to mention the Achromatic Instruments: by the means of one may be seen the whole of the Diamond Beetle, 28 inches in length.—Two of the largest Concave Mirrors, so placed as to produce such intensity of heat, that no known substance can withstand it. The powerful Gregorian Reflecting Telescope pointed to the sun, furnished with proper eyepieces, for the most minute scrutiny of the very remarkable spots discernible on this stupendous orb, is also worthy of especial notice.

Occupying the whole of one side of the anti-room, is the largest Electrical Apparatus in the world. This magnificent instrument is a plate machine, and measures seven feet in diameter, consequently exposes an electric surface of upwards of 80 square feet. This unequalled instrument is mounted in the most scientific manner by Clarke, so as to obtain a current of electricity such as was never before seen; its positive and negative conductors are of varnished copper, and so constructed as to give a striking distance or length of spark, hitherto deemed unattainable. The terminating balls of the conductors are strongly gilt, in order to prevent dissipation. Its single pair of rubbers deserve especial attention, from the superior and simple manner by which they are supported. The enormous battery is worthy of much notice; the terrific effects of which, when fully charged, are shown by many brilliant and striking experiments. The effects of this wonderful agent is exhibited in its sudden and violent transfer from one body to another, producing intense heat, igniting and fusing metals, setting fire to inflammable substances, etc. etc. The electric equilibrium is here destroyed by friction, and the positive and negative electricity called into action in all its vast rapidity and violence.

THE NEW MODE OF GETTING PICTURES.—A few days since M. Daguerre exhibited, in one of the rooms attached to the Chamber of Deputies, several specimens of the products of the Daguerreotype. Among them were views of three streets of the capital, the interior of M. Daguerre's atelier, and a group of boats in the collection of the Louvre. The deputies who examined them, and who continued to crowd the room throughout the day, were particularly struck with the marvellous minuteness of detail which these views, and especially those of the streets, exhibited. In one, representing the Pont Marie, all the minutest indentations and divisions of the ground or the building, the goods lying on the wharf, even the small stones under the water at the edge of the stream, and the different degrees of transparency given to the water, were all shown with the most incredible accuracy. The use of a magnifying glass revealed an affinity of other details quite undistinguishable by the naked eye, and more particularly in the foliage of trees. The antique busts are said to have been rendered by this method with very great beauty of effect. The chemical substance upon which the light acts, according to M. Daguerre's method, is laid upon sheets of copper, which, for the drawing, exhibited on Saturday, were about nine or ten inches by six or seven inches. The expense of such plates M. Daguerre estimates at about 3fr. 50c. each, but he expects that considerable reductions may be ultimately made in their cost, and that the improvement of his method will render it applicable to other substances not metallic.—Galignani.

Virtue wants more admirers, wisdom more applicants, truth more real friends, and honesty more practitioners.

Eh! philanthropy wants a residence, and fidelity an asylum. Conceit and Ignorance go hand in hand; wherever persons are bloated with conceit, ignorance is invariably the expanding principle.