

digestions like ostriches, and nothing is an impediment, and who would eat *skunk*, if some one would set the example.

The guests and frequenters of the "Mermaid" are worthy a study. I often thought how Dickens would enjoy them! At present I have the honor of breakfasting with a peddler of sham jewellery, who is of the Jewish persuasion—he persuaded me to buy a brass brooch from him; a silent member of parliament, whose eloquence confines itself to the sensible remark of "hear! hear!" and "yea" and "nay," and who stammered and blushed to the ears when he was called upon for a speech at his last election; a pair of twin brothers, who seem to have been taught to eat and drink by word of command—they do it so exactly together; and a young man from the States, who says he is merely travelling for the good of his health, being the son of a New York merchant, but who nevertheless will sell you a receipt for harness-blackening, with a number of others, for the small sum of ten cents.

There is one old gentleman, a great storyteller, who comes here often: he was formerly a militia major, and was "permitted to retire, retaining his rank." Having once assisted in capturing a lot of Yankee soldiers, he feels very proud of it, and laments that no such honor as the Victoria cross had been given for valor, when he was young; and I dare say he was plucky enough, and might have been lucky enough, to win it. He has a clever knack of sliding in, by hook or by crook, his story of this adventure, and I've heard it as often as I've seen him here.

There is a mysterious man who comes here, day after day, and never says anything, but listens eternally. He sits in an arm-chair regularly, supporting his chin on his hands, and his elbows on the chair, and is all ears and eyes, but no tongue. He is not a strong man, for his chin is the only part of his body his hands support. He never drinks, and no one ever speaks to him, and people say he has been a frequenter of the "Mermaid" for seven years, and conducts himself always the same. He is a perfect puzzle to me.

You should see a grinning, gesticulating Frenchman, who is ardently in love with the beer-pump and bar-maid. He strokes the former like a pet dog, and puts on his sweetest smiles to the latter, until she draws him mild or bitter ale for love. His sympathies of the tender passion, however, are only evinced in the vicinity of the bar.

There's an immaculate snob here now, Mr. Frederick Hawhaw, who is a sort of natural curiosity to me, as those nondescripts always are. He is tall and straight; has a very dissipated-looking phiz; nose cocked, beefy and ruby; face ornamented with carbuncles gangrenous and pimples; hair once black, but now—tell it not, O Bogle!—while a long poetical curl is plastered affectionately down his cheek on each side of his face. They say some wag once cut them off, when Frederick was asleep, and that he was invisible until they had grown again. He wears a beavaw, and talks aw! when he doesn't forget: is eloquent on almost every subject, but when he has done, for the life of me, I can't tell what he's been talking about. He is overwhelmed to inconvenience with opinion of himself, and has come to the conclusion that the world is going to pot. It turns out that he is a travelling tailor, taking orders. He says he was offered \$25 a week from Gibb & Co., but he wouldn't take less than \$35, as he couldn't live in Montreal for less. He is all the way from Yorkshire, England, never worked for any one but the nobility, and once made a riding suit for Her Majesty! He is reported to have been married, but denies the soft impeachment.

The village physician is Dr. Kiloreure. He is a stout, burly man; has a very gruff voice, and is something of a ventriloquist, talking down deep in epigastric regions. He has a great deal to say on hæmophysics, puncturing the pericardium, tracheotomy, and aneurism, by anastomosis—not a word of which, from beginning to end, his hearers understand. I don't believe he'd be so talkative, if they did. He is too fond of the cup which inebriates. He says very often,

"nature abhors a vacuum," and I think he is determined to give her no chance of finding one in him. But leaving him as I last saw him, drunk, in an easy chair, let us look at

Mine host. He is a regular John Bull, and once fought as a pugilist in the London ring, and can still hit from the shoulder to knock many a younger pugilist "into the middle of next week." He is so very fond of his wife, that she isn't at all fond of him. She bullies her better half, but he has no objections to her wearing the breeches, metaphorically speaking. When any of his boys make a fuss in the street, he is out into the middle of it, and roars after the juvenile at the top of his voice; and even when speaking in his mildest tone of voice, he shouts loud enough to be heard at the other end of the village, on account of which peculiarity he has been called "The Whisperer," and whenever his gentle voice is heard, the village boys say, "ther's old E—whispering."

My landlady. She is the most civil woman in the world, and greets rich and poor with the same "Good morning, Sir." She attends the bar, has a most insinuating manner, and is such an unceasing talker, that she is known to the world by the cognomen of "The Mute." They're fond of contradictory comparisons in this village. She can't listen to another person talking without talking herself all the time, or at least moving her lips; she "never tires," but, like the steed that ran in the Camptown races, she's "bound to run all day, and bound to run all night." Her husband says she talks in her sleep; and once, when she had such a sore throat that she couldn't do more than move her lips, he found it impossible to sleep for want of his usual somnific.

There are other bipeds worth studying; but let me tell you of two of my quadruped friends.

There is a dog belonging to the inn called "Bob," and I never look at him without seeing his strong resemblance to his master, old E—. I have always thought dogs grow like their masters, as husband and wife come to look alike, and though it is odd, I could show many an old dog with the family likeness (!) of his master in his face. "Bob" is a great favorite, and is a thorough-bred English bull. His face bears honorable marks of hard fights, and his left ear—what's left of it—is slit into three. He is as gentle as a pup to his friends, and the very d— to his enemies. The cat of the establishment lies curled up in "Bob's" legs when he is asleep; she is jet black, and is the terror of other cats. Once she climbed up on Dr. Kiloreure's lap, and he flung her off, when up sprang "Bob," and growled in dog language, "you'd better beware!"

You should see my bed-room. The old four-poster occupies about three-quarters of the room, and would make a grand blockhouse, if it was walled and roofed. I have to elimb or jump into it, and it creaks most musically. There are six monstrous pillows, and I couldn't count the sheets and quilts. Over there on a shelf is a stuffed owl, and, as the straw is coming out, it makes Mad. Owl look a most remarkable bird. I turn first rate summersaults on my bed, make a comfortable sofa of the pillows, and otherwise manage to appropriate the contents of my room.

But I don't want you to imagine I'm in the house all the time. Remember I told you it has been raining for three days. Just fancy the luxurious time of it I have when the weather's fine; and, if you possibly can, take a run out here—though it would never do to tell you where I am. Wouldn't old E— *whisper* if he saw this!

Montreal.

W. G. B.

HUMOUR OF LONDON CABMEN.

THESE are some people so exceedingly genteel that everything that is common or cheap—such as a bunch of violets—is in their eyes vulgar, and not to be written about. They clap their gloved hands in approbation of mincing drawing-room wit, but shrink from humour in its everyday garb. I venture to warn such gentry not to read this paper, which

is intended for stronger stom— I beg pardon— more robust intelligence. *Nihil humanum a me alienum puto*. I for my part enjoy the quick retort of a Hansom cabman equally well with the repartee of a Chesterfield.

It is a noticeable fact, that drivers of Hansom cabs are vastly sharper than those who preside over the four-wheeled conveyances. These last, indeed, are called "Grumblers," I believe, simply because their Jehus do grumble in a sulky and muttering sort of way (no matter what money you offer them,) but rarely think of giving intellectual battle, like their brethren upon two wheels. They stand in one's doorway, and ask, with their proper dues in their open hand: What is *this* for? They terrify one's wife with their bad language, and will bully a poor servant girl going to her place about the unmistakable box, for which they want sixpence extra for its ride on their roof; but their "sauce" is not piquant. None of them was ever known to give back his sixpence to a fashionable but rather economical fare, with the remark, that "he is sure he wants it more than him" (the driver); he prefers sixpence to all the wit in the world, and would never indulge in a sarcasm, even if he could, at the cost of a pint of beer.

Only once did I hear of a Growler who made himself completely master of the situation, and obtained ransom from the poor creature in his vehicle by sheer intellectual superiority. Young Augustus Foljambe of our club—who spells his name with a number of little *fs*—was the victim, and confided the story to me, with tears in his eyes, upon the very night of the occurrence. The poor lad is very fond of finding his legs under the mahogany of persons of title, and he had been asked to dine that evening with a live marquis, for the first time. Though bent on this exquisite pleasure, however, ffoljambe had a frugal mind; since St. James's square was only a few streets from his own lodgings, he would not hire a brougham, even for so momentous an occasion, but took a "grumbler" from the rank. "The Marquis of Rattatat, No. 999, St. James's square," said he, in a magnificent voice, and leaned back in the crazy vehicle, as though it had been a coroneted chariot with patent springs. The mention of his titled host was quite unnecessary, and as it turned out, cost the poor fellow as much as a brougham would have done, besides much mental agony; for, from his exalted manner, the astute driver gathered that Mr. ffoljambe was about to partake of his lordship's hospitality for the first time, and would wish, above all things, to enter his mansion in a graceful and unembarrassed manner; and the wretch took his measures accordingly.

On arriving (in about a minute and a half) at No. 999, Cabby put in his head at the window, and demanded *five shillings*. My poor friend, looking in an apprehensive manner up at the stately mansion, exclaimed: "Nonsense!" but hastily proffered half-a-crown. Hereupon, Cabby swiftly ran up the steps, and administered a thundering double-knock, which summoned three flamingo-like footmen, besides a perfect gentleman in plain clothes. "You scoundrel," cried ffoljambe in a stage-whisper, "here is your five shillings; but I have got your number."

"My fare is *half-a-sovereign* now, sir," and I don't leave this house until I get it," answered Cabby, in a most determined tone. And he *did* get it. ffoljambe paid about a shilling a yard for that little drive; and his lordship's butler and three lackeys thought him a very mean fellow after all, and quite unfit to be a guest of their master, to be thus disputing with a cabman about a paltry sixpence.

This achievement of Cabby's was undoubtedly a great *coup*; but its conception did not require much agility of mind, and its success was due to dogged determination, rather than to any brilliant parts. A Hansom cabman would probably have recognised little ffoljambe's character at a glance, whereas this four-wheeled individual was doubtless indebted to Luck that he did not make a mistake in his man. The idea itself was not original. A brother Johu once tried the very same trick upon a subtle lawyer of my acquaintance, and made the saddest *fiasco* of that affair. My legal friend, although a disciple of