

year Sir Julius celebrated his jubilee by two concerts given in the Royal Albert Hall, at the first of which his oratorio *St. Peter* was performed. Sir Julius Benedict will shortly be the recipient of a money testimonial, which has already reached a large sum, and which has been subscribed to by many distinguished musicians and lovers of the divine art.

Such is a brief outline of the career of one who, as composer, performer, and teacher of music, has now held an exceptionally high position in this country for

over half a century. We have found space to mention only the leading works which have proceeded from his pen. These may be taken as representative specimens of his musical gifts, but they form only a small number of the gems which have been the outcome of his genius. There are few forms of music which he has not cultivated; and though many composers have written more, there are few who have been so successful in so many different styles as Sir Julius Benedict.

JAMES C. HADDEN.

COMING THROUGH THE WOOD.

I SAW her coming through the wood,
 My pretty one, my dear ;
 I said, "An' you will marry me,
 I'll wait for you a year.
 And I'll give you a silken gown,
 And I'll give you a ring,
 An' you will only marry me
 I' th' coming of the spring."

My love, she tossed her pretty head
 As she went on her way,
 And said, "I'm in a hurry, sir,
 For it is market day."

She had a basket on her arm,
 And she began to sing,
 As she went on into the town
 To do her marketing.

She stayed to rest as she came back
 Upon a fallen tree ;
 She'd bought a ribbon for her hair
 And put it in for me.
 And then we sat and wondered what
 The coming year would bring ;
 And, oh ! I think she'll marry me
 I' th' coming of the spring.

REA.



A SHILLING A DAY AND HIS BOARD

BY THOMAS ARCHER.

FEW years ago there appeared in a popular journal, conducted by the late Charles Dickens, an amusing description of a journey in a large square caravan, the external walls of which were covered with staring advertisements printed on great bills known as "posters," while the interior was occupied by the proprietor, who represented that he was known as "King of the Bill-stickers." The writer of the description saw this portentous vehicle slowly passing along Cheapside, and frequently blocking or being blocked by the traffic of other vehicles. He gained an introduction—or, rather, introduced himself—to the owner, who sat within in solitary state on a wooden stool, and during their jolting and somewhat prolonged journey through the City, not only participated in certain refreshments which were handed into the

caravan from a tavern on the route, but gave his audience of one some technical information on the interesting subject of the bill-posting business and its recent developments.

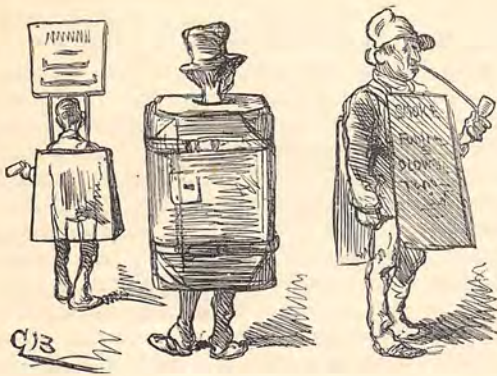
Glancing at that lively description to-day, one is almost startled to find what remarkable changes have taken place in the methods of public advertising since it was written.

Bill-posting is now not only a science, but an art, the professors of which have to deal with sheets, several of which are combined to make a bill of stupendous area, proportionate to the vast extent of hoarding on which it is to be displayed.

So large, so strikingly illustrative, and so varied in style and colour are the modern posters, that London thoroughfares, where extensive "improvements" are going on, take the aspect of irregular

picture-galleries, sometimes of a character rather appalling than attractive, but always eminently suggestive of what we are pleased to call civilisation.

It would be rash to conclude that the art of bill-



sticking has attained its utmost limit; but, at all events, its professors often seem to occupy most of the important sites in the metropolis, and to keep possession for an indefinite period, and until the original timber of the exclusive hoarding becomes a solid and impregnable rampart of papier-maché, each successive layer being an interjectional chronicle of the history of a period.

We are not prepared to say that the men employed to display this mural record claim to rank as historians, but let us ask ourselves what would be the result if the entire staff—or, rather, clan or tribe—of metropolitan bill-posters lost their heads, so that the various innumerable sheets became inextricably mixed, and London awoke one morning to see hoardings and dead walls covered with irrelevant segments of thousands of pictured and “displayed” advertisements. Fancy the fearsome appearance of long streets, where at frequent intervals the otherwise blank spaces were filled with incongruously combined portions of the presentments of natural and unnatural heads of hair, bridal bloom, anti-corrosive paint, prize kitcheners, with smiling cooks, cattle food, cures for obesity, and patent wringers! Imagine the features and the forms of contortionists, statesmen, showmen, philanthropists, popular actors in character, comic singers, eminent divines, hospital nurses; figures displaying the latest shower-proof attire, modish hats, symmetrical umbrellas; gentlemen suspending the operation of dressing for dinner to discuss the merits of a new collar-stud; mothers neglecting rampant babes to extol the virtues of a revived food; ancient crones with a remedy for sprains; blooming maidens with scarlet cheeks, illustrating the effects of a wash for the complexion;—all commingled in heterogeneous segments, and associated with a meaningless eruption of letters, explaining nothing, and suggesting only abject hallucination!

Fancy recoils from the mere hint of such a possibility, and finds some relief by reverting to the times when the most striking advertisements consisted of

strange objects placed upon wheels and slowly moving through the chief metropolitan thoroughfares, to the dismay of the drivers of the public vehicles and the despair of already belated passengers. Special Acts of Parliament and ordinances of the Civic Council have reserved all rights of obstruction for the Lord Mayor and Corporation. On Lord Mayor's Day some occasional vestiges of the old advertising media reappear; but where are the giant caravans covered with posters, the Brobdingnagian hats, the seven-league boots, the painted and varnished pagodas, the monster tea-caddies, and all the other picturesque symbols which so often strangled the stream of traffic for an hour or two, and checked the feverish current of the streets?

These are nothing but a recollection now, and even the branch of itinerant advertising which still flourishes and has been largely developed in West-End thoroughfares, is sternly banished from the City of London. The “sandwich men,” as they are called—the chunks of humanity between slices of deal thinly spread with more or less piquancy—are allowed no place between the Griffin of the Law Courts and the outer eastern boundary. Light and entertaining announcements emphasised by repetition, as a line of board-men slouches in single file, are denied to the *habitués* of the districts between Aldgate and Cripplegate. Even a man who recently appeared in Cheapside wearing a waterproof coat painted with white letters, was summarily arrested and cautioned. The modern representatives of the heraldic office who bear blazoned on their rigid tabards the latest achievements of the age are, however, one of the cherished institutions of Western London, and the greater streets would lose some chief attractions if these were abolished. They are among the most entertaining of our few remaining public shows, now that legislation has declared against the strolling juggler, the acrobat of the by-way, and the pedlar who in years gone by stood and pattered



at the street-corner that he might sell “six handy and useful articles for a penny.”

How often has our weak curiosity yielded to the appearance of a grimy and melancholy-looking individual who, with a wistful and imploring air, bore on his feeble front a placard inscribed with the injunction

—"Do not look at my back"! How often have we been tormented day after day by a wooden-bordered square of unsullied pasteboard borne silently along, its centre containing the command, "Watch this Frame;" and having watched it with persistent expectation,



what has been our indignation when we discovered, later in life, that the frame had been filled with a recommendation to "Try Bubblejohn's Bunion Plaisters"! The means adopted for directing public attention to the depressed and too consciously inappropriate mediums of these advertisements, are often amazingly ingenious. A procession of heterogeneously-sized fellows, each provided with a pasteboard nose and a burlesque hat, is but a crude method of arresting notice. The appearance of a regiment of grotesques, each with a long pipe, and the legend "Smoke only Fungus's Old Virginia Cabbage Leaf," is but an initial form of announcement. A whole row of unmistakable denizens of Whitechapel and St. Giles wearing imitation Chinese blouses, caps, and black calico pig-tails, and each bearing a fan which half conceals the inscription on his chest, is a higher range of invention. This has, however, been excelled by a recent advertisement of a drama at one of the most popular theatres, where, the success of the performance apparently depending on an episode of penal servitude, the announcements were borne by a gang of unhappy board-men, attired and numbered as convicts, and led through the public streets as though they felt their gyves, and the iron had entered into their souls. This was snatching a grace beyond the reach of art, and far transcended the exhibition of processions of shambling, awkward squads of elderly casuals habited in the coarsest burlesque of stage sailors or pirates, and with lineaments as melancholy as could well be imagined.

One ingenious and, for a time, attractive and successful device, was to marshal a regiment of board-men bearing on back and breast, in huge capitals, the consecutive letters of the title of some sensational drama. The chief difficulty was not only to place them in proper order, so that the public behind them, or before them, should read letter by letter the proper words of the advertisement, but so to regulate the march that each man should maintain his position in single file in spite of the obstructions and the traffic

of the streets. This was so difficult that the experiment has been almost abandoned. When a number of men—having had their mid-day rest, and eaten their bread and dripping, by the wall leading down to the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, at the Charing Cross end of the Strand—prepare for the afternoon's march, and instead of exhibiting the consecutive letters which make the words "THE DUKE'S MOTTO, ADELPHI," show to the astonished gaze of the populace a legend running, "THE DUKE'S MILD HE POTATO," the difficulties and risks of that mode of announcement are obvious. And when, in an attempt to shuffle them into their right places, the letters burst forth with the declaration, "THE DUKE SMILED A HOT POT," it was not easy to restrain popular interference. But probably all previous successes of the combined effects of "sandwiches" and dramatic properties, have been surpassed by the quite recent spectacle of a procession of the conventional board-men, each with the impenetrable and depressed expression peculiar to the tribe, and each carrying a baby—that is to say, a doll of more than natural infantile beauty and proportions—becomingly attired. The effect of an interminable succession of infants, borne by such incongruous nurses, was irresistible. Even the grim features of the men themselves occasionally relaxed—moved by the laughter of the spectators.

It is not only the merely grotesque and incongruous that succeeds, however. Quite lately an advertisement in the newspapers offered a reward to a number of bald-headed men who would submit to have the name of a new cough medicine branded or stamped on their bare pates. The outcome of this was that a number of peripatetic mediums—otherwise board-men—were engaged to parade the streets wearing a "scalp" wig, on the back of which the name of the article was impressed, and over the front of the wig a hat of somewhat grotesque appearance. As some of these men were to pervade the bridges and the public thoroughfares singly, and were liable to rude salutations, not to say the occasional missiles and jocularities of a personal character, the pay was supposed to be



raised from the traditional shilling to eighteenpence a day; but the scheme does not seem to have been successful.



Of course, only the advertisements of the regular theatres and amusements, and those of some articles of commerce which have acquired the right to a specific name, hold a permanent place in the "sandwich" announcements. The sensational displays are necessarily ephemeral. There are a few boardmen who are pretty regularly employed when they choose to apply to the firms who engage their own mediums and supply the boards. There are others who are only too glad to get a job for a week or so; and these, as well as some of the more regular and steady itinerants, are readily mustered and roughly drilled by a gentleman who is an agent for conspicuous advertisements. Any one who has happened to be at the entrance of a certain court not far from St. Giles' Church early in the morning at this season of the year, may have seen the poor ragged regiment assemble there, for this is the agent's trysting-place.

Here the names of the queer contingent are enrolled, here they receive their board, and here they come for their shilling. Where do they live? When Sam Weller was once asked that question he answered, "Anywheres." You may take the same reply. "Well, you see, what's a shillin' or eighteenpence arter all? It may be better than hangin' about the docks all day on the chance of fourpence a hour for three or four hours three days a week; but them as hasn't got no reg'lar lodgin's with a family down Whitechapel way, or else by Waterloo Road, or perhaps Bermondsey, or closer by in this neighbourhood till Newport Market's all gone, why, they takes what they can get at the lodgin'-houses in Fulwood's Rents, down by Holborn, or similar.

"Breakfus'! Well, a haporth o' coffee and a bit o' bread mostly; or, if your missus is able to do anythink, perhaps cocoa and a chunk off the loaf. Bread an' drippin' or else a saveloy, or once in a way a slice o' cheese, about the middle o' the day, and them as thinks they need it a penn'orth o' beer. We takes our dinner-time mostly down by St. Martin's Church, them as works the Strand; and others down by the bridges, and such places as has walls to set down by, or to lean agin. We're off long afore dark, and them that's lucky can pick up a job in the evening, perhaps, if they ain't wore out with the weight and the heat of the boards at their shoulder-blades and on their chests. Some on us gets a job at the theaters; and I've known sech as goes on the stage itself in percessions and sech-like for what they call sooper-noomaries.

"Lor bless you, yes! there's a many of us as has seen better days. I have myself, though it was only as a plasterer; but that man over there, as looks so tidy an' clean, he kep' a good 'ouse over his head one time. Lost his all, he did, when some bank or another went and broke, and I s'pose he's never had no chance, or else no heart to take it, ever since; but he does better than most becos he's a steady, civil man, and gets employ to put up the shutters at shops, and when they want a extra hand at the theatre, and what not. I shouldn't wonder if he made—ah, as much as eighteen bob or a suffrin some weeks. But you must excuse me, sir, and thankee. Time's up, and I must get between the shutters agin. There's my mate a-beckonin' of me, and we've got to work round Pall Mall with this lot."

