



## Thespian Reminiscences.

BY J. H. SIDDONS.

THE year 1815 was one of the most remarkable epochs in British history. In that year the great Napoleon received the *coup de grace* at Waterloo, and in that year I was introduced to Lord Byron. I was quite a youth—beyond boyhood, and in that feverish condition of adolescence when a fellow begins to think himself a man and destined to occupy a space in the world's thought. "I suppose you are intended for the stage," said the poet-peer; "you've a good *low comedy mug* of your own." I did not appreciate the compliment. If I did happen to cherish dramatic aspirations, *Romeo*, *Douglas*, and *Hamlet* came rather more within the scope of my ambition than any of the characters which indicated a disciple of Thalia. How his lordship came to think I was to adopt the stage arose, I suppose, from the name I bore, and because I was introduced to him by Sheridan. Byron was at the time one of the Committee of Management of Drury Lane Theater, and under its auspices Edmond Kean, the great tragedian, had been brought out, and was upholding the fortunes of the theater. There was a beautiful woman in the Drury Lane company—a mediocre actress, but personally bewitching, and a good-natured world ascribed the *mésintelligence* between Byron and his wife to the influence of her fascination. Mrs. Mordyn's portrait in water colors was in all the windows of the stationers' shops, and underneath were written the lines from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, and songs:

"Take, oh take those lips away," etc.

A man might have been pardoned an indiscretion swayed by so winning an object, but I believe Lord B— was quite innocent of more than simple admiration of her surpassing loveliness. He was always *en evidence*, and could not have escaped detection. Young men were mad about him, and followed him everywhere. The Byronic fever was not less infectious than typhus or small-pox. He wore his shirt collar turned over his shoulders, exposing a rather full and handsome neck. The youth of England turned their shirt collars down, regardless of their throats, which sometimes disclosed a prominent *pomum Adame*. His manner was gloomy and morose, his speech sarcastic. Young England affected a similar idiosyncrasy—they fancied themselves *Corsairs* and *Laras*.

"Men of loneliness and mystery,  
Scarce seen to smile and seldom heard to sigh."

It was a poetic age. Moore and Scott, Campbell, and Rogers, and Coleridge flourished then and for ten years later, when George Stephenson withdrew the nation from the heights of Parnassus, compelling poetasters to forsake Pegasus and mount the iron horse. The muses and the graces were expelled by Fulton, Boulton, and Watt.

Notwithstanding Lord Byron's false estimate of my capacity to shine in the loftiest branches of the drama, I began to nurture a hope of taking high ground, and was soon confirmed in my ambition by Kean tapping me on the back, one evening, encouragingly, and saying, "It's in you, don't flinch, you'll do," after I had recited Richmond's speech, "Thus far into the bowels of the land," etc., at the O. P. and P. S. "Free and Easy" hotel. But I was yet young and so awfully slim that *Falstaff's* description of *Shallow* would have suited my tenuity of person exactly. I was the image of

a "forked radish." Facility of access to the green rooms of the two great-patent theaters kept my passion at fever height for the stage. The stage swarmed with young, handsome, and agreeable actors and actresses. At Drury Lane there were Rae, James Wallack, Barnard, Penley, and Stanley, Fanny Kelly, Mrs. Orgen, Mrs. Bartley, and others. Fanny Kelly was the *Dejazet* of the English stage, and occasionally appeared in male costume. She had a *svelte* figure and pretty limbs. In those days the ancle was more thought of than the calf. In a little musical piece called *My Spouse and I*, Fanny appeared as a youth. Some of the playgoers were very irate, and one wrote to the tune of *Green Grow the Rushes, oh!*

"Oh, my Fanny Kelly, oh!  
Charming Fanny Kelly, oh!  
Her ancle neat, her little feet  
Of admiration rouses, oh!  
Oh, Dibdin why, in *Spouse and I*,  
Hide them in boots and trowsers, oh!"

She was charming in farce and operetta, powerful in melodrama. Her chief *collaborateur* was James Wallack, the father of Lester. He could not have been more than four or five-and-twenty, an excellent actor and a very handsome man. When in his daily attire of tight buckskin pants and polished Hessian boots, a superb black silk stock, buff vest and dark blue swallow-tail with gilt buttons, he was the admiration of Catharine street, the cynosure of the Strand. Delightful in genteel comedy, he was great in the heroic. His *Edmond Enfield* (Falls of Clyde), *Martin Heywood* (Rest Day), and Richard in the *Innkeeper's Daughter* (a stage version of *Mary the Maid of the Inn*), were an immense attraction.

While Kean drew thousands to Old Drury, Miss O'Neill was filling "the Garden." Like the other house, Covent Garden had its galaxy of beauty. Kitty Stephens, afterward Countess of Essex, Miss Matthews, Miss S. Booth, and Miss Foote among the women; Charles Kemble, Richard Jones, Conway, Connor, William Abbott and Durusat among the men, were all, more or less, handsome, gay, and intelligent. I have read something lately about the improved social status of actors; but if that position is to be rated by the private countenance they enjoy, I cannot think it improved. I used to see the Marquis of Worcester, Lord Peterston, Lord Essex, Lord W. Lennox, Sir Wrixon Becher, and many untitled gentlemen of great wealth and a pronounced style among the *piliers des coulisses*, as the French call the *fleurs* behind the scenes. John Kemble, who was then on the point of retiring from the stage, was one of the familiar associates of the Prince Regent, whose ecology he was permitted to correct. It is an old story that when, at dinner one day, the Prince said: "Kemble, *oblige* me by passing the wine," Kemble replied: "Pray expand your royal jaws and say *oblige!*" Kemble was a perfect gentleman, more "gentlemanly," I should say, than the irrepressible hotel book-keeper! He could not say a rude thing to a super. His education had been excellent, but his dignified manner arose, perhaps, from his constant performance of elevated characters. He deserved all that Thomas Campbell wrote of him.

Charles Mayne Young, who succeeded Kemble in the lead at Covent Garden, was with him at the period of my attendance at theater, and he was very friendly toward me. He had a strange lisp, of which he seemed to be unconscious. When Charles Matthews, the elder, gave some imitations of distinguished actors in the passage from *Hamlet*, "Oh, there be players I have seen play," etc., Young said to him, "Charley, I went *lath* night to hear your *imitation*. They were very good, but why did you make me *thepeak* with a *lithp*?"

Among the habitudes of Covent Garden, was Colonel Berkely, afterward Lord Fitzhardinge.

He was enamored of the beautiful Maria Foote, and was the putative father of two of her children. He was an amateur actor at Cheltenham, and she had played *Calista* to his *Lothario* until the fiction became a fact. One of my schoolfellows, called Pea Green Hague, because he wore a pea-green coat and was rather soft in the upper story, likewise surrendered himself to the attachments of lovely Maria, proposed marriage, in ignorance of her *liaison* with Berkely, and was accepted. But mark the sequel. When he discovered the existence of the two babies, he cried "off"—a very natural proceeding. The chaste Maria, however, was not going to let a rich West India creole (for such he was) slip through her fingers, and so she brought an action against him for breach of promise, and soothed her wounded affections with £3,000. What fun the press made of the whole affair! The trial was made the subject of a capital poem full of puns, and the discerning public, who had hissed Kean for disturbing the conjugal felicity of a fat aderman, greeted the injured Foote with acclamation! Years later, the damsel married Lord Peterston, who became Lord Harrington, and as Countess of Harrington she led an exemplary life. Did not one of her sons or grandsons lately marry a *dansusee*? And, by the way, the *dansuses* have more than once married well. Hughes Ball, the Golden Ball as he was called for his riches, espoused Mercandotte; Lyne Stephens, a millionaire, was made happy by the slender and graceful Duvernay; Count St. James became the husband of Auguste, and Fairbrother captivated "P. G." as his brother dragoons called "Prince George," before he became Duke of Cambridge. It is not certain whether the prince privately married Miss F., but her action has been uniformly proper and wifely, and the Duke has made officers of all her sons. The one who was the issue of a *previous* alliance is called Fairbrother, but the Duke's own offspring appear in the army list as Fitz George.

The union of actresses with rich or titled men has been a very common affair since the days of Nell Gwynne, but the most remarkable career of the chosen favorites of fortune was that of the Duchess of St. Albans. When I first knew her, she was Miss Wellon, living at the top of Highgate Hill, in a charming villa, still tenanted by her heiress, Lady Burdett Coutts. Coutts, the banker, patronized her before he made her his wife. She must have been a woman of irreproachable character, or the incomparable *tragédienne*, Mrs. Siddons, never would have introduced her to the Liverpool company as "a respectable young friend of hers who always conducted herself with propriety." When the "widow" Coutts married the young Duke of St. Albans, she grew fat, and the delicate brown hairs which crowned her upper lip became a formidable pair of mustaches. Theodore Hook was editing the *John Bull*, and habitually made fun of all the aristocracy who had not blue blood in their veins; and as the duchess was not an educated woman, and affected a few of the airs of nobility, Hook lost no opportunity of ridiculing her peculiarities. On one occasion, he obtained a note of invitation of hers, which (he said) ran thus: "As the *Dook* is out of town, suppose you come and dine with me and three other ladies, *en famille*"—which Hook rendered "and three other ladies: we are all *enceinte*."

Highgate—a sweet, pretty village, before a tunnel was cut through or a railway driven to its vicinity—was much frequented by actors. It is four miles from London. Mundson lived there, and not a mile off dwelt Joey Grimaldi, the father of clowns. He was a little man, and drove a little gig with a little pony. He often took me to town to see him play, first at Sadler's Wells and then at Covent Garden. He was great as a *grimacier*—his flexible features rivaled *gutta percha*—his natural



wit overflowed, and the "comic business" which he originated has never been paralleled. But his comic songs were his *pieces de resistance*. The galleries roared over *Tippitywichtch* and *Hot Coddins*. One song of his was a special favorite. I heard him sing it several times. One verse ran,

"There was one McGrig  
Wore a cauliflower wig,  
And a wooing he went on his set o' toes  
To one Miss Turkey Snap,  
Who wore a high-curl'd cap,  
And was monstrously fond of pig's pettitoes."

There was a good deal of folderol, *ri tol de rol*, and all that, in every song, but the rubbish was accompanied by so many odd faces and queer attitudes that pit, boxes, and gallery were alike diverted.

But Grimaldi did not monopolize the comic song. It was an institution highly popular in every theater. Comic songs were introduced in all the farces or between the pieces. No actor or actress was engaged at a country or suburban theater who could not sing. Johannot, a Frenchman, and Sloman, a Jew, were indispensable adjuncts to the equestrian dramas and pantomimes at Astley's. Burlesque had not attained, fifty years ago, the proportions it now enjoys. *Tom Thumb* and *Bombastes Furioso* for a long time were the sole mockeries of inflated tragedy, and *Amoroso*, which followed them, ridiculing opera, did not appear until 1818, or thereabouts. Dibdin wrote an excellent burlesque of *Don Giovanni*, which ran for 100 nights at the Surrey, but, with the exception of two or three poor travesties of Shakespeare, nothing like the present class of extravaganzas was produced until Vestris rented the Olympic, some ten or fifteen years later. I do not mention Sheridan's incomprehensible *Critic*, because that stands upon a loftier pinnacle than the ordinary burlesque pedestal. For whim, pungent satire, and delicious sarcasm it will always stand alone.

In 1819 I attempted the stage. I had taken no lessons in the dramatic art, beyond attentively following the performances of the great geniuses of the time. They were good examples. To arm myself against stage fright, I adopted the advice kindly given to me by John Kemble. "When you are in your room alone fancy you are before a thousand persons, and recite aloud under that impression; when you are in the presence of an audience fancy yourself in your own room, and recite as if no one heard you." This was a lesson in *abandon*, by which every actor and actress might profit.

I date my passion for the stage from the year 1816, when I saw Mrs. Siddons perform *Lady Macbeth*. Few persons are now alive who witnessed the performances of that wonderful woman, and although I witnessed the play under very great disadvantages, the recollection of the incident is too vividly impressed on my memory to be forgotten. Mrs. Siddons had formally retired from the stage in 1812, and confined herself to readings at her own residence; but the Princess Charlotte of Wales having married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, Her Royal Highness was anxious that her husband should witness all that was deserving of attention in England. Mrs. Siddons was therefore asked to withdraw from her seclusion for a single evening and play *Lady Macbeth*. Though quite conscious of her faded powers, and with features deeply marked by the ruthless hand of Time, the great "Tragic Muse," of Sir Joshua Reynolds might fairly have excused herself. But loyalty was with her a principle, and as she had always received much countenance from George the Third and his sons and daughters, she could not refuse to gratify the Princess whom the English people loved so well. To witness her performance, I wrote a very respectful letter to Mrs.

Siddons, asking the favor of her getting me smuggled into the theater on the occasion. Every seat in the boxes was engaged, and to have attempted to get into the pit or gallery, when hundreds of stout men stood around the doors and in the passages for three hours before the hour of opening, would have been perilous. Mr. Henry Harris, the manager, could not accommodate me in the *auditorium*, and he therefore kindly allowed me to go behind the scenes and station myself within one of the doors, which, at the time, formed part of the *proscenium*, keeping the door partly open so that I could command a view of all that passed near the front of the stage. This was not a remarkable "coign of vantage," but nothing better was to be had. To say that I was enchanted with all I heard from the lips of Mrs. Siddons, and John Kemble, who played *Macbeth*, would not express my emotion; but a new sentiment arose when the murder of Duncan was reached. I had followed Kemble in his grand delivery of the speech "Is that a dagger that I see before me?" but was startled at the close by a bell striking near me, and Kemble, approaching the door and uttering the words, "Hear it not, Duncan," etc., in a sepulchral tone, suddenly passed me and received the daggers from his dresser who, at the same time, daubed his hands with red ochre. While I looked on, in curious amazement, my attention was drawn away by the voice of Mrs. Siddons saying, in a loud whisper, "He is about it!" What a voice that was! The very whisper was thrilling. And when Kemble rushed on and exclaimed, "I have done the deed!" the whole thing wore such an air of reality that, for the moment, I trembled and fancied I had been *particeps criminis*. Most certainly, if a police constable had appeared and charged me with being an accessory before and after the fact, I should have surrendered at once. When Mrs. Siddons came behind the scene and submitted her hands to the process which Kemble had undergone, I felt reassured; the mechanical operation dissipated the fanciful alarm. After that the great "sleeping scene" was the point of attraction. To this hour I behold the marvelous lady standing in the center of the stage, her eyes wide open, as is the wont of somnambulists, and in the act of washing her hands. To use the words of Christopher North, "the bared soul," seemed escaping in wonderful whispers, and the face wore the expression of the deepest remorse.

I never saw Mrs. Siddons act after that night, though she played two or three times for a benefit, but it was enough to convince me that the British public had not been spell-bound by her for thirty-five years without sufficient warranty. She has never been equaled—much less surpassed.

The vocalist who was to have taken the leading part in an operetta to follow the play (the custom in those days), had witnessed *Macbeth* from the boxes, and was so overcome as to be unable to appear. An apology was made for the omission of the piece, and I think I had never heard anything so badly done.

Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless the fact, that English actors, accustomed for years to repeat the thoughts of others, are generally at a loss when they are called upon for an impromptu. If an actor is invited ask a blessing before meat, he generally gives a quotation from the banquet scene in *Macbeth*, and if you compliment him on his performance, he replies in a hackneyed quotation from an old comedy, "Praise from Sir Hubert is praise indeed." I remember on one occasion a married lady, whose name appeared in the bills as Miss Milne (she had acquired her popularity as a maiden) was unable to perform her part because she had just presented her husband with a pledge of affection. The manager, exclaiming in the midst of the trouble occasioned by the announce-

ment, "here's a calamity!" desired a Mr. Thomas to go forward and apologize to the audience for the necessity of changing the performance, and he did it in these words: "Ladies and gentlemen, in consequence of a severe domestic calamity, Miss M. will be unable to appear to-night." Some of the audience were in consternation, for they knew and respected the lady. "What has happened?" called out one from the pit (*parquette*). Mr. Thomas immediately replied, "Miss Milne has become the mother of a bouncing boy!" The house was convulsed. The manager, to make the most of the hilarious humor of the audience, then ran on and cried out, "The mother and child are doing well!" Mrs. W. never after that appeared under her maiden name.

In 1819, after having tried trade as a clerk, successively in the office of a wine merchant, a Canadian merchant, and a banker, and finding none of the occupations congenial to my disposition, I resolved on abandoning such prosaic pursuits and adopting the stage. If others of the family had become famous, why should not I?

"I would be an actor."

I had no trouble in getting an engagement. There was but one theatrical agent at the time. His name was Sims, and he occupied a room in Great Rugville Street, Drury Lane. Sitting there with a large book before him, a record of the names of aspirants, his walls hung with country play bills, he looked like an old spider watching for the flies who might "walk into his parlor." I was soon caught and registered for five shillings. A week later I was on my way to Biggleswade, in Bedfordshire, to open as *Rodrigo* in *Othello*. Yates, the father (I think) of the present Edmund Yates was the nobleman. My success was not stupendous; my salary was proportioned to its magnitude. I realized, in appearance, *Iago's* contemptuous term of "snipe," but, instead of putting "money in my purse," I spent all I had, and the little I received, and returned home to be better treated for my *vagabondage* than I deserved. Prodigal sons seem to have a strong claim to indulgence if they do a little in the way of penitence when they get back to the paternal domicile.

What tended to secure me a pardon for the transgression, was that I had not caused my real name to appear in the bills. I was at first at a loss what to call myself. Buggins did not harmonize with *Romeo*, and Wiggins was rather antithetical to *Hamlet*, so I adopted the pseudonym of "Horatio Belmont." I feared that, if I had given my proper name, public expectation would have been raised to an extravagant height, and my modesty forbade the supposition till I could realize popular expectation.

In a general way, I think the profession is damaged by the adoption of an alias. Why should Brown or Smith shrink from the employment of the patronymic? It is only where the real name is violently antagonistic to the class of characters to be acted, that a change is justifiable or advisable. "Mercutio by Mr. Timothy Spivers," is not so euphonistic as "Mercutio by Mr. Henry Sylvester." So with the ladies, Miss Marie Somerville sounds better than Miss Mollie Briggs, or Miss Alice Vignstone. Changing the name argues a sense of degradation in adopting the profession.

As I hated trade, could not be an actor, and had not seven years to spare for the study of law, physic, or divinity, I gladly accepted an opportunity of going out to join the army in India. The commission even of a subaltern was very acceptable, for I had been informed that in India the officers had theaters in the garrisons, and were themselves the actors. With my experience (!) and some hints given to me by dear John Howard Payne, the American actor, to whom I had been made instrumental in rendering a little service, I felt sure of making an impression. Payne's ad-



vice was contained in a few words, "Always be letter perfect, take care that your costume accords with the character you act and the period of the play; do not aspire to reach the top of the ladder by a single bound, but go up step by step. The greatest genius needs practical lessons. There is no royal road to dramatic excellence."

I sailed for Bombay, and arrived in 1820. I had an easy time of it in India, for the calumet of peace was being extensively smoked. We only made war upon tigers and hogs, on which occasions victory sat on my helm and the pork chops on my vitals. Ample leisure becoming monotonous, amateur acting was an immense relief. In twenty years I played three hundred times, generally making use of the "low comedy mug," though I did shine (among blind people, a man with one eye, you know, is a king) as *Shylock*, *Cassius*, *Macduff*, and *Jago*. Bombay and Calcutta were the scenes of my glory. The people paid high prices of admission, and were content with that we gave them. It was delightful to be able to defy criticism. We realized the poet's sketch:

"The actor, meeting no examination,  
Rants, retains puffs, obtains a reputation,  
Despising critical dissection, plays,  
Riots in affluence and careless ease."

I will not bore the reader with a history of a career in which they could take no interest. The very names of the amateurs would be quite strange to them. All were educated men, and most of them fair actors.

Having been wounded in Persia, I took a furlough to Europe, in 1826, returned to India and again went to England in 1831, in time to see Fanny Kemble perform before she went to America. It is a popular impression that talent is rarely hereditary, but here was an instance that histrionic ability could descend through several generations. John Ord, who repainted the bust of Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, in 1723, was the manager of a strolling company, and both himself and his wife were clever. Their daughter became the wife of Roger Kemble, himself an actor and manager; and Roger was the father of Mrs. Siddons, and of John, Charles, and Stephen Kemble, all ornaments of the stage. Charles had two daughters, Adelaide and Fanny. Adelaide was a fine cantatrice, but left the stage to marry a Mr. Sartoris. Mr. George Siddons, the second son of the Mrs. Siddons, went to India and had a family. One of his sons became the father of the lady who goes by the name of "Scott Siddons." Thus the dramatic blood, so to speak, has flowed through five generations. But Fanny Kemble (afterward Mrs. Pierce Butler), has placed on record her dislike to the stage, though she adored the poetry and structure of the drama. Her appearance, as an actress, was to save her father's property from ruin. She sacrificed inclination at the shrine of filial duty. After a fortunate career in England and America, she became a public reader, and realized a handsome competency.

I returned finally to England, in 1843, with the fruits of my long sojourn abroad, and at once renewed my acquaintance with "the profession." A captain, Harvey Tuckett, who had been an amateur in India, fought a duel with the unpopular Lord Cardigan, and got wounded. Of this incident he made capital, and persuaded two or three soft people to rent a theater for him. He was associated with another important amateur historian named Westwall, and they agreed to astonish the world in *Falstaff* and *Hotspur*. Shakespeare's *Henry IV.* was therefore announced, and as the person who was to have played the prince fell into the hands of the sheriff, at the instance of a bill-discounter, two or three days before the performance, Tuckett and his friend were in tribulation. At their request I assumed the prince, and perhaps there never was greater excitement in the

world of Art, than when the papers proclaimed the advent of three accomplished amateurs, who were to revive the fading glories of the British Drama. The house was crowded from floor to ceiling. Nothing was done in the way of scenery, costume and accessories, to promote success. Tuckett was a firm believer in the effect of elocution and personation. Scenery was unknown in Shakespeare's time. A piece of green cloth, suspended at the back of a platform, labeled "this is a street," or "this is a room," answered all the purposes of a play. Modern degeneracy, however, demanded decorations, and modern degeneracy was not gratified. *Henry IV.* was miserably mounted, and there was no compensation in the acting. Never was there a greater "fizzle." Tuckett fled to the United States. Westwall fell into the lower ranks, and I remained to become a voluminous dramatic author and a reader of Shakespeare.

### Malachite and Lapis Lazuli.

THE anecdote told of the Italian duke, who, when a boastful and vulgar person was displaying a ring of malachite, said: "Yes, very pretty; I have a mantelpiece of it at home," might give the idea that large slabs of this beautiful mineral are to be found. This is not, however, the case. The duke's mantelpiece, like the furniture of the celebrated palace where the frames of the mirrors and the doors were of this mineral, had required an amount of labor and expense almost incalculable, which will be easily understood when it is remembered that the mineral must be cut into thin layers with some other stone—that is, by the use of some other stone to cut it—and then veneered on metal. When it is considered that the skill of able and expert workmen is here required to arrange the veins so that these thin layers may intersect and have the appearance of being one continuous surface, the time and expense may be guessed at. *Lapis lazuli* requires a similar process, and only when even in color, as in the case of the small pieces used for ornament making, is either malachite or *lapis lazuli* of value.

### The Fan of Fans.

THE fan of fans, in this day of fanciful fancy, is one for which a great painter, Louis Leloir, received eight thousand francs.

The extreme beauty of its design, its delicacy of execution, and its marvelous mounting are the subject of much comment in the city of Paris, where it was painted for a Rothschild. Another noted artist has one on exhibition—the Rothschild fan has also been exhibited—which cannot be "comprehended" without a sort of magnifying glass. It is placed in a case surrounded by a little wall like a fortification, and in it magnifying glasses are set like little tilted cannon. You look through and see the wonderful minute work, and you are lost in amazement.

THE "ALLIANCE" engagement-ring proves itself a favorite. It is two hands meeting and clasping. In the more costly styles of this offering, so full of graceful sentiment, the tiny finger of the golden feminine hand has a ring of pearl, while that of the masculine hand has a circle—a seal ring—of amethyst.

"PUG-DOG" INKSTANDS, pencils, canes, and umbrellas have the most ludicrous and preternaturally grave-looking pug-dogs' heads upon them, with white bead eyes. The body of the inkstand is of cut glass, and the pug-dogs' heads form the two stoppers. The same heads, but smaller, tip off pencils. Larger heads decorate canes and umbrellas, which are so absurdly funny that every

time they appear one must smile. *Grotesquerie* is beginning to be extremely popular.

PUNCH AND JUDY form the design for a majolica lemonade jug. Punch has a longer chin than ever before, and Judy a bigger cap, while the dog, the bailiff, and the baby ornament the side of this delightfully funny bit of ware.



### Coffee Houses versus Beer Shops.

IT is a singular fact, that with all the charity there is in the world, all the desire to benefit those who need aid, all the expenditure of money by public appropriation and private munificence, that to-day, in the city of New York, there exists so many more opportunities for men to do ill than for them to do well, so many more helps to drag them down than props to hold them up.

Every person of experience knows that a poor man's life is sufficiently hard, and frequently destitute not only of the luxuries, but of the prime necessities of life, in the shape of warmth and suitable well-cooked food. Ignorance is superadded to want of means, and between the two he finds but little of that warmth and nourishment which are necessary to the satisfaction of the body. The cravings which he feels he satisfies with draughts of beer, or stronger liquor, because these cost but a few pence, and are ready upon every street corner.

Recently a movement has been started, having for its object the furnishing of coffee and simple food at the lowest rates. This special enterprise contemplates, in connection with a coffee house, a Workingmen's Club, and also a co-operative store, where workmen can obtain flour by the barrel, and coal by the ton, at the wholesale rates.

This movement is in the right direction, but it is not enough. Wherever is a beer shop, beside it ought to be a coffee house, where good coffee, hot soup, or cocoa, with a slice of bread, could be obtained for the same price for which a glass of beer or whisky can be purchased. In Liverpool, and other large European cities, there are thirty or more of these public coffee houses to each town, in the vicinity of docks, markets, and the places where laboring men mainly congregate. Well managed by sensible, capable and intelligent persons—and it is no use doing a thing at all unless it is well done—such enterprises could be made to pay, and would be not less beneficial because self-supporting.

In fact, no form of beneficence is so good, so valuable, so enduring in its results as that which teaches weakness and ignorance how to rely upon and help themselves. To simply give is to perpetuate pauperism. To strengthen a man's hands, to encourage his own efforts, to furnish instruments by which he can add to the fruits of his labor—these are the methods by which he can be raised from degradation, and made to feel that he is a man among men.

Moreover, though ideas are valuable, and money is needed in working them out, yet neither are of so such importance as the personal service of intelligent, self-sacrificing men and women in bringing the seed that has been planted to proper growth and fruitage. Work in this direction would reduce the necessity for charity hospitals, and rid us of the majority of our penitentiaries and alms-houses.