



JOHN LEECH,—FROM "THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS."

JOHN LEECH was born in London on the 29th of August, 1817; and was educated at the Charter House, where his friend Thackeray, near whose remains his own are laid, was his older schoolfellow. The medical profession was chosen for him; but, this not proving very congenial to his tastes, he soon abandoned it for the pencil.

In August, 1841, John Leech began work which he never quitted but with life. Three weeks before the first number of *Punch* appeared he was secured for the new periodical. In the fourth number, the large page cut bears his signature in full. The engraving was called "Foreign Affairs," and is a collection of sketches, too truthful to be called caricatures, of male and female foreigners as they appeared in London. The figures are all more or less those of disreputable-looking folk, and several were from Lestarr-squarr. With this picture commenced Leech's connection with a periodical in which his best works appeared, in an unbroken series, up to the issue of the very last cut he ever completed, the small design in the 1217th number (an Irishwoman remonstrating with her husband, who has "enjoyed" a tremendous beating in a street fight), which appeared when the cunning right hand had forgotten its cunning for ever.

Henceforth, the life of Leech was one of well-earned prosperity and hap-

piness. His income, at first gradually and then rapidly, increased; he was most happily married; and his kindly and gentle nature, which no worldly success could spoil, endeared him to numerous friends, some of whom preceded him to the tomb, while others live to mourn him. He never alienated the friends of his youth. He formed also a large circle of general acquaintance, among whom were men highly placed in the world, and with whom he ever maintained frank and pleasant relations; his innate dignity of mind preventing his ever seeking such fellowship unduly, and preserving him from the almost common error of avoiding the higher society from an idea that it demands a sacrifice from those who are not born to it. He never affected to under-estimate the refinement, the frankness, and the kindness which mark the upper classes in England, and he was the most welcome of guests where to be welcome is an honour; but he never sought that honour, and his chief happiness was in cultivated society of his own rank. His hospitality was very great, and it was extended with no idea that he had to discharge a social obligation, but with an evident pleasure in collecting around his table—at which the best taste presided—guests whose natures were most in accordance with his own. His death occurred on Saturday, October 24, 1864; and his remains are deposited in Kensal-green Cemetery.