

the sound of that gun—discharged on an average once a week, (100 rounds on each occasion,) in commemoration of some democratic triumph—still rings in our ears. The Christian name of our mild and meek friend is Isaiah.

We don't think he will himself ever be president, but he may yet live to elect many such chief magistrates of the model republic as the present Mr. BUCHANAN, who, we believe, was chiefly indebted to the Captain—his big stick, his bigger gun, and, above all, the Empire Club, who got up on the occasion the most astounding nocturnal procession ever witnessed—for his nomination. It is astonishing, we may add, *en passant*, how fond the Americans are becoming of imperial titles. They have an Empire Club—that already mentioned—an "Empire City," (New York,) and an "Empire State," the State of that name. We shall not be surprised to learn that some morning the Captain awakes to be saluted as an emperor himself.

Whilst we are writing these recollections of the Congress and of American notables, we read in the "New York Herald" the following description of a "scene" in the House of Representatives, on the 20th of January this year, the House having previously spent many weeks in vainly attempting to get to business by the election of a Speaker:—

"The proceedings to-day were characterized by language of the most vulgar Billingsgate, by appeals to the wildest passions, by propositions and denunciations unparliamentary, discourteous, and disgraceful. The galleries are daily appealed to in general terms by inflammatory arguments, and often in language direct. So loosely was the business of the House conducted, that the members themselves presented more the appearance of a disorganized mob in a low pot-house than that of a great deliberative body; and, under the impulsive retort of a member from Arkansas to the remark of a member from New York, the galleries, from the example set them by the members, caught up the fever of disorder, and broke out into the loudest cheers. The clerk appealed to the people in the galleries to preserve order, rebuking the House at the same time for setting the example. Unless those who profess to represent the people can give better evidence that they are capable of governing themselves than they have done thus far, they had better not attempt to govern others. A few more weeks of such bear-garden scenes as have been witnessed at the national Capitol will be sufficient cause for the people to rise, and, with a Cromwell at their head, drive the present disorganizers from the Capitol. The House is really no nearer an election than it was weeks ago."

RAG FAIR.

"You seem much interested with your book, Harry," said Arthur Ellis to his friend Thompson, as, one summer morning, he entered his chambers in the Temple. "What is the absorbing subject of your author's lucubrations?"

"Well, I am reading at this moment," replied Harry, "a strange chapter in a volume called

'Mildred Norman,' which I picked up at a book-stall yesterday. The writer is an artizan, and though he has not much artistic skill in making a book, he seems to have seen many scenes of which professed book-makers could make good literary capital. Will you hear his description of Rag Fair?"

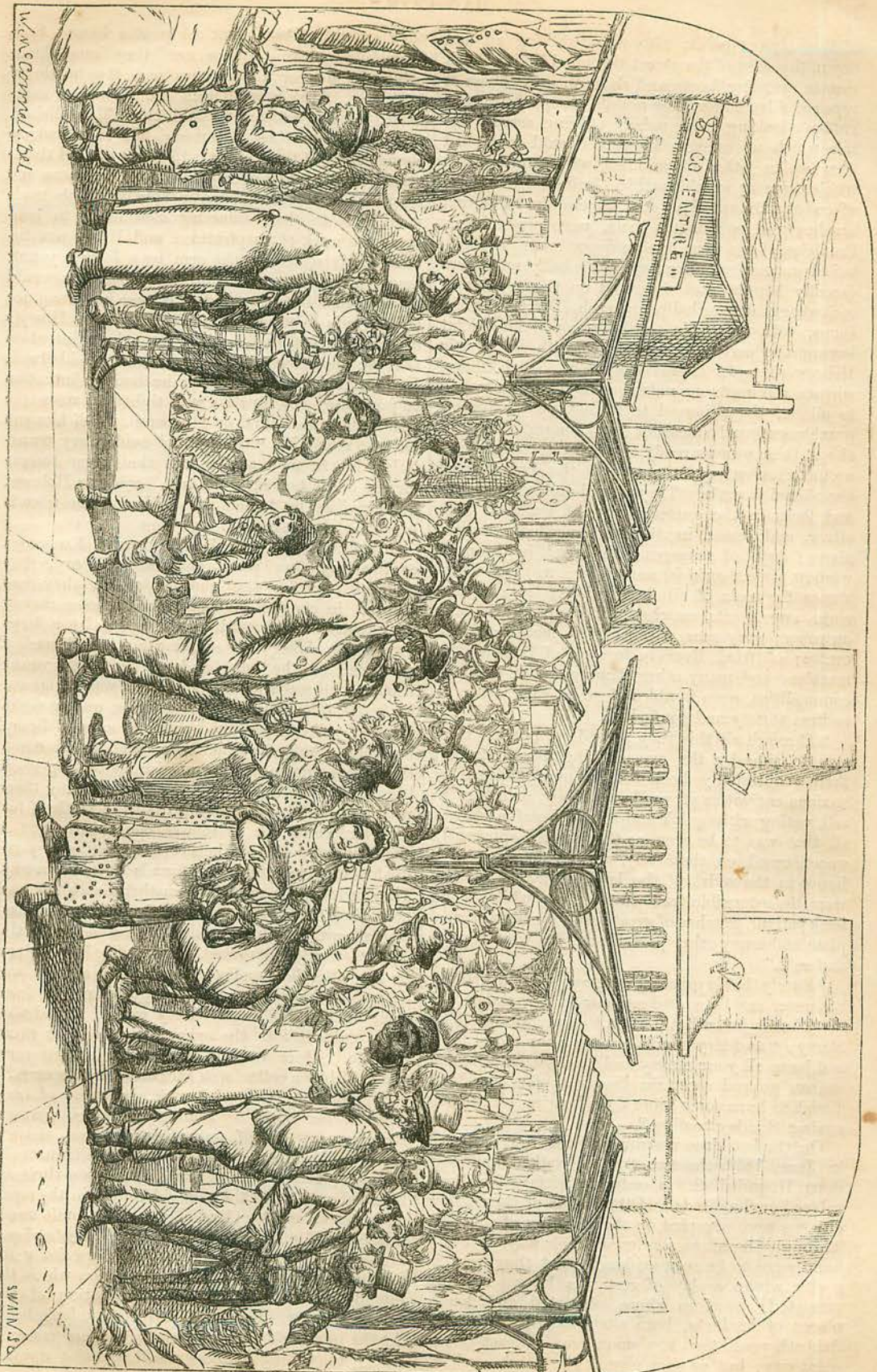
"Go on," said Arthur; "I have often heard of Rag Fair, but haven't the slightest idea what it is or where it is."

A stranger, on a Sunday morning, is in company with a superintendent of police, in this scene of the story.

"They turned up a broad paved court from Houndsditch, paid a halfpenny each to a man in a sentry box, at an iron gate, and stood within the Exchange mentioned.

"It was an almost indescribable scene. There were Jews, male and female, young, middle-aged, and very old, taking part with so-called Christians in buying and selling, each adding a share to make up a clamour that was perfectly deafening. There were oaths resounding on every side, the utterers calling on the God of heaven to witness to the truth of what they themselves knew perfectly well were lies, their hearers knowing it at the same time. There were clothes of every shape and colour for men, women, and children, from the almost unsoiled coat of the west-end exquisite, to the unmentionables patched up with green baize, for which sixpence might be named as the uttermost value. There was upper and under-clothing for women and children, in large sacks with their wide mouths open, and large piles upon the damp and dirty ground. Over these, worn women with pale faces, and eyes which spoke of pinching want, bargained eagerly; while men, and boys whose greatest ambition was to be thought men, looked with keen and cunning glances for what might suit them. All sorts of expression in the human face was to be seen in that confined space. The bright and yet but half-corrupted boy, who was thus paying his first stolen visit in company with the more experienced and colder-featured lad at his side, was half timidly glancing round, almost lost in wonder at the scene. The *very* young man, whose resplendent waistcoat was to be the envy of the 'Judge and Jury Club' some evening, where he was to be defendant in some slashing case, was there to purchase the waistcoat then. The older young man, whose blotched face and swollen features told too plainly a heart-sickening tale of dissipation, was there for a bargain of a coat to be sported along City Road, a cigar, and blue glass-headed stick. Plain mechanics were there, many of them unwashed since the labour of the week was ended. Thieves, known to half the police of London, were exhibiting for sale goods well understood to have been stolen. Dealers in second-hand clothes from all parts of London had agents there, with keen eyes and hands, for bargains on behalf of their employers. All these, and many a score of other types of character, were seen and noted by Edward and his friend as they passed round and out of the Exchange.

"They emerged into 'the Lane' (Petticoat Lane), where matters were tenfold worse, in the very sight



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of the helpless police, who were walking up and down, the sides of the street thronged by low Irish women, vending boots and shoes in every stage of repaired dilapidation; the middle occupied by stout ruffianly-looking men, noisily offering articles for sale which no man in his senses could doubt had been stolen; the shops filled with innumerable articles, among which worthless imitation jewellery, offered at a thousand per cent, beyond the value, and brushes and workmen's tools, were pre-eminent. Provision shops were in abundance, where the hot-boiled cucumber and gravy, for a halfpenny, were greedily bought and devoured on the spot; also cooked eggs for one halfpenny each. Dirty butchers' shops, with each pale unwholesome-looking joint having the certifying tin ticket with its mystic Hebrew character engraved upon it. Fish shops, whence the unctuous noisome smell was sickening to all but those inured to it, but where hungry purchasers found a meal for small amount. Brokers' shops, their owners ready to buy or to sell, asking no inconvenient questions as to the derivation of the offered bargain. Trays of old and worn knives and forks in the gutter; trays of watches, gold, silver, and brass, in the well-guarded windows above; trays of sausages with bread, in the open window (owner *outside*) next door; trays of whetstones for tools of all descriptions; trays of earrings, sweetmeats, matches; piled up treacle balls on paper; grey peas, parched, with measure in the centre; of fried liver in lumps; of buttons; of marbles; and many other strange and ill-assorted commodities, were jumbled close to each other in endless variety and confusion.

"Through all this they passed on, pushed from side to side by the ever-shifting crowd around them, continually beckoned to and stopped by anxious entreaties of venders to buy, or others to sell, noting with quick and comprehensive glances all that was to be seen, as they passed apparently unconcerned on their way, until they came to a house in the midst of the lane, where old clothes were the ostensible trade in the shop, while in the back parlour, watches of great value, precious stones, plate, and many other portable articles were bought and sold."

"Surely that is greatly exaggerated," said Arthur; "it never can be so bad as your author makes it."

"That is just what I wish to ascertain," replied Harry; "and if you will put on your oldest coat, and leave all your money and your watch at home, we can go and ascertain the truth for ourselves. I wish to have some more facts bearing on the Bill against Sunday trading."

On the hot close morning of the first Sabbath in June, 1859, the two friends walked half way down Houndsditch, in order to witness for themselves how hundreds and thousands of their fellow citizens were occupied on the morning of this day. Through the silent streets, on their way, on every hand were to be seen evidences that they were in a city where a day of rest was known and appreciated; shut-up shops, deserted and lonely places of business, bore eloquent witness of the Sabbath peace that was upon part at least of the giant city; but as they neared the neighbourhood

they sought, these silent signs of a known Sabbath faded out one by one, until they found themselves in a roar of tongues and the bustle of business. They passed into the Exchange mentioned by the artizan, to find the toll abolished, and the sentry box removed; but they had no sooner entered the iron gate than they found themselves in the midst of a prevailing frowsiness and closeness of the confined atmosphere, which made it difficult to their unaccustomed lungs to continue the work of respiration; and Harry was incontinently seized by the arm by a Jewish young man, who, in his ardour to transact business, would by no means be persuaded to release his grasp, for the trader's keen glance had rested upon Harry's dilapidated coat, and he had formed an intention that he should leave with another upon his back. In vain Harry informed him he had no intention to purchase; the Jew's grasp tightened upon the arm he had, until Arthur whispered, "Tell him you have no money." "Got no tin," said Harry, translating his friend's advice into the vulgar tongue for the Jew's benefit. "Right," said the Hebrew, grinning, as he loosed his hold, and the friends proceeded on their way.

After walking through the crowded Exchange, at the very slow pace rendered necessary, they stopped opposite the gate by which they had entered, in complete amazement. A long narrow deal table was covered in its centre by a large brown pan, filled with smoking-hot boiled mashed potatoes; on the left hand of the stout young woman who stood behind the table, was a gigantic tin kettle, filled with hot pickled eels; on her right, a round yellow dish filled with the same delicacy, but cold. As fast as her busy hands could move, the young woman was occupied in half-filling small basins with the boiled potatoes, and covering them with a spoonful of the liquid from the kettle of hot eels, for which the price was one halfpenny. A sharp inquiry as to whether they needed any refreshment, drove our two friends upon their way. They crossed the road into another Exchange, and here they found the venders of old shoes—whose places heretofore had been the pavement and the gutter—were congregated, they having been driven by the attendant policemen (to them a most undesirable innovation on vested gutter rights) from their ancient holdings. They walked round this place and out into the open air, in an outer street or lane. Here various cries saluted their ears. "Who'll buy a collar, well stitched, for twopence?" vociferated an Irish girl, with a plurality of bonnets on her hand. "Want any braces, garters, shoe-laces, sweetstuff, waistcoats, goloshes, victoria perfume, blacking, shirts, white duck trousers?" and many other offers of articles fell upon their astounded ears, until they sought refuge in the semi-darkness of another Exchange, wholly built under houses, and lighted only by flaring yellow jets of gas. Here were two young girls eagerly bargaining for a bonnet, certainly not worth twopence, which the intended purchaser, by recommendation of the saleswoman, was trying on her companion's head. At the next stall they stopped by common consent, where, examining a dress, stood a young woman,

her beautiful face and form evidently in full health: the clear colour glowing upon her cheek, the bright gleam of her eyes, and the whiteness of her displayed hands, would have formed a picture a painter would have loved to trace; but the *expression* of the features was that of a fallen angel, for the seal of an evil life was there unmistakably set.

"How beautiful she is!" was Harry's involuntary exclamation.

"And how fallen!" replied Arthur, as they passed through and out of the Exchange into the lane, into a crush and crowd of human life such as they thought no other portion of the city could have furnished a parallel.

"Space is well economized here," remarked Harry, as they stopped in the lane opposite a tea and coffee-house, where, in a spot twelve feet square, were congregated vendors of oranges, ices, old tools, waistcoats, cloth caps, onions, mackerel, and ginger beer.

"Here is another example," replied Arthur, pointing to a shop of six-feet frontage, where butcher's meat, tin ware, and china and glass were all exposed together.

"Here's your author's pickled cucumbers," said Harry; "but he did not mention these oyster tubs full of pickled walnuts, onions, and cabbage. How fond the denizens must be of such edibles, if the supply is any indication of the demand."

"Not more so than of sweetcakes and sweetstuff generally, judging by the same rule," remarked Arthur, "for it is hard to tell which predominates."

So they went on their way, in the midst of the crowd, while in other parts of the city men and women and children occupied churches and chapels, and the air was resonant with the praises of God; for then it was the hour of praise and prayer.

They had passed nearly through "the lane," when they heard some lads saying, "Let's go to Club Row."

"Where's that?" asked Harry.

"Don't know," was the reply; "but we can easily ascertain."

They inquired of a city policeman who was near, and who directed them upon their way.

"I have seen enough for to-day," said Arthur; "my head is sick, and my heart faint; let us leave Club Row for another day."

So passes, week by week, earth's fast-fleeting sabbaths to thousands of men, women, and even little children. Is it ever possible that the immortal spirits within them can be fitted by such experiences for the eternal sabbath of heaven and of God?

NOTES OF A WESTMORELAND NATURALIST.

DEATH FROM FRIGHT.

THAT animals frequently die from the shock of a sudden terror, is well known. The following instance has recently come under notice. A friend of ours, an enthusiastic naturalist, who resides in our beautiful Westmoreland, discovered that a fine pair of large white owls had been making their

rummy nest in a loft, where they *would be* disturbed by the entrance of very few rays of ungenial light. He climbed a ladder and looked in. There sat the solemn pair, in the deep hush of intense gravity—she upon the nest, he beside her, with no less than thirteen dead mice laid out in order before him, in readiness for the regular return of the meal times. They sat in all the stolid dignity of prescriptive wisdom, gravely blinking at the lord of the manor, though much too philosophical to betray the least surprise at anything which could happen. But at a short distance from the sages was dimly visible the shadowy outline of a wood-pigeon sitting on her nest. Again and again, and day after day, did our friend climb the step-ladder, and superintend the birth, growth, and training of the family of hideous young owls; and still the shadowy form of the gentle wood pigeon sat noiseless on her nest. By this time, the form was sinking, and drooping, and losing its fair rounded outlines. She was dead: she had been dead from the first; and it is supposed that her gentle breast heaved with such a sudden paroxysm of terror, when the *white-plumed* sages first flapped in to fix upon a building site, that life departed: she had literally died of fright.

One of our fine Windermere swans was found, not long ago, sitting in grand monumental attitude upon her eggs, in a retired nook of the little dreamy bays. She was perfectly uninjured, and yet quite dead. The shadows of the mountains silently came and went, the reeds spoke in whispers only, and the old oaks had said and done nothing new for centuries. So that no natural cause of alarm was likely to have reached her in her calm seclusion. Perhaps some fox, bent on no good, had rustled the underwood not far off, or had slunk through the ferns just within sight; and, with one heave of terror, the swan's life may have left her. But nobody knows why the stately matron had failed to lead forth a little fleet of white cygnets on the serene waters of Windermere.

Another case of fright, with a less tragic ending, came under the observation of a gifted naturalist of Westmoreland. He was one day driving along the road, when, to his great surprise, a poor sky-lark suddenly flew into his gig. Panting and trembling with affright, it took refuge by his side. He looked round and above in search of the reason, and there, just over his head, was hovering a hawk, ready to pounce on his prey. The thing was intolerable; and away drove our friend, determined to defend the poor flutterer that had claimed sanctuary almost in his bosom. But the hawk was in no mind to be baffled; and on he wheeled, too, keeping his keen eye on the sky-lark. It was a chase. Which will beat? hawk or horse, wings or wheels? One mile is done; on spin the wheels, but on circles the bold fellow overhead. Two miles: there he is still, just overhead, circling, hovering, swooping with matchless determination. That fine bandit of the air deserves to win, were it not that the trustful little poet deserves to live to sing a fresh hymn in the sky; the little creature still clings to his new ally, showing the most eloquent signs of intense