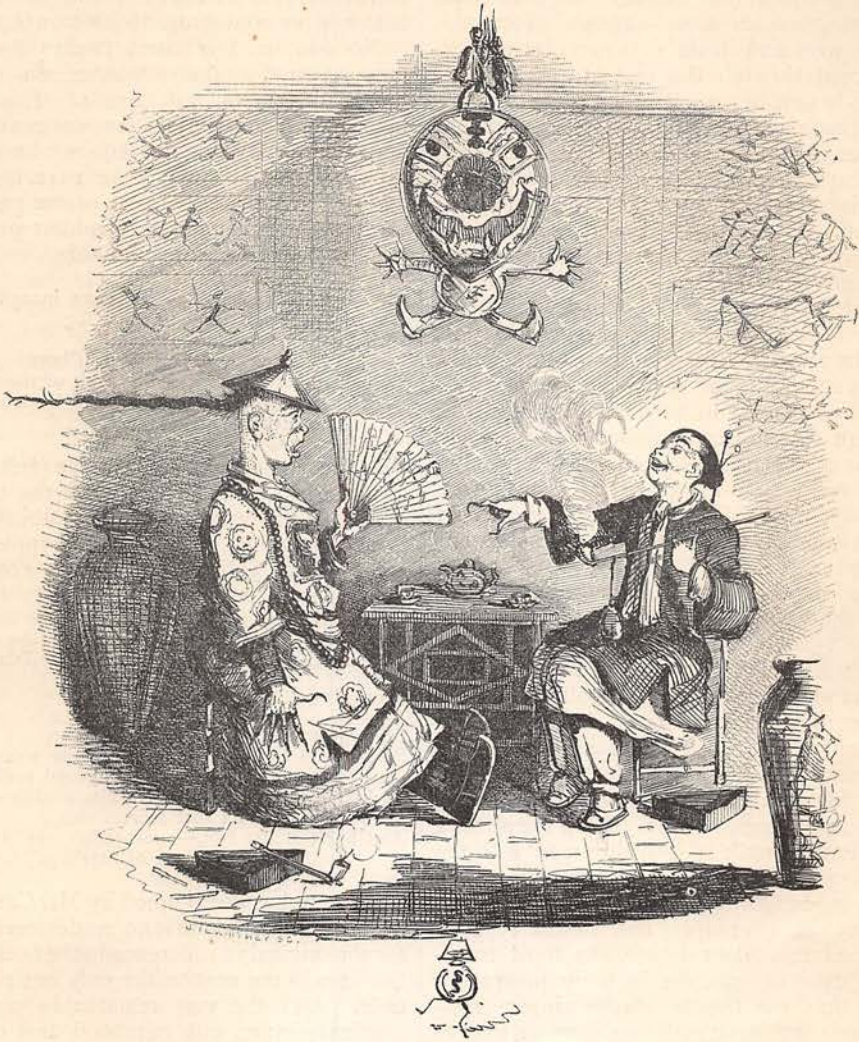


JOHN LEECH.



NO. 1.—HO-FI CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP.

THIRTY-SEVEN and a half years ago, in London, there appeared a prospectus of a proposed new journal. The newsmen handed it to their customers; it was headed by a fairly clever picture in the fashion of the day, a wood-cut of just such character as were Hablot Browne's contributions to another journal then in its second year,—“Master Humphrey's Clock,” edited by Charles Dickens and published by Chapman and Hall. This head-piece represented the well-known puppet of London street shows—that very “Punch” whose

most famous gentlemen-ushers were Messrs. Codlin and Short—standing between two masked personages, his “author” and his “artist”; and the first line declares that it is a “refuge for destitute wit” which is here established, thereby asserting a connection between the new journal and the recognized fashion of comic publication for the previous century or two. On the seventeenth of July, 1841, came out the first number of “Punch”; it seems not very funny to a reader of to-day; its manner of jesting is ponderous and, except for its

freedom from offense, reminds one of that eighteenth century "wit" now only known to book-collectors as to be found in the comic publications alluded to. The illustrations, besides one full-page "cartoon," were wretched little cuts an inch high, scattered through the text; the cartoon itself is better, but is not a design at all, only five heads of "Candidates under different Phases,"—five separate pictures irregularly distributed over the page. The Parliamentary elections of that summer were just concluded. The Whigs had been beaten pretty badly. Lord Melbourne's ministry was evidently endangered; the Tories were on the alert and ready to build up their own government on the ruins of the old one, and by means of the popular majorities they had won. "Punch" is chiefly occupied with politics at first, and very blue reading it is. Except for the preservation in these pages of some of those old stories and local allusions which help the reader of history wonderfully, even Miss Martineau's record of those times is more amusing than that of our joker.

But in the fourth number of "Punch," "for the week ending August 7, 1841," the cartoon was by a different hand. John Leech had signed his name in full in the left hand lower corner; a scroll in the very center of the page bore the inscription "Foreign Affairs," and, as author's name, the mark so well known afterward, a bottle with inverted glass over the stopper and a wriggling "leech" within. Below the scroll, a London sidewalk is seen thronged with the denizens of Liecester Square, eight men and two women, walking and staring, or conversing in a group. The lowest type of escaped fraudulent debtor, the most truculent style of gambler in fairly prosperous condition, the female chorus singer growing old and stout; all are here as easy to recognize as if described in words. Above are detached studies. In one portly figure, whose back only is seen, but who has an inscription, "The Great Singer," we recognize Lablache. In a pianist with a cataract of coarse hair, a better informed reader of English journals, or one who had the patience to wade through this very number of "Punch," might recognize some celebrity of the day—can it be Liszt? But the important thing to our inquiry is the easy strength seen in the drawing of these twenty grotesque figures. They are hardly caricature. Take any one of them and it will be evident that we have before us a

portrait. The original of that portrait was "padding with thin soles" the pavement of Regent street in August, 1841. His son is there to-day, in a somewhat different hat and coat and without straps to his trowsers.

No one head of these twenty heads is quite so good as the very wonderful design reproduced in our cut No. 4. This must have been made within a few weeks after the appearance of "Foreign Affairs," for it is in Hood's "Comic Annual" for 1842, and this was printed before the close of the previous year. Miss Kilmansegg "and her precious leg" are wooed of a count,—of

"A foreign Count,—who came incog,  
Not under a cloud, but under a fog,  
In a Calais packet's fore-cabin,  
To charm some lady British born,  
With his eyes as black as the fruit of the thorn,  
And his hooky nose, and his beard half-shorn,  
Like a half-converted Rabbin."

But the physical charms of the *prétendant* and his half-military dress, and the "retail order" in his button-hole, are nothing; any book-illustrating artist could grapple with those; what John Leech did to complete Tom Hood's record of the Count's inward gifts and graces is the wonder.

"He could sing, and play first fiddle, and dance—" says Hood, and

"Savage at heart and false of tongue,  
Subtle with age and smooth with the young,  
Like a snake in his coiling and curling—  
Such was the Count—to give him a niche—  
Who came to court that heiress rich,  
And knelt at her foot,—one needn't say which,—  
Besieging her castle of Sterling."

This cut has been copied by Mr. Carson in so perfect a fashion that no reader need long for the original; a difference in the fineness of the lines in the coat is the only one perceptible. And the very remarkable physiognomical picture, with falsehood and cruelty equally plain in it, while the head remains that of a false and cruel man and not a mere abstraction, is just the same thing in our page as in that of the last volume of the "Comic Annual."

This picture is given instead of a head from "Punch," as better. Still the "Punch" cartoon is admirable work as we see it now, but how far was it seen, in 1840, to be unusually good? Did the dissatisfied subscribers of "Punch" (who must have been many, for the paper was sold to new owners not many weeks after this "week ending August 7, 1841," and was bought by Messrs. Bradbury & Evans very cheaply

—some say for a hundred pounds!—did they welcome the new hand? Was his name already known well enough to carry with it assurance of better work than that done by A. S. H. and W. N.? It must have been familiar already to amateurs and students of wood-engraving and of book-illustration. For Leech, though only a twenty-four-year-old man, in 1841, was a three-year-old designer for wood-cuts. "Bell's Life" had had the first-fruits of his genius, for that paper was an "illustrated" one then. A student of medicine, with a strong love of sporting and horses, and a habit which dated from his school-boy days of drawing everything he saw, he came quite naturally to work for a journal which did not ask matured skill, but only what he could give it. Mr. Shirley Brooks's interesting biography of Leech states that he was first brought into notice by a design for an envelope—a take-off of the one designed by Mulready for the post-office authorities; this the writer has never seen. "Bentley's Miscellany," which had been filled for six years with our dear old friend George Cruikshank's designs for "Oliver Twist" and "Jack Sheppard" and the rest, made room, in 1840, for an etching by Leech, the earliest etching of his of which we find record—"The Black Mousquetaire." It is hardly worth while reproducing this, as the "Ingoldsby Legends" are so well known, and the different illustrated editions of it so accessible. The first appearance of the etching was in "Bentley," Vol. VIII. It is not very good; its artistic value is very slight, but then Leech never cared for that, but stuck to his simple line-work to the end just as Cruikshank did; and without reaching even such simple excellence as Cruikshank's best or second-best work with the needle. What is more strange is that his fun is badly mixed with earnest, caricature with tragedy, in this, and in other etchings of the same series. The etchings in the same volume, in illustration of "'Stanley Thorn,' by the author of 'Valentine Vox,'" are greatly better in character because dealing with English people and because frankly studied from life, with no more effort at caricature than one finds in later work.

There was some broad farce in Leech, though, at least in those early days. The first of our illustrations in chronological order, is No. 2, "The Sun and Moon," from Percival Leigh's "Comic English Grammar." The

author wishes to fix in the youthful mind the fact that "Sun" is masculine and "Moon" is feminine, and so goes into the analogies,—how the "golden rays" of the Sun are turned into "silvery light" by the Moon, who, of course, is fond of "change," and who, moreover, shines at night, like other feminine elegancies. The original cut is very exactly copied by Mr. Sugden. The rather "sat upon" and disciplined look of Sol, and Lady Luna's elate enjoyment of the jewelry, as she sits in her habit and hat, are admirably rendered. Our cut No. 1 is a *fac-simile* of an etching to be found in Vol. IX.



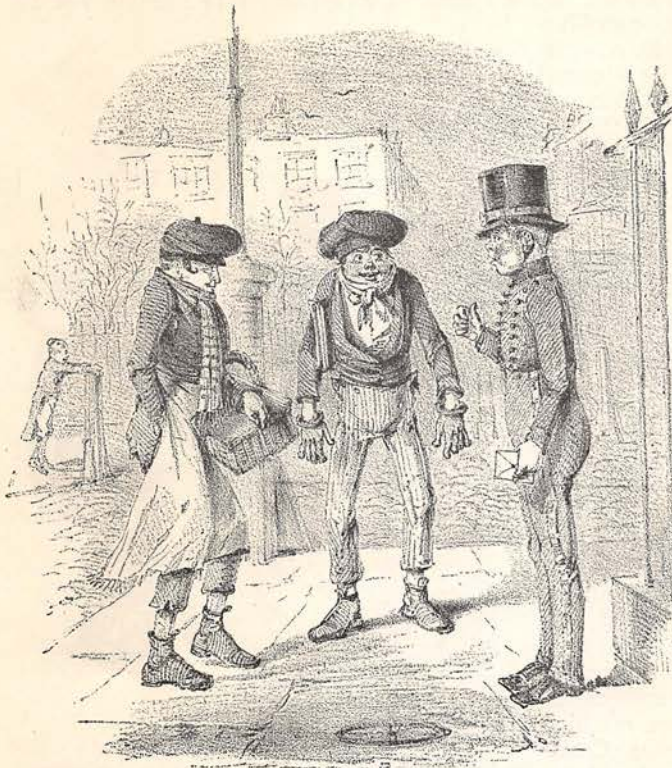
NO. 2.—THE SUN AFFORDS THE MOON THE MEANS OF SHINING.

of "Bentley's Miscellany," where it illustrates a farcical sort of story, called "Ho-Fi of the Yellow Girdle." Ho-Fi had proposed to his bride, So-Sli, to drink certain tea which he didn't wish to share with her, and she had seemed to pour the same out of window, to put an end to a loving contest. But three days afterward she offered him tea which, as he thought, tasted strangely; and then it appeared that he was "caught in his own trap," for the lady had poured the decoction into a pan outside the sill, and had now warmed it up for him. Certainly, of these two pictures, the most comical is the simplest,—the wood-cut, with its child-like di-

rectness and *naïveté*. In the Chinese picture the long clay pipes and the three-cornered sand-boxes, as if in a British tavern, are well imagined, as in contrast with the more Oriental accessories of costume and furniture. This very costume, too, is pleasantly travestied; but still the value of the picture is rather in the pretty girlishness of the little bride, So-Sli, maintained through all the theatrical-Chinese features and dress. It was, indeed, not fun that Leech cared for, but character; not a loud laugh, but an amused smile. If his humor may be thought

give, in a few words, of Leech's way of looking at life. "The Children of the Mobility" is a publication of 1841, seven lithographs in a wrapper. It has become scarce, like too many good things. After Leech's death, the committee which undertook to raise a fund for the purchase from his sister of those of his drawings which remained in her possession, published a thin folio, containing photographic copies of the original outline studies for six of these; but the one we have chosen for reproduction in our cut No. 3 has never been copied in any form. Our

picture is on less than half the scale of the original, of which the India paper measures eight by ten inches. The photographic process by which it is reduced gives the character of the original lithograph better, perhaps, than it could have been done otherwise; but it has exaggerated in an ugly way the strength of the paler parts,—the distant figure of the charity-boy about to "over" a post, the signature below, the sky and the distant haze,—so that the effect of the original, as a delicate bit of light and shade, is pretty much lost. But the expression of character is preserved. The three boys are types—all children of the mobile classes; there is the muffin-man's boy, and the apothecary's errand-boy, or "lawyer's clerk" in his first year; there is the liveried page of a



NO. 3.—CHILDREN OF THE MOBILITY.

to resemble that of Dickens, at least it is without that side of it which, in Dickens's work, appears to the world as Dick Swiveller. Hablot Browne's development, again, of that very character in the original "Master Humphrey's Clock," is as superior to anything Leech could have done, at least in his ordinary mood, in the way of mere laughableness, as Leech's varied insight and affectionate sympathy are to Browne's thin and flimsy art,—a mere seizing of outsides. Pathos, hidden beneath a very momentary, though pleasant and natural, fun, is the best account we can

family—the "boy in buttons." Some quizzing of the uniformed messenger by the rough boys, who rather despise him for his good clothes, seems to be in order; he wants a direction, and they, proud of their knowledge of London and of their freedom and general wide-awakeness, mean to make him pay for it. This is the least tragical subject of the whole seven; the others have more to do with the misery and squalor of the poor than this rather jovial study. One of them contains some charming bits of child-life among the very poor: a tall girl, of fourteen, with the

sweetest and most sympathizing smile, looks down upon a little boy who has been to get a tea-kettleful of water,—for that fluid has to be brought from far for the very poor in London,—and who seems to have found a herring, with which he and all the bystanders are delighted. Two of the pictures are wholly sad, and the third, while it has a foreground incident not unlike the one before us,—a jocose controversy between two boys,—shows, beyond, a child's parish funeral, where the little coffin is borne on the shoulders of an undertaker's assistant, preceded by another as mute; where one poor woman follows as the only mourner, and where the poor little procession of three has to make its way along a London foot-way, with a Punch-and-Judy show in full operation. It was to observe these incidents of every-day life, and to record them, that Leech lived. He must have seen and remembered as many sad incidents as amusing ones; as many even agonizing events and pitiful appeals as comic situations or jocose conversations,—in short, as much sadness as fun. But it was his business, throughout the greater part of his life, to furnish amusement to the most amusement-seeking class of people in this world,—the wealthier English. There was too steady a demand for what he had that was entertaining to let him neglect long to supply it. It is not "Punch" alone nor "Punch" chiefly to which allusion is made; the greater number of the books he illustrated gave him more purely comic work to do than "Punch." In that weekly he found the best opportunity ever afforded to him to give voice to his more serious thoughts.

Chronologically, we have now reached "Miss Kilmansegg," and our illustration No. 4, already described. The pathetic and humanitarian tone of the poem fitted it exactly to Leech's humor. It is a pity that he had not free choice of subject and treatment. But that could hardly be, for the previous volumes of the "Comic Annual" had contained few pictures other than the coarse, ill-drawn, and purely farcical little cuts from Hood's own hand,—designs so inartistic in every sense, so ugly, and so common, that it is a wonder "a genius so shrinking and rare" as Tom Hood's could have consented to them even as mere sport, or as sport turned to bread-winning. There are thirty-two pictures to "Miss Kilmansegg," of which two or three have the artist's full power in them. Especially vigorous is the Countess tearing her will, while the blackguard Count

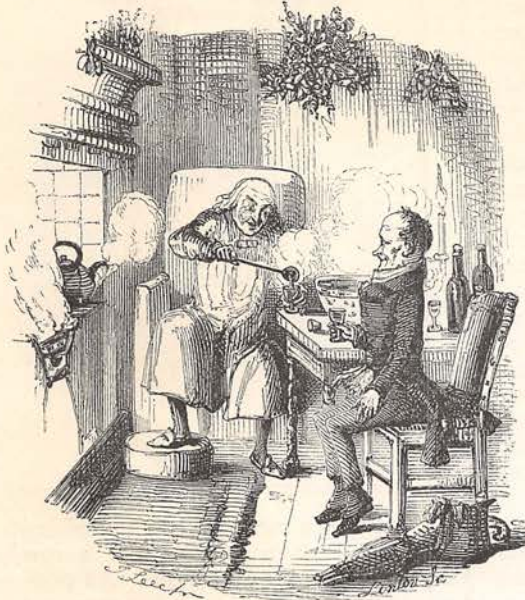


NO. 4.—"SUCH WAS THE COUNT—TO GIVE HIM A NICHE."

looks on with a sneer, pockets turned inside out, hair disheveled, fresh from a rowdy debauch, while broken bottles and a dice-box strew the floor. Especially charming is "Love for Dinner,"—too subtle a design to describe,—in illustration of some lines which are known, it is to be hoped, to most readers.

During the year 1842, Leech worked steadily for "Punch," though the more commonplace sketches of Hine, and the stilted and "hifalutin" designs of Kenny Meadows, are more frequent in those pages. There are also a lot of smug and drawing-room-like pictures which seem to be by Harvey. It is odd enough to see one of Leech's firm and simple designs in the adjoining column to one of those others, with their lady-like grace and pretty turns of the head, and smoothness and smirk. Leech, for his part, gets into full career toward the close of the third volume; the big picture illustrating the pleasures of folding doors, and "of hearing the 'Battle of Prague' played with a running accompaniment of one, and two, and three,—and one, and two, and three,—and"—is a good landmark; it shows the future style of the artist, his way of treating feature and expression, his touch, his ingenuity in handling accessories, and that neatness of his legends and inscriptions which never forsook him. In the fifth volume, toward the close of 1843, there is a picture (perhaps not the first, indeed) and a legend, about the organ-grinding nuisance, which, in after

life, at least, was a real distress and burden to the sensitive artist: "Wanted," it says, "by an aged lady, of a very nervous temperament, a professor who will undertake to mesmerize all the organs in her street.—Salary,



NO. 5.—BOB CRATCHIT AND SCROOGE "OVER A CHRISTMAS BOWL OF SMOKING BISHOP."

so much per organ." For "aged lady," read, delicately organized man of twenty-six!

"Punch" was bravely "liberal" in those early days; full of sympathy with advanced ideas, and with the opponents of privilege and stately establishments; even to the extent of making immense fun of royalty and the royal family, and the rapidly lengthening list of royal children. It is an odd contrast between the touchingly loyal tone of only ten years later, and the quite ferocious fun made of Prince Albert, of the Duke of Cambridge and his daughter's marriage, of the expense of the royal establishment as contrasted with the wretchedness of the poor; a theme constantly urged. A change came over the public mind in England, not long after the events of 1848 and 1849, and this is as visible elsewhere as in the pages of "Punch." Prince Albert was indeed a favorite mark for ridicule, at least on certain occasions, till a much later time, but the queen and her children and her household, and royalty as an institution, were all treated as things very sacred and very precious, from about the year 1850. Concerning Ireland, too, and Irish government, there was in the early volumes a certain feeling of regret

and apology not to be found later; in the sixth volume, the Queen and the Czar Nicholas are seen sitting at the two ends of a table, while above their heads hang the map of Ireland and the map of Poland, and the Queen, pointing to her own dependency, says, "Brother, brother, we're both in the wrong!" In the same volume a really admirable cartoon is entitled "The Game Laws, or the Sacrifice of the Peasant to the Hare;" and a more uncompromising bit of anti-privilege thought no one need ask for. All these are by Leech. There is a marked change in the artist's temper in after life. It is not probable that he ever forgot to be charitable, or to be pitiful, or to be indignant at gross abuses; but assuredly his mind was fixed upon other things.

In this year, 1844, appeared "The Christmas Carol,"—the first of Dickens's Christmas stories, and the only one illustrated exclusively by Leech. There are, in this original edition, four colored etchings, of the kind so common in Cruikshank's early books, and common to Leech until his latest years, the etching being naturally only line-work, and not carried very far; the coloring always in full blue, and red, and yellow, with white paper left for the white waistcoats and aprons. There are also a number of uncolored wood-cuts, of which we give one in cut No. 5, a faithful reproduction by Mr. Zeltner of the final picture, "Scrooge and Bob Cratchit." It is very interesting, in these designs, to see Leech *aux prises* with the supernatural. He is not particularly clever at it; fresh thoughts do not seem to arise in his mind; he follows his author about, trying to set down what the text suggests, but with no especial success. It is the transmogrification of Scrooge, from the hardest to the jolliest business man in London, which is admirably managed! It is the same face and yet not the same, in the picture of "Marley's Ghost" at the beginning and in the one before us. As for Bob Cratchit,—to any other artist this characterization would be set down as a great success; to Leech it is only every-day work. In "Punch" for this year, 1844, are several fanciful designs which are remarkable enough. "Old Port introducing Gout to the Fine Young English Gentleman," contains a portrait of "Gout," which it is a pity we cannot find room for. But these fantasies are not his best work. The holiday-

schoolboy at the pastry-cook's counter, who tells the saleswoman that he has had—"two jellies, seven of them, and eleven of them, and six of those, and four bath-buns, a sausage-roll, ten almond-cakes, and a bottle of ginger beer;"—the capital heads of the two swimmers at a watering-place, of which the lips of one say almost in the horror-stricken ear of the other, "I beg your parding, Captain, but could you oblige me with my little account?" the old gentleman and the ragged little boy who meet, in front of a sweet-shop, in "A Lumping Penn'orth," between whom passes this dialogue: "Now, my man, what would you say, if I gave you a penny?" "Vy, that you vos a jolly old Brick!"—these portraits of the people of London are what our kindly and observant artist was sent to London to make. Here (No. 6) is his own portrait, as he was in July, 1846, when the maid said to him, "If you please, sir, here's the printer's boy called again!" And here is his portrait in January, 1847, "first (and only) fiddle" to the orchestra in "Mr. Punch's Fancy Ball." This picture is a huge double-page cartoon; on the floor are the celebrities of the day dancing and conversing,—Lord Brougham with the "Standard," Mr. Punch (of course) with Britannia, and O'Connell, Lord Derby, Wellington and the rest; but the orchestra is made up of the editors and contributors to "Punch." Let Dr. John Brown describe them; for he claims to know them all (see his essay on Leech, reprinted in "Spare Hours"): "On the left is Mayhew playing the cornet, then Percival Leigh the double-bass, Gilbert A'Becket the violin, Doyle the clarinet, Leech next playing the same,—tall, handsome and nervous,—Mark Lemon the editor, as conductor, appealing to the fell Jerrold to moderate his bitter transports on the drum. Mooning over all is Thackeray,—big, vague, child-like,—playing on the piccolo; and Tom Taylor earnestly pegging away on the piano." Clearly there is error in one clause of this passage; for it is Leech's head and a violin, not a clarinet, which the reader has before

him.\* "The fell Jerrold" gave Leech some work about this time. Writing constantly in "Punch," his papers had been illustrated by



NO. 6.—ONE OF "PUNCH'S" FULL ORCHESTRA. (LEECH PLAYING THE FIDDLE.)

Leech and by other artists; but when in 1845, the "Shilling Magazine" was begun, and the novel of "St. Giles and St. James" in its first number, full-page etchings were made to illustrate that story. They are in



NO. 7.—OUR ARTIST IN HOT WEATHER—"OH, BOTHER! SAY I'M BUSY."

some respects more elaborate than most of

\*In "Punch," seven years later, a different hand has portrayed all these and other contributors as boys at play; Leech himself is decorated with a hobby-horse and armed with a porte-crayon, and is about to leap an easel set sidewise to serve as a hurdle; Jerrold is playing skittles; Thackeray has the bat in a small game of cricket; Lemon is playing rackets.



NO. 8.—THE HOLIDAYS HAVE BEGUN.

Leech's works,—with more black and white, more pretense at chiaro-oscuro; but whether he could not sympathize with his author's unquestioning convictions and savage animosities, or from what other reason it may have been, it is clear that the designs were not done with his whole energy. But his whole energy is put into some festive little publications of his own about the same time (for "St. Giles and St. James" was not finished until 1847); and we name especially the Christmas brochure from which picture No. 8 is taken—"Master Jacky's Holidays, or the History of Young Troublesome." It is all

pictures, with no text beyond the legends at the foot of the page, and one page of *dramatis personæ*. Master Jacky keeps his father's London house amused and occupied during the holidays, by various escapades more ingenious than common in well-regulated families. The pursuits of the first morning after his arrival are depicted in our cut, closely fac-similed from the etching, by Mr. Brinkerhoff; Master Brown from next door and Master Green from over the way come to help Jacky's younger brothers and sisters welcome his return, while the nursery maids above, Ruggles below, and





NO. 9.—THE PARSON IN THE DITCH.

Mr. Phoenix at his library door "assist," in the original and French sense, and Mr. Phoenix's bust on the landing-place wears an expression of amazement at the break in its tranquil existence.

In 1848 appeared another set of lithographs—"The Rising Generation." These are, perhaps, inferior to the similar publication of seven years before, from which we give an illustration, less refined in drawing, less elevated in character, as works of art. Still, they add to the regret one feels that Leech so seldom resorted to the art of lithography to embody his more elaborate conceptions. There was constant complaint that his drawings were spoiled by the wood-engravers, not necessarily that these last were unskillful, but that the more subtle flavor of the swiftly drawn designs was hard to preserve in hastily cut blocks. Leech is quoted as saying to a friend, who was admiring a study in pencil: "Wait till Saturday, and see how the engraver will have spoiled it." Under these circumstances, it does seem strange that the example of the French humoristic designers, and especially of Gavarni, should not have been more frequently followed. Gavarni's most important work was in large lithographs, and certainly Leech must have been familiar with it. The concentrated intensity and power of caricature without exaggeration of the great Frenchman was not in place in "Punch," nor in the illustration of the trifling novels and books of sporting sketches

which were brought for Leech to work at; but this, again, seems a reason for regretting that the Englishman did not more frequently issue independent designs, or sets of designs, of the fashion of "The Children of the Mobility," and the few others. But there was etching, with the processes of which art Leech had made himself familiar in his boyhood; if he had thoughts in him which his own hand only could rightly embody in visible form, why did he not carry farther that art of boundless capacities? Why was he satisfied to make hundreds of etchings for "Bentley's Miscellany" and a score of novels besides, without giving or seriously attempting to give them any artistic character at all? It is a question that no one can answer, except by the unsatisfactory reflection that, up to the time of Leech's death, there had been no recognition in modern England of etching as an independent and respectable fine art, and that, with the insignificant exception of the publications of the Etching Club,—themselves almost all valueless in an artistic point of view,—etchings were known only as "comic illustrations to novels, ordered for their comic, and not their artistic, qualities," as Mr. Hamerton says, because they "could be done rapidly, and because the facility of the point was a convenience to the designers for giving expression to their Harry Lorrequers and Charles O'Malleys." Leech seems to have been a man who would do what was given him to

do with perfect satisfaction and in his best manner, but without longing for greater scope or larger opportunities. That temperament is indicated in the subjects of his work, as well as in their character: among early works, "The Fiddle-Faddle Fashion Book," Percival's Comic English and Latin Grammars, and the trifling designs to Bon Gaultier's ballads and "Puck on Pegasus"; then, in "Bentley's Miscellany," from 1840 to 1844, a host of large etchings to a romantic sort of biography of Savage, the poet, Albert Smith's "Jack Ledbury," to "Stanley Thorn," and stories and sketches innumerable beside; in other periodicals or in sepa-

—as showing noble talents never rightly employed, rare gifts unsuspected by his contemporaries, and a tragic force which he hardly suspected himself.

It does not appear from any record of Leech's life within reach at what time he had his experience of the hunting-field. That he always loved horses is evident, and that he owned them and enjoyed riding; it must have been his custom from an early day to take a two-days' winter run into the country, visiting some friend in the hunting districts. By the time he was thirty-five, the long series of his hunting-field pictures begins, not to cease



NO. 10.—FOX-HUNTERS IN THE DAYS OF SQUIRE WESTERN.

rately published volumes, illustrations to some of the most purely farcical of English publications,—“Christopher Tadpole” and Theodore Hook’s “Jack Bragg,”—and, finally, the hundreds of pictures, large and small, in the “Handley Cross Series” of sporting novels. These and such as these are almost the only books he illustrated; this and such as this was the only work given him to do. “Punch” was almost the only field for his graver thoughts, and in “Punch” the graver thoughts could not be too often made prominent. It is not customary to consider Leech as an unfortunate man, an artist who never had a chance; but an essay could be written treating of his art from that point of view,

till his death. In “Punch” for 1855, we find “The Parson in the Ditch,” which, reduced only slightly in scale, gives us our cut No. 9, the work of Mr. Tynan. “I say, Jack! who’s that come to grief in the ditch?” “Only the parson.” “Oh! leave him there, then! He wont be wanted until next Sunday!” Such are the gracious remarks of the young Nimrods. The picture is selected on account of its landscape background. Leech’s professed admirers, writing soon after his death in 1864, have much to say about his love of, and power over, landscape, but a plenty of designs could be brought to show how carelessly he could draw out-of-door nature, and how seldom,

in his earlier life, he seems to have cared to give it especial thought. Still, this one must be accepted at full! This is really a capital distance,—flat and leading far away, —a December country-side in England, as



NO. 11.—GIRL'S HEAD.

if of April with us; and this is only the first of a great many landscape bits equally good and suggestive, which accompany the hunting-scenes and go far to reconcile one to their constant recurrence.

For, indeed, to any one who respects the history and believes in the continued manliness and virtue of English national character, the modern abandonment of the whole nation to sport seems a wretched thing; and it is pitiful to see the unquestioning way in which so able and amiable a man gives up his time to representing the incidents of the hunting-field. The ways and manners of the young patricians are not a whit more amusing than those of London omnibus drivers and cabbies—as Leech represents them. They say things not nearly so witty; there is no room for pathos; there is actually nothing delightful about it but the horses and the landscape, and, to the young swells themselves and their families, the constant contemplation of themselves engaged in their

favorite pursuit. Our good-natured moralist enters into the spirit of many classes of men, and gives us with equal hand scenes of life on sea and on shore, in the streets and in the fields; and it is all life, tragedy and comedy, business and rest, mingled in due proportion. But these scores of pictures, all devoted to one of the many sports which have for their very nature the cruel destruction of animals,—this amusement of chasing and tearing to pieces a beast who is cared for and made much of in his native haunts, for the very purpose of this chase, is a hard thing to an outsider. It is pleasanter to turn back over a few pages of "Punch" to the famous cartoon, "Général Février turned Traitor." The Czar Nicholas, then at war with France and Great Britain, was reported to have said that his two best generals had not yet come—"Général Janvier et Général Février." But he died, self-slain, as it almost seemed, at the close of the following February, and Leech's picture shows a uniformed skeleton entering the tent amid a whirling snow-storm, which follows and surrounds him, and laying his hand on the heart of the emperor, whose dead face in profile is admirably designed. This is a bit of that perfervid patriotism which in war time is good and true, and which, in memory of war time, seems true still. Leech was busily at work at this time, nearly forty years of age, prosperous, established, and famous, and the titles alone of the books he illustrated during the decade would fill a couple of these printed pages. He made a number of designs for other illustrated papers, and in 1856, for the "Illustrated London News," two of his very largest



NO. 12.—A FOLLOWING WIND.

and most elaborate pictures, celebrated ones, too, "Fox-hunters in the Good Old Times," and "Fox-hunters in these Degenerate Days." The former of these is given in cut No. 10, engraved on a scale



NO. 13.—A SWELL.

of less than one-half that of the original, but admirably well done—the work of Mr. Carson. It needs no description. The other picture represents decorous, dress-coated men, young and old, mingling with ladies in the drawing-room after dinner.

In 1859 was started "Once A Week," by the same house which had owned and issued "Punch" from a few weeks after its first appearance. During the first year Leech contributed thirty-one drawings to that weekly, besides about one hundred and fifty to "Punch," and whatever work other publications may have called for. The only thing we can give from "Once a Week" is the little head of the young lady swimming,—part of a decorated initial letter T (No. 11). But that volume and its earliest successors are crowded with good things, by Charles Keene, Millais and other men, and, as we have seen, by Leech. In the second volume, 1860, he is in prodigious force, and if one ever feels like denying an especially comic gift to Leech, he will feel doubtful on the point when he examines the illustrations to "Divorce *a Vinculo*, or the Terrors of Sir Creswell Creswell."

About this time he traveled on the Continent in search of renewed health, and thence was sent to "Punch" that great piece of work, "A Bull-Fight at Bayonne, with a little of the tinsel off, dedicated with every feeling of disgust to the nobility, gentry and clergy, especially of Spain and France." Wretched, worn-out horses with blindfolded eyes, held up, a defenseless and unconscious mark for the attack of bulls purposely infuriated, while "matadors" and "picadors" easily escape,

—this is the subject of the large cut whose details we will not describe. Cut No. 12 is also from "Punch," and gives another nice bit of suggested landscape. There's another member of the hunt behind the wind-buffeted rider whom we see, not yet in sight except as to his hat, which precedes him in the gale. Cut No. 13 is also from "Punch," and appears to be meant for a swell of the Dundreary sort, reading a savage attack on the Times and on England in an Irish paper, but as it is only used to ornament the initial letter of an article, its meaning is not to be asked after too closely. This head and whiskers remind one of the capital picture, too big to get into our brief space, of the two swells at Sothorn's "American Cousin," between the acts: "No fellah ever saw such a fellah. Gwoss cawica-tawaw!" Cut No. 14 is from "Puck on Pegasus,"—a volume of very slight and temporary verse, by Mr. H. Cholmondeley-Pennell,—and is taken chiefly for the landscape. The verse requires the "Primeval Forest" for "Piggy-wiggy" to emerge from; but this grassy bank and these small crowded stems are as little like it as may be.

The year 1864 came, and found our admirable artist still at work as vigorously as ever; not robust, not rugged, but in seeming good health and spirits, and fit to live and work for years. To "Punch" for that year he had contributed eighty pictures, when, on the fifth of November, appeared a very amusing cut: An Irishman, dreadfully maltreated in a street fight, is taken charge of by his wife, while a capitially indicated group of the victor and his friends is seen in the distance, and two little Irish boys nearer. "Terence, ye great ummadawn," says the "wife of his bussum" to the vanquished hero, "what do yer git into this Thrubble fur?" Says the hero, in response: "D'ye call it Thrubble, now? Why, it's Engyement." It is as good a thing as ever Leech did—as good a cut as ever was in "Punch." When he laid his pencil down beside this drawing, it was never to take it up again; and six days before the appearance of the paper in which the cut was published, he had passed away. In his death there was taken from modern England her closest observer and most suggestive delineator of men and women. To the great Cruikshank, human character was rather a thing to draw inspiration from than simply to portray: Oliver Twist and Jack Falstaff, in Cruikshank's work, are conceptions as completely abstract as his fairies and witches. If the

reader will look back to the July number of this magazine, he will see how much more varied and how much more imaginative and powerful is Cruikshank's art. But he could never have done what Leech did, still less what Leech might have done. To represent every class of English life, and the peculiar types of form and character, developed in different parts of the kingdom, with sympathizing and loving touch, and to contrast with these pictures of his countrymen many studies of foreign life, almost as thorough and accurate, though often touched with that pleasant exaggeration, which

makes some portraiture more like than life; to do this was Leech's appointed task, and to a certain extent he fulfilled it. In one sense, his art is monotonous; its range is limited; a hundred pictures could be selected which would show all that Leech achieved during his too brief career of twenty-five years. But the pleasure this body of work is capable of giving is not limited by its narrowness of range; every fresh design is a fresh enjoyment, however like it is to the last. And there is not one which is not pure and refined in thought and purpose.



NO. 14.—ILLUSTRATION TO "PUCK ON PEGASUS."

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GERTRUDE.

WHAT shall I say, my friend, my own heart healing,  
 When for my love you cannot answer me?  
 This earth would quake, alas, might I but see  
 You smile, death's rigorous law repealing!  
 Pale lips, your mystery so well concealing,  
 May not the eloquent, varied minstrelsy  
 Of my inspired ardor potent be,  
 To touch your chords to music's uttered feeling?—  
 Friend, here you cherished flowers. Send me now  
 One ghostly bloom to prove that you are blessed.  
 No?—If denial such as brands my brow,  
 Be in your heavenly regions, too, confessed,  
 Oh may it prove the truth that your still eyes  
 Foresee the end of all futurities!