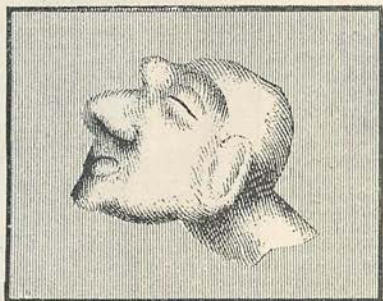


Curiosities in Ancient Caricatures.

By J. HOLT SCHOOLING.



FAMILIARITY with the many clever caricatures of to-day does not, in many cases, extend to an acquaintance with equally clever caricatures of ancient times. We admire the pungent black-and-white sarcasms of a Gould, and, to go farther back, of a Gillray



No. 1.—“Do you know . . .”—[Mr. Penley in “The Private Secretary.”]

or of a Hogarth, and there, as a rule, our knowledge of the art of caricature stops. But there exist excellent examples of this art, which date back to very early times indeed, and these drawings, which have the quality of much intrinsic oddity and grotesqueness, have also a historic and social interest, and some of them have also a most curious resemblance to persons and incidents that are sufficiently familiar to us of the present day to warrant some reference to these curious resemblances to modern things which are to be seen in ancient caricatures.

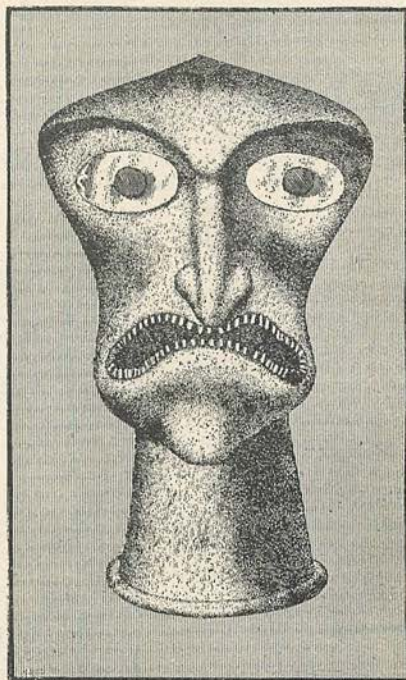
For example, look at No. 1, which at once suggests Mr. Penley's facial expression in “The Private Secretary” when he was speaking the well-known catch-words, “Do you know . . .” This quaint bit of coincidence is, of course, only coincidence, for the original of No. 1 was an ancient South Sea Islands' idol, centuries before clever Mr. Penley became the idol of a considerable section of modern theatre-goers.

One authority on caricatures says that Bufalmaco, an Italian painter, in about A.D. 1330 drew caricatures, and put labels with sentences on them to the mouths of his figures; and the word itself is derived from the Italian verb *caricare*, to charge or load, and, therefore, it means a picture

Vol. xvi.—22.

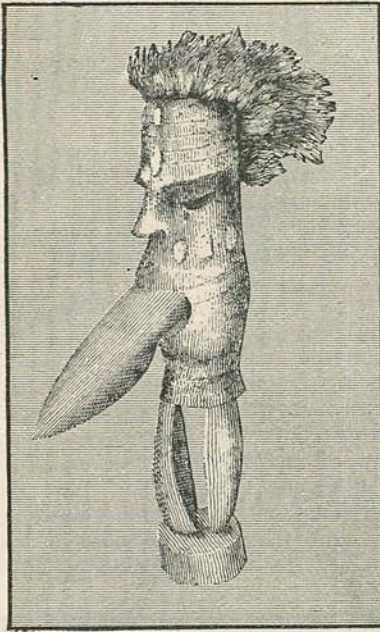
which is charged or exaggerated. But we can go much farther back than the year 1330, and then find grotesque instances of mankind's apparently innate love of making other people “make faces.”

No. 2 is a fairly good example of early barbaric skill in caricature. This was a favourite idol, and its expression of grief, with its air of savage wildness, reminds me of a gentleman whom at one time I used to meet fairly often on the District (underground) Railway: sometimes, this idol sat opposite to me in the compartment, and one effect of his liver complaint was his habit of viciously and violently shutting the door from his corner seat if by chance a passenger got out



No. 2.—Suffering from a liver complaint.

and left the door open. Truly, a most illogical way of showing an idol's resentment, to inflict an appalling bang on one's own tympanum, because another person has omitted to do so. The last time I met this idol No. 2, the corners of his mouth had dropped still more than they do here.



No. 3.—“Lem-me-look-at-the-tongue.”

No. 3 is an illustration that reminds us of Miss Mary H. Tennyson's amusing story in *THE STRAND MAGAZINE* for January, 1895—“Let-me-look-at-the-tongue.” Actually, No. 3 formed part of a South Sea Islander's club, and the tongue was the business end of this weapon. The tongue is still out, and no persuasion can get it back again.

There is an expression about the contour of the mouth and jaws of No. 4 that distinctly suggests the premonitory symptoms of that fearful yell of infancy, just at the moment before the babe “gives tongue”—but the developed teeth interfere with this theory. To while away an idle hour, a savage person living in an age now remote made this caricature of his dearest friend, which now serves to suggest an advertisement of a well-known modern dentist.

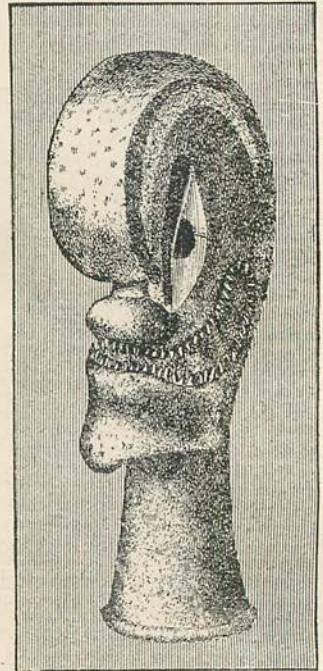
But what shall we say about No. 5? These distorted and even shocking features are bad



No. 4.—A dentist's advertisement.

enough to have been the origin of the modern Australian scallywag's term of reproach to a passing friend—“Halloa, Image!” To which the friend promptly replies—“What yer, Face!” Anyway, No. 5 was a savage's image, and it is a face—a face that has evidently exposed itself to the danger against which Sir Thomas Brown, an ingenious writer of Charles II.'s reign, warned a friend when he wrote, *à propos* of caricatures, “Expose not thyself by four-footed manners [bestial manners] unto monstrous draughts [*i.e.*, drawings] and caricatura representations.”

Concerning these interesting pieces of early South Sea (not South-sea) caricature, we should be doing an injustice to these barbarians if in mentioning, and showing, their grotesque productions, we omitted to take note of the tools with which they worked. Their adzes were of stone, their



No. 5.—A forbidding expression.

gouge, or chisel, was made of the bones of the human arm—an enemy's arm, for preference—their rasps, or files, were of coral, and their polishing material, which they employed on the specimens now before us, was mainly coral sand. Despite these disadvantages, the savages mentioned are entitled to a leading place among the pioneers of the art of caricature, and we may see that they had a dim perception of the up-to-date artistic quality called “actuality,” by noting that these early artists appended tufts of real hair to their works—see No. 3—and real teeth—see Nos. 4 and 5. Moreover, these are real, tangible caricatures, that can be touched and handled, and, as in the case of No. 3, forced with a will and a definite purpose into the perception of a neighbouring brain—however dull. If the

hypercritical reader think that these early caricatures lack the pointed sarcasm of a Gould or of a Hogarth, let him remember that these savage sarcasms were based on "deeds not words," and let him observe that the tongue in No. 3 is sufficiently pointed to be effective at close quarters with the artist who made it. Take my word for it, the caricaturist who made No. 3 quite understood the art of driving the point of his sarcasm home to his opponent.

Caricature No. 6 is the last example I shall show of the work of these barbaric pioneers of the art with which this paper deals: the "intense" facial expression, made fun of some years ago by the satirists who laughed the more fervid devotees of the



No. 6.—An ultra-intense young woman.

aesthetic cult out of existence, is curiously well suggested by this early example of savage art. Here, again, real hair and real teeth were inserted in this female mask.

The art of caricature has flourished at all times, and in all places. Pauson, a Greek painter of ancient times, and who is mentioned by Aristotle, showed a perception of this fanciful quality of art when he made the neat reply now to be quoted. Someone had ordered of Pauson the picture of a horse rolling on the ground. Pauson painted the horse running. The customer complained that the condition of his order had not been fulfilled. "Turn the picture upside down," said the artist, "and the horse will seem to roll on the ground." Even nowadays, the art of turning people upside down—in a figurative sense—is often used as effectively



No. 7.—In the upper boxes (old style).

as was the Greek painter's expedient of reversing his horse. Perhaps the universal prevalence of the art of caricature may be due to the fact that the generality of people are more influenced by pictorial representations than by written statements: witness the extraordinary popularity of election cartoons. Only the other day, a well-known writer said he thought that Mr. Gould and his brethren might, by their pencils, do more to set nations by the ears than anyone could accomplish by their pens.

China and Japan supply excellent examples of caricature. No. 7, for example, represents an ancient bit of Chinese work notable for its deviation from the stolid sobriety of features and attitude usually seen in the Chinese. No. 8, again, may be called a Chinese *bon vivant* (if one can imagine a Chinaman being a *bon vivant*) who is thoroughly



No. 8.—"Now, I wonder where he heard that?"



No. 9.—“That’s a good one! Say it again, will you?—I may want to use it.” [“A Trip to Chinatown.”]

enjoying the last good story. And No. 9, also a Chinese production, recalls to me the expression and attitude of Mr. Wellandstrong in the theatrical whimsicality, “A Trip to Chinatown,” where the robust invalid is having a lively interchange of choice expressions with the enraged restaurant cook, one at each end of the speaking-tube. If you have seen this piece at the theatre, you will remember that the conversation of the cook gets so lurid that even the experienced American is learning something as he holds a lighted match to his ear-piece of the speaking-tube, with the result that the cook’s expressions ignite and burn with a blue flame as they issue from the tube.

Ancient Japanese proficiency in caricature is represented by the remarkable example shown in No. 10. The performer is standing on a chimera—a fantastic monster so composed of parts of animal forms as to produce one complete but unnatural design—with the head of a horse and the tail of a whale. With his right hand this Japanese acrobat presents a slipper (for contributions, I suppose) and in his left the man flourishes a dagger—for use, perhaps, if the contributions be withheld. Altogether, this is a remarkable specimen, and the serpent entwined about the acrobat is not the least remarkable feature of the whole.

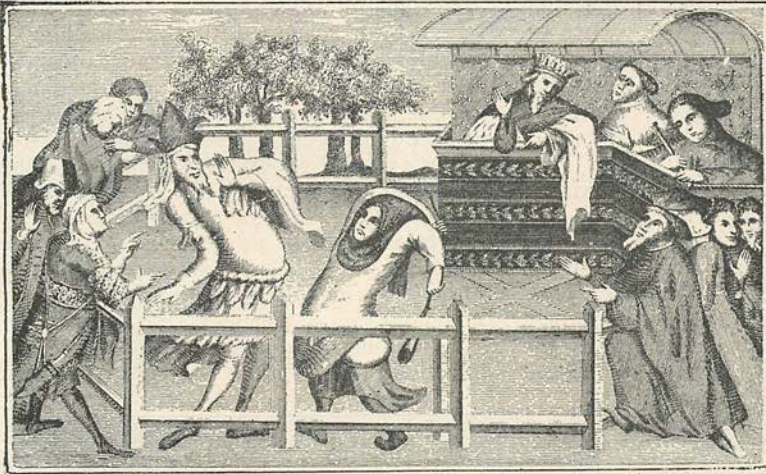
We have now seen a fairly representative lot of ancient caricatures that belong to the early and barbaric exponents of this universal art: we will come to our own country. In the city of York I have seen projecting from the churches some most extraordinary gargoyles that are nothing but caricatures: and, in many instances I have met with, ecclesiastical caricature seems to have been encouraged in times gone by. Not necessarily caricatures of religion itself, but caricatures appended as accessories to churches, etc. In fact, a very interesting branch of the present subject is the study of those caricatures by which the crude con-



No. 10.—An ancient Japanese caricature of a remarkable acrobatic performance.

ceptions of mankind as regards divinities and evil spirits have been expressed and perpetuated all over the world.

But let us glance at the historical aspect of caricatures as illustrated by their use in interesting and notable instances still extant. No. 11 is from a drawing in the Mass Book



No. 11.—From the Mass Book of Richard II. Representing a combat in the lists before the King between the dwarf and the fool of the Court.

of King Richard II. of England, who died in 1400. This singular picture shows a combat within lists, before a King, between the dwarf and the giant, a fool (*Big Sam*) of the Court. The latter bends back with uplifted arms to avoid the blow aimed at him by the little man who has thrown back both his hands in order to give added weight to a blow with a sort of flexible club or sling, to be delivered with his utmost force, and who thus furnishes an attitude of almost ludicrous posture. The King is pointing with evident meaning to the dwarf as the probable victor, and the other spectators are much interested by the scene. What strikes one about old drawings of this kind is the very artificial and *posé* attitude of the persons portrayed—in this quality, they resemble the modern Chinese work.

An interesting feature about this drawing is mentioned by an antiquarian, Mr. J. P. Malcolm, F.S.A., who wrote "An Historical Sketch of the Art of Caricaturing" early in this century. Mr. Malcolm suggests that this caricature is meant to

represent Saul surrounded by his Court, the huge, distorted, falling personage being Goliath, and the little man being David with his sling. This explanation is certainly ingenious, and may very likely be the true interpretation of No. 11, for we must remember that artists of this early period paid but little attention to the characterization of their work, and to the

harmonious fitting-in of appropriate surroundings—which are certainly wanting



No. 12.—An Allegorical Caricature at the time of the marriage of Henry VII.'s daughter to the King, James IV. of Scotland. The Scots King and his Consort are represented in the act of crossing the sea in a frail bark but little larger than themselves.

here if Mr. Malcolm's theory is the right one.

No small interest attaches to the historical aspect of ancient caricatures. Look, for example, at No. 12, from a MS. written in honour of the nuptials of the daughter of King Henry VII. of England with James IV. of Scotland. Here, allegory is caricatured without mercy, but very unconsciously. We see the King and his wife crossing the dreaded sea in a bark not much larger than themselves. The monarch, looking very poorly, and with his right hand held to his diaphragm, sadly contemplates the vine branch held in his left hand. Between the married pair stands a sheaf of wheat. A dignified personage guides the helm at the left of this picture, three sails are set on three masts, and four heads, two in the sky and two in the sea, blow *contrary* ways for a fair wind. Honour and two armed men sit in the tops, the three being destitute of legs, as there is not room for them; and four sailors of the period man the shrouds in attitudes that would not present the quality of actuality to the modern blue-jacket. This marriage took place in 1503, and to the counsellors who urged that in the case of failure of Henry's heirs in the male line, England would become subject to Scotland, Henry VII. replied that there was no fear of that, as "the greater would draw the less." A shrewd application of the then unknown scientific truth of the working of the law of gravity.

Many of the caricatures, in the form of carvings, that were executed during the reign of Henry VII., and both earlier and later than his times, were placed under the seats of choir-stalls in various churches. It is difficult to account for the extraordinary nature of some of these carvings—which cannot be reproduced in a magazine for general reading—except by the theory that prior to the Reformation manners among the clergy of these ancient days were very different from those that are usually associated with their profession. The dignitaries of the Church either disregarded the caricature ornamentation of their edifices, or they saw no reason to condemn designs that, if now exhibited in a printseller's window, would

expose the printseller to a legal prosecution. It has been suggested that this method of caricature was adopted by different orders of the religions to satirize each other, and that some of the carvings were intended to caricature particular persons then well known.

No. 13 is of about the same date as the last illustration, and it represents a practical example of the old saying, "A woman, a dog, and a walnut-tree—the more you beat 'em, the better they be." I don't agree with this adage, but an elderly gentleman who was lately talking to me about the remarkable, and, to him, scandalous, aspirations and activities of the more advanced modern



No. 13.—"A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree—the more you beat 'em, the better they be."

women, quite sincerely said that "a good whipping is the only thing to set them right"; so that the old spirit illustrated by the curious caricature in No. 13 is evidently still in existence.

French caricature was ably represented in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by clever artists, who, however, scarcely dared to use the license in things political that is evidenced by English work of the same period. No. 14 shows a pair of caricature heads by a

French artist, and they date back to about A.D. 1600. Beyond the fact that there is a sort of chignon at the back of the left-hand head in No. 14, there is really nothing to show which of these two beauties is Venus and which Adonis. I have labelled the left one Venus, and the one at the right hand Adonis, but the reader is quite at liberty to form his own opinion as to which is which.



VENUS: "HALLOA, IMAGE!" ADONIS: "WHAT YER, FACE!"
 No. 14.—An old French caricature of "Le bel Adonis" and "La divine Venus" [date about 1600]. The decision as to which of these two beauties is Adonis and which Venus must be left to the reader's judgment.

The next illustration, No. 15, is a pair of cleverly drawn caricatures by Callot, a Frenchman who died in 1635, and who was an admirable caricaturist. The expressive, whimsical features and posture of this pigmy soldier and this stout beggar are quite up to the level of modern work.

During a debate in the House of Commons on the Navy Estimates, Mr. Goschen, when asked what he would do if England should be threatened by a strong combination of the navies of several foreign Powers, spoke the memorable and sensible words, "I should trust in Providence and a good Admiral." This, surely, smacks of the old English spirit of the Armada danger, which is most interestingly caricatured in No. 16, a print published during the reign of James I. It is called "Spayne and Rome defeated," and, combined with the Armada affair, is a representation of the "Gunpowder Treason and Plot," with Faux in the foreground, to the left, being prompted by a demon to ignite the barrels of gunpowder stowed under the

House. In the tent, a personage with horns presides at the table, who is intended for the King of Evil, and his counsellors are the Pope, a Cardinal, a Spaniard, and several monks. The fiend who prompts Faux holds in his left hand the bull, or mandate, issued by the conclave in the tent.

On the right of No. 16 is a view of the sea with the Spanish Armada in a horseshoe formation, with an English ship entering under full sail and firing broadsides to right and left; and in the far distance, just below the line of the horizon, there is "Tylbury Campe" and Queen Elizabeth in a little carriage in front of the troops drawn up in line upon the shore. A beam of light comes from the eye of Providence to Faux's path, inscribed "*Video, Rideo*: I see and smile." Two cherubs at the right blow on the Spanish Armada, with "*Difflo, dissipo*: I blow and scatter," written between them. The other inscriptions on this curious allegorical caricature are: *Ventorum Ludibrium* [printed in the middle of the Armada] means "A Sport of Winds"; *Quantillum absint* [printed just at the right of the barrels of gunpowder] means "How little they lack" [i.e., a match]; *In Perpetuam Papist [icæ] re [i] infamiam* [printed over the opening to the tent] means "To the perpetual infamy of the Papal power"; *In foveam quam foderūt [foderunt]* [printed below the Pope's chair in the tent] means "In the pit which they digged"; *Straverat innumeris* [printed below the



No. 15.—Two French caricatures, by Callot, of a pigmy soldier and a beggar, date about 1630.

