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CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY, W.

THE
LIFE AND ADVENTURES
OF
A CHEAP JACK

BY ONE OF THE FRATERNITY

EDITED BY
CHARLES HINDLEY
EDITOR OF "TAVERN ANECDOTES AND SAYINGS," ETC.



A NEW EDITION

London
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY
1881

TO
PHINEAS TAYLOR BARNUM,

THE GREAT AMERICAN SHOWMAN

AND

"PRINCE OF HUMBUGS,"

I Dedicate

MY

"LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF A CHEAP JACK,"

IN FOND AND EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE OF ONCE HAVING

HAD A "LIQUOR UP" WITH HIM DURING HIS VISIT TO

BRIGHTON, WHEN HE WAS PLEASED TO DO A SODA

WITHOUT—TO MY A SODA WITH—BRANDY,

AND ALSO TO TAKE A BUSINESS HINT FROM

HIS HUMBLE SERVANT,

CHEAP JACK.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF A CHEAP JACK has been faithfully transcribed as near *verbatim et literatim* as possible from the MS. supplied to me for that purpose by Mr. William Green, who has spent his youth and early manhood in the capacity of a "Cheap Jack," and who, during the past twenty-five years, has held a respectable position in Brighton as a "London, Birmingham, and Sheffield Warehouseman—Wholesale, Retail, and for Exportation."

Truth forming the basis of the work, there is, perhaps, a peculiar freshness about the sketches, tales, jokes, and witticisms, which will, I trust, be appreciated and approved of by the reader.

THE EDITOR.

THE
LIFE & ADVENTURES
OF
A CHEAP JACK.

IN giving a series of short sketches of the life, manners, and customs of Cheap Johns, *vulgo* Jacks, including my own life and adventures as a member of that fraternity, it is absolutely necessary in the first place to disabuse the public mind of certain things they have read in books or seen enacted upon the British stage in reference to them in general, and the parties whom I shall hereafter name in particular. For in all my experience—and I have seen and heard all of any note that have appeared in any part of England during the last forty years—I never saw anything or anybody like the Dr. Marigold of the late Charles Dickens, or that

nondescript in little Buckstone's popular and withal powerful drama the "Flowers of the Forest," where Cheap John is made out to be part gipsy, part thief, part lawyer, and part idiot, and theatrically drawn in such a manner that, I am sure, "none but himself can be his parallel." Nor is his crying pal the "Kinchin" any more faithfully drawn.

Now, when I travelled, we had in the first place to be licensed as hawkers, and to get that licence we had to pay 8*l.* per year, or any portion of a year, for one horse, or 12*l.* for two horses, besides getting two vouchers from two respectable persons being householders, and the signature of the clergyman of the parish, as a guarantee that we were respectable and deserving persons to be trusted with a licence.

A man that travels as a Cheap John is thought nothing of as a master unless he has at least 100*l.* worth of goods of his own—literally his own by reason of their being bought and paid for—a good horse, and a good carriage. Besides, in getting his goods he has to send cash with order, for two or three good and sufficient reasons, one is to get the goods at the lowest possible price, no credit is given or asked for, because as a rule people that travel with Birmingham or Sheffield

goods pay ready money for everything, for the sake of the "special terms," and it saves trouble at both ends, insures promptness in executing an order, whether large or small, and both buyer and seller are equally alive to the fact that where there's no trust there's no mistrust.

And the very fact that a person holds an 8*l.* or a 12*l.* licence is a proof of his respectability and responsibility. Of course the foregoing remarks chiefly apply to the master Cheap John, and not to the men in his employ.

It is always a rule with the fraternity, whatever may be their shortcomings in selling their goods—when they are always supposed, and by common consent allowed, to "lie like truth,"—to speak the truth to each other when stating the amount of business they have done, and not if they have taken 12*l.* to say 25*l.*, for if one of them were known to tell a lie about his takings it would stick by him ever afterwards and make it very unpleasant for the party in the future. For if he happened to be relating any circumstance, whether directly or indirectly connected with his business affairs, he would be looked upon as unworthy of belief and never to be speaking truth.

In^d all my experience of travelling I don't think I ever found anything equal to the delight

of stopping or halting for a few hours at mid-day during the heat on the "*high spice toby*," as we used to call the main road, when after travelling perhaps twenty miles in the morning, the horses and the men becoming tired and worn out with the dust and the heat, then to draw off when we found a convenient place at the side of the road where there was a nice bit of grass and a running stream for the tits. And what makes it more pleasant, it is so inexpensive.

Cheap Johns as a rule do not make a practice of camping, although I frequently did—perhaps more than any other on the road at the time—for besides the enjoyment of it, it is so much less trouble than stopping at an inn by the road-side. In the summer the horses are taken out from the shafts and begin browsing and watering directly, in fact helping themselves, and are no further trouble. Then the round kettle is got out and slung from a pole placed through the spokes over the nave of the wheel, and under the bed of the carriage. The pot is soon set boiling by the aid of broken pieces of tea-chests and boxes that the goods have been received in. The gammon of bacon is put in with the hard pudding and cabbage, and in an hour or so we sit down on the grass to "a feast fit for an emperor!"

At other times we used to turn out the tits into a grass field, which we were always glad to pay for, as it was not then necessary to hobble them, or get out of bed at three or four o'clock in the morning to see that they had not strayed away, and were happy at least for the next six or seven hours. But old horses that were accustomed to this kind of travelling seldom strayed away from the *caravansaris* even if they were not fettered, which is done with a piece of rope about four feet six inches long tied round one fore-leg by the middle of the rope, and then the two ends coiled together, and at the extreme ends fastened round the other fore-leg, but always long enough between the legs to allow the horse to spread them, or he could not get his head down to the grass.

No one can imagine the luxuries of a Cheap John's life years ago that has not travelled with him, or been at the business in some way. The summer was the worst time for business, but of course the best for the pleasures of travelling. It frequently happened after or while making a halt, as above described, that a farmer, or perhaps one or two of the locality, would pay us a visit, and if they were good fellows would invite us to their houses or to the nearest inn, and have a friendly glass together; others, however, would be

what we termed "crabbed," and would come and ask, "How long we intended to remain there?" which hint we took by answering, "Oh, only while we bait the horses; we shall be away in an hour or so." But as a rule we were always welcome to stop anywhere we had selected for our "pitch." Again, some of the farmers would ask, "Are you going to stay here all night?" "Aye! we thought about it. Have you a meadow we can turn our horses in?" "Yes, you may turn them in that field over the other side. I'll charge you a shilling a head." "All right, governor—we are on! and thank you too."

In the morning after a comfortable night's rest, a good wash in the purling stream, get the tits together and harness them, and then away for the next twenty or thirty miles, as the distances from one fair to another would happen to be, as from a good rest like this men and horses would be like giants refreshed. There is really nothing to equal the cool spot, the refreshing stream, the splendid dinner—because so badly wanted, and the grateful animals made it all, that no heart could wish for more—at that moment.

But it is now high time that I began to say something about my own personal history before I get too deeply immersed in Cheap Johns and

Johnny, for, unlike Canning's "Needy Knife Grinder," *I have* a story to tell. Therefore, gentle reader—yes, I think that's the proper "booky" term. But, gentle or simple—and I may here add that many more are cut for the simples than "take"—so, reader, be you of what class you may, before I go any further, I must tell you, even at the very threshold of my life and experience as a Cheap John, before I have got over the first two or three pages I have got tired of the job. For of all the things in the world there is nothing so slow and tedious to me, who have spent my youth and early manhood as a Cheap John, as committing old memories to paper with a pen and ink, and it is only at the urgent and long-expressed wish of my old friend, well-known as the "Bookworm," that I have been induced and at last persuaded to "undergo the operation." What I have always wanted, and what I have always said, is—you make an appointment to meet me some fine afternoon in my own parlour or drawing-room; then let me have the "missus's chimney ornaments" and her sideboard "nick-nackery" on the pembroke table, and let me be mounted up on that after a good dinner and two or three glasses of '47 port, and then that two expert and double-quick-time parliamentary reporters be present while I sold to

imaginary customers all the "missus's" ornaments, for then I could rattle out the old "whids" after the old form. But no, it appears that I must write it all out in a dry matter-of-fact manner without the upturned faces, the rattle and noise of the gong, trumpet, drum, and pipes, or even the cymbals, usually to be found on the fair-ground, or not so much as the noise and hubbub of a country market-place to cheer me on.

Somehow or another I don't think they make steel pens so good as they did in days of yore, for I well remember that those I used to sell stitched on a card, and with a holder, a stick of sealing-wax, and a lead pencil, the lot for sixpence. Those 'pens—or at all events I used to say so—"You had only got to stick one of them in the holder, lay a sheet of paper and a bottle of ink on the table, and tell the pen what you wanted to say, then go on smoking your pipe, and in a few minutes the letter would be written and sealed up ready for the post." The pens I get hold of I find won't do anything of the sort. Could I have been exaggerating, I wonder? But to my task, for it appears that I am to write out the last forty years of my life on small pieces of paper, and then my friend, the editor, is to put them all in ship-shape order: I can but wish I had done

the job, as he wanted me, two or three years ago, then it would have been done. But, no matter; here goes.

Now be it known to all whom it may concern, that the author of these memoirs and sketches of the manners, customs, sayings, and doings of Cheap Johns was born *young*! of poor, but honest—and all that sort of thing—parents. My father was a butcher, my mother the daughter of a sea captain; and as they had a family of seven boys and one girl, they were kept, *in statu quo*, always poor. So as soon as the boys were able to turn out and get their own living they were only too glad to do so.

After knocking about for some time as a butcher's boy, I resolved in my own mind that if ever the chance presented itself I would start travelling in some way or another, as going to market and driving home the beasts, and at other times going long distances either on foot or on an old horse called "Daddy," belonging to my father, to fetch home his purchases from markets or fairs, had given me a disposition to roam.

When Free Mart Fair—then held at Portsmouth for fourteen days, but now abolished—came round, I never failed to go there in the evening, and there I used to stand for hours together listening to the

Cheap Jacks, as they were then as now called by the people, although the term "han' seller" is mostly used by themselves.

My father was a quiet easy-going man, and as strong and healthy as need be. My mother was hearty, and as good-looking a woman as you would wish or expect to see. Both were well favoured by Nature, but Nature in her bounty had made them opposites, as mother was very business-like and speculative, while "dad" was just the reverse, so that the family of seven boys and one girl was divided, four being in temper, disposition, business habits, &c., like one, and the other four like the other of the parents. The eldest boy was like his father; myself and two next like mother; the next like "dad," and the next like mother, and the last two like their father; and we were so constructed that we did not care much about hearing from, or seeing, our opposite brothers, and unfortunately we were not taught to do so when young, and as we grew up the same feeling prevailed in a more or less degree.

Butchers as a rule bring their boys into the business early, and my father was no exception, so that when I left school I certainly had learned to read, make figures, and scribble after a fashion; but at that time I was fond of venture, could not

bear anything like restraint, so I learnt everything that pleased me best, and after doing the usual drudgery of the calling of a butcher-boy at home I was put out to another butcher in the town, who did a much larger business than my father. There I soon became very useful in driving the cart to the neighbouring markets, or riding horseback, without a saddle, with baskets of meat, and, as before observed, going to the markets and other places to bring home the cattle, as sheep, lambs, oxen, cows, and calves. I now enjoyed more freedom than when at home; but the worst misfortune that ever happened to me in my youth, was that my father for any fault always struck me a blow on the back of my head, which so flattened the part that it knocked all the self-respect out of me, and made me careless and reckless, and first put me in mind of quitting my native place for an adventurous life, and no calling seemed to suit my young inclination like the life of a Cheap John.

Bill Hedges was the first man I ever saw in the business. He was a smart, active fellow, and at that time about thirty-five years of age; and when I used to hear him on the cart talk of Sheffield in Yorkshire, where he came from, and saw written on the sides of the carriage, "Birmingham and Sheffield Warehouse," and on the back, "York

Bazaar," it gave me a great desire to travel and see these wonderful places. Hedges had the misfortune to have a bad affliction of the face, which made him very queer to look at. He ultimately gave over the business to Mat Hunt, his head man, and became a contractor on the Great Western Railway, where I believe he made a nice little fortune.

Mat Hunt was certainly the best in the business I ever met with, both in taking large sums of money and for humour. He had a capital voice and a plentiful stock of wit, and good judgment in the use of each.

From frequently hearing these two celebrated men hold forth at Free Mart Fair, together with men in the same line but of lesser importance, I formed such an idea of the charms of the life that I determined at all risks to follow it for the future.

It was at the back end of the year that I first joined a Cheap John at Salisbury Market, and after travelling for about six weeks through Dorsetshire and Somersetshire, we returned to Salisbury to spend the Christmas of 1834.

The man I was with was connected with another person who kept a shop in the town, and dealt in marine stores as well. It used to be the fashion in

those days, and the same thing to a certain extent is carried on now by those who, in addition to travelling, keep a shop in the town they hail from, and supply country shops and hawkers with various goods. They both buy and take in exchange old metals, skins, &c. The party mentioned carried on this trade, besides having carts travelling in the Cheap John line.

When a sufficient quantity of skins had accumulated they were carted off to London, and we brought back such goods in our line that could be purchased there. And when we had a good load of metals we used to set off for Birmingham. From Salisbury we went to Devizes, from there to Swindon, Highworth, Faringdon, Lechlade, Burford, Stow-on-the-Wold, Moreton-in-the-Marsh, Stratford-on-Avon, Henley-in-Arden, and so on to Birmingham, a very nice little journey of about 110 miles. There were no railways in those days.

The first railway I ever saw was from Moreton to Stratford, sixteen miles running alongside of the high-road. I remember seeing the horses drawing the bricks used in the construction of it uphill, and when they came to an incline they were put into the trucks and so rode until they were wanted to draw up an incline again, or on a level.

It was in the way just described that I first went to Birmingham. My employer had got two loads of metal ready to be sent off, and he had his horses at a farm at Sturminster Marshall, about five miles on the Wimborne side of Blandford, perhaps altogether about twenty-six miles from Salisbury. We had at that time an old joskin of a countryman for an ostler, who made all sorts of excuses about fetching these horses up: he not caring for the job. As I was always fond of horses I volunteered to go for them. So after some talk on the subject it was arranged that I should start off at once, it then being about twelve o'clock of the day, and in the month of February. I was at the time but fifteen years old, and rather small for my age. The effect of those knocks on the back of the head my father used to be so free in giving, had not yet quite left me to give my system free scope for development.

Now I had never been to the place where the horses were turned out, nor did I know anything about the country. But in the butchering business I had often gone long journeys, both on foot and horseback, and had never made a mistake, so I treated their doubts about my finding the place and bringing the horses home safe with great contempt; and off I started, they telling me

I was to keep the Salisbury and Blandford road until I got to the seventeenth milestone, and then to strike to the left over the downs until I came to a windmill. I did so, and after walking, as I thought, some fifteen or sixteen miles, I saw a mill and made for it. It had been past daylight for some hours, but there was a splendid moon; and as I approached what I thought was a mill, I found it to be but a clump of trees, so I disconsolately drawled on about another mile and found myself on the high-road between Blandford and Wimborne, and close to a milestone. It was a very still night, and I heard the running of water at some little distance off the road. I hastened towards it, and found it was the mill I was looking for, but instead of being a wind it was a water-mill. I inquired at a house for the place I wanted to be at, and was told it was a little more than a mile from hence. I started off with better courage, and arrived at the farm just as the good man and his family were about to retire for the night, and glad enough to be at my journey's end.

I was served with a good supper, and not before I needed it; after which I was shown to a comfortable bed, where I slept soundly until seven o'clock the next morning. After breakfast the horses—one called "Old Sharper," and the other

"Young Sharper"—were got ready, and by eight o'clock I was on the road back to Salisbury. My instructions from the farmer where the horses had been kept for his nephew, my employer, were to go back through Blandford; why I did not know, but I was too fond of riding over downs, and therefore thought proper to disobey orders. And to the surprise of all parties concerned I arrived at Salisbury as the Cathedral clock chimed forth one A.M., with the horses safe and sound. I was asked by the joskin of an ostler whether I wasn't a-going to dress 'em now that I had brought them home. I answered, "No, I've rode them, Jem, and now you can dress them—that's your job."

I write of the above circumstance merely to show how handy a boy starting life early in the butchering trade may be made, inasmuch as he has to ride, and drive, and go long journeys much earlier than any other class of lads; then they are instructed early to find out everything for themselves—all the customers' residences, and other things connected with the business, without troubling any other persons in the establishment.

The difficulties of writing the circumstances attendant on the life of a Cheap Jack, or John, are very great. It's something like trying to play a drama in which there are ten or a dozen charac-

ters without the principal one, as, for example, *Hamlet* without Hamlet. The company that Cheap Jack addresses are parts in the play, and he the leading, or principal character. The whole business of the scene remains in abeyance until he has opened it; for, whenever he makes a sale, there is always a bit of chaff in connection with the transaction, as—"Sold again! and to a gentleman with a shoulder-of-mutton fist, that has never been washed since he had it"—which if the person takes in good part, it is all right; for he laughs with the rest. But if he shows that he is in the least way annoyed at it, he makes himself a butt for the others, and in which Cheap Jack is never backward in lending a helping hand to add to the party's discomfiture, as—"Hah! he! ha! ha! look there, master, there's one of your front teeth dropped out. Don't open your mouth so wide the next time you laugh, or you will lose the lot; then what will your poor old grandmother say?"

Another stereotyped joke when addressing some woman in the crowd—and in the absence of a young and pretty one to point to the oldest and ugliest—is, "Don't wink at me, my dear; I'm a married man, with only one wife. You're a sweet pretty creature, and I'm fond of sweet things; but,

lor' bless you, you would not last me a week. Look at her, my lads—there! there she is! Betsy Blush is her name. Now that's the sort of girl for you. Cheeks like roses, lips like posies—blow yer noses. Would you like to travel with me, my dear? Come with me and be my love, and we will all the pleasures prove; and you will only have three jobs to do, namely—that is to say—ride, drive, and nurse the baby."

The usual opening is to this effect: "Now then, gentlemen, if you will just roll up, bowl up, and wheel about, and coil up this way for a few minutes, I shall not detain you long. I'm your old friend Cheap John, and not one of those common hawking, walking, talking, run-about fellows, such as wild Irishmen, fiddle-legged Scotchmen, long-nosed Jews, Greeks, Turks, Italians, and so forth, that go about and up and down the country calling themselves Cheap Johns—they are mere idle impostors. I am the old original Cheap John of all. My father was a Cheap John, my mother was a Cheap John, my brothers and sisters were all Cheap Johns, so if I am not a real Cheap John I must be cross-bred. I say, sold again, to a gentleman with a thousand a-year, and a bushel of spick-span new half-crowns every Monday morning.

"Look at old George down there. There he is! Look at him! He stands like one o'clock half-struck. What a rare nose he has got for the button of a closet-door; if I had him at Birmingham I could make a lot of money by letting him out, his face being such a capital model for cast-iron knockers.

"There's a cove standing there that looks as if he was built by subscription, run up by contract, and badly finished; three-quarters out of an upright. If rags were trumps he would be all fours. There are no rag-shops where he comes from, for they wear them all. Ah! ah! you half-starved, hungry, ugly-looking covey, why, if they had you in the country where I came from they'd boil you down for the pigs. I have seen many a better fellow than you served so.

"If any of you people buy any article of me, and do not approve of it to-morrow, bring it back, and I shan't be here, for I am going to swing on a gate all day and eat fat bacon."

"If you please, master, will you change this article I bought of you last night?"

"Change it? not I; I have had it long enough. You keep it a little while now, and see how you like it.

"I have double and single guns, double and

single-reined bridles, saddles, whips, girths, and spurs ; I have hand-saws, panel-saws, tenon, meat and butchers' saws, stocks and bits, chisels and gouges, tea and table spoons, knives and forks, both table and dessert, rules and tools for wise men and fools, the iron works of a fiddle, and various other articles too numerous to mention. Now, the first article I have for your inspection is a well-made hand-saw.

"What do you say, old Nosey ?—how much do I want for this saw ?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's just the price."

"But how much ?"

"Well, you know ; give me what you like for it."

"But how much do you ask ?"

"Well, I tell you I shall not take less."

"I'll take it at your price."

"I should like to be worth half what you would take, if you could only get the chance."

"Bravo ! Bravissimo ! Multum in parvo ! Quantum sufficio ! Fol the riddle, the rol, the ri do ! Non quiero dando non de grubbo ! The last phrase is Latin for 'The devil said to Jerry Boam, Hand me over my slippers.'

"I can speak all languages, as Dutch, Hebrew, Coptic, Greek, and Latin, Double Dutch and

German, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, and all the Oriental languages that have been translated by Dr. Adam Clarke. For I took up my degrees—by degrees—at all the principal universities in the kingdom, as Oxford, Cambridge, Barnwell, Eton, and other places. I was educated for a *crocus*—that, you must understand, is a quack doctor—but the smell of the physic and pills, with the lotions, potions, and motions, didn't agree with me; so they sent me to Sheffield and made a Cheap John of me. Talk about scholarship, I learnt all my geography from a book called 'Reading made Easy,' on one fine afternoon before breakfast.

"Now, then, gather round me for bargains; look sharp, and take no notice. Let your eyes be your judge, your pockets your guide, and your ready money the last thing you part with unless you can see good value for it: and I mean to say, when you see me standing up here, bawling in sweet accents like a young sucking-dove on the tip of a young lady's finger, and offering goods at these prices, you get good value. But—

"'Tis not in mortals to command success;
But we'll do more—we'll deserve it.
It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well."

The "whids," as the words or set phrases used by Cheap Johns in disposing of their articles are

called, are very much alike, as one copies from another. I will here give a further variety of them as they now occur to my mind. As a matter of course they lose some of their "sharp edge" by the process of committing them to paper; many little circumstances occur when they (the whids) are being "cracked," which are lost to a reader, and ideas and language keep cropping up, that a person sitting down to write them cannot possibly think of, the very look at times of the buyer would cause a remark that would be very appropriate with or to the person at the time; but the saying would most likely go for nothing in another without the attendant circumstances.

Sometimes, in offering goods when trade is dull, it requires more tact and judgment in coming down to the price than it does when every second person in the company are buyers, and the seller has by word and action to keep the attention of his company fixed, or at the least that portion of them that look like buyers. And it used to be a common saying, "Why, you are like the Welshmen; they take the money out of their pocket twice to look at it, and then put it back again."

But I will now attempt to give the "whids" as pure and unadulterated as I possibly can under the unfavourable circumstances.

"Here I am again, gentlemen! Here I am again, ladies, friends, Romans and fellow-countrymen. Here I am again, I say, after travelling through England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, through Russia, Prussia, France, Spain, Portugal, the North and South of America, and the West Indies! I have arrived among you once more, just to open your eyes, enlighten your minds, and fill your boots with wonder, just to show and to tell you and let you know the imposition that is practised in my absence in the hardware and ironmongery trade, and to inform you that you will never more have the opportunity of buying goods at the low, scandalous, and reduced prices you have at the present time—*Right-tu-ral—right-tu-ral-ly-da.*

"Now, my friends, there's only one man that could ever make these goods, and he's gone dead—dead as a coffin nail—and swears he'll never make any more at the price, so now's yer time.

"Now I have here a set of electro double-silver-plated coffee and tea service. There's coffee-pot, tea-pot, sugar-basin, and cream-jug; they are electro-plated on nickel silver. They were bred, born, and reared in the town of Sheffield. The manufacturer of these articles is the owner of a

large—very large—silver mine in the Staffordshire collieries ; so it matters not to him whether the workmen in plating these goods put on half a pound of pure silver, or half a stone, all's the same to him ; his great desire is to wire in and get his name up, that he may hand it *up* and down to posterity as the best maker of silver wares of his day. His name is marked in large legible roman capitals on the bottom of each article, so that when these goods are bought by any respectable person they will be handed down as a hair-broom—no—heirloom I mean, in the family, and landed down from mother to daughter, and father to son, through a dozen generations, past, present, and to come.

“The sugar-basin and cream-ewer are lined, as you see, with gold—gold melted down from old spade-ace guineas to insure their being the pure stuff. I have asked fifty guineas for a set of goods like these many and many a time.

“What do you say, old Bacon-face, that I never got it ?

“Well, who said I did ? I never said so. I'd scorn the action. Now there never were but two sets equal to these ever made ; the other set I sold to the Pacha of Egypt at Grand Cairo, only last Wednesday week. He would have bought this

set of me, but he had no more cash, ready rhinoceros de rol de ri do. So he offered me an elephant and a Turkish shawl in exchange; but we could not deal, as the elephant had only one tusk, and the shawl had been worn, and I don't deal in second-hand goods. Not I.

"Now if any of you ladies buy this lot and make them a present to your daughter, she will have twenty sweethearts offering her marriage before she is twelve hours older; for they will argue to themselves—the parents must be immensely rich or they could not afford to make their daughter such a present as that.

"It is the only lot I have so valuable in the cart, and if you won't give me fifty guineas, why, I'll throw it away—yes, if you won't give me fifty guineas I'll throw the lot away—for as many shillings; who says fifty shillings? No one give fifty shillings? Then I'll say, just to tempt you, here, take the lot for two pound ten! No one at two pound ten or fifty shillings; then I'll say forty. Here, blow me, I'll do such a thing I never did before, I'll say thirty—yes, thirty shillings buys the lot, and I'll have no more nor take no less. Why, if my friend the Pacha of Egypt knew I sold these at the price he'd go stark staring mad, and tear all the hair off his

old bald head. Sold again! And this time to a gentleman with two odd legs. If he was walking in Manchester, one of his legs would be in Deansgate and the other going down Shude Hill."

Any one used to a Cheap John life could tell what part of the country they were in without actually knowing the place, and that is by the style of cash taken. For instance, if he was in or near London, or any other very large town, the principal money taken would be sixpences, with but few shillings, whereas in a farming country at a fair the cash would be larger coin and cleaner. It would take longer time to count the takings, perhaps only amounting to 7*l.* or 8*l.* in the first instance, than it would take to count 30*l.* or 40*l.* of the latter. This may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true. As I have remarked, the principal articles selling in or near a big city are "sixpennies," such as pocket-knives, spoons, &c., small articles that can be conveniently carried. But at country fairs everything sells—bridles, saddles, whips, guns, padlocks, saws, &c. &c., all goods of amounts varying from one shilling to three pounds and upwards. Not so the other, as before observed, but mostly sixpences, and seldom more than a shilling or two. I have

experienced Bartholomew and Camberwell fairs in their palmy days, and if the takings amounted to 12*l.* in the day, 11*l.* odd would be in sixpences.

Some cheap Johns were very different to others as regards good money-takers, inasmuch as one man would be up his time, usually one hour and a-half for 2*l.*, while another would take 5*l.* in the same time, the difference being that one man would work sixpenny lots, the other shilling and half-crown lots; then there were others who would work in a good place upon still larger amounts. I have known Mat Hunt take 30*l.* in two hours at Colchester Market by offering guns, bridles, watches, table cutlery, &c.

Then there were others good at opposition. Mat Hunt was the best out as a money-taker, but bad at opposition; Aaron Jessell, Friday, Mike Fagan, and Chris. Newman, good at both; while Fred. Jolly and others, slow at either; but although slow, tolerably sure, in smooth water. Then there were others who, although they learned certain "whids," *i.e.* set speeches, did not know how to use them to advantage, but uttered them parrot-like.

And it is curious and noteworthy, now that I come to quietly think over the matter, that in two men, with the same goods to dispose of, with

the same "whids" and the same surroundings, then I say—

"Tis strange so much difference should be
"Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee."

No doubt the public often think that when they hear two Cheap Johns chaffing each other they are only doing it for the sake of business; but that is at times a mistake, as I have known two men so opposed as to carry on their spleen until one or both have been ruined. I have known men literally give their goods away, or throw them at each other, which is termed "dolloping." Mo Jacobs was celebrated for this species of folly. Once at Sheffield fair he had a row with an Irishman in the business—whose name has now escaped me—which ended in a fight. Mo handed his purse to a by-stander, who sloped with the lot; and when Mo was made conscious of the fact he made a terrible lamentation, and declared he would never eat another bit of "cozza," *i.e.* pork, as long as he lived, and I believe kept his word; for he always attributed his bad luck on that occasion to his having partaken of the "unclean animal" the day before.

The profits arising from ordinary Cheap John business were never less than twenty and never more than forty per cent., but generally averaged

about thirty, a little extra profit being now and then made by persons "snapping" before we got down to the lowest price we meant to take, which is always announced by the stereotyped phrase of "I'll take no more nor I'll take no less, sell it or never sell it—buy it who will." Wherever it did happen that we got more for any article than we meant to take for a lot or two, it always caused a good deal of fun and chaff. Then we said :

"As to the last lot I sold, although they were very good, but if the party had seen this lot he never would have bought the others, as these are larger, stronger, and better made, and a deal more solid silver about them than the last. However, I shall not make fish of one and fowl of another. You shall have this lot at the same price—half-a-crown. Sold again ! Here, stop ; there is just one more left, I do really think. Yes, one more, etc., etc.

"I know how it will be when I am gone. You'll sit at home fretting, stewing, and crying, and saying: 'Oh dear me ! oh, lawks-a-daisy ! how sorry I am. What a pity. Oh dear, dear me, why didn't I buy the goods when I had the chance ?'"

It was good fun sometimes, when trade was brisk, to sell the same lot to half-a-dozen people, and take their money, for when we suddenly came to the lowest price, there were generally several hands

held up for the articles; so, after taking their money and having a bit of chaff over, it ended in serving them with a lot each, with, "Here, let's see; you spoke first, didn't you, sir? Yes. Ah! but you (*to another*) gave me the money first—sold again! and got the money."

Again, on taking a half-crown from a customer, and who from the article he had purchased would require some change out, we used to say, "Sold again! and the gentleman has given me a Yorkshire shilling. Yes, there are nothing but shillings in the part I come from. But never mind, as I am Yorkshire too, I shall give you eighteenpence back for luck; and as to-day is my birthday, I shall present all you people that give me a Yorkshire shilling for any of my ordinary shilling articles, with the sum of eighteenpence to spend in drinking my jolly good health, and wishing me very many happy returns of the day, and to-morrow, and the day after that."

To continue my own life and personal experience, I have to inform my readers that after travelling with various parties as a help, or journeyman Cheap John, for about three years, I started on my own account at Birmingham by buying a few goods and standing in Birmingham fair selling from off a pot-crate, under the walls of old St.

Martin's Church, in the Bull-ring. And let me here observe that people need not be surprised at a Cheap John selling Birmingham goods in the town, as the trade is so varied, that although you offer the very goods that are manufactured in the town, yet amongst a company of two or three hundred you would not have a dozen that knew where to buy them, most of the large manufacturers carrying on their business in a very quiet manner, and many in very obscure parts, and dealing mostly wholesale.

I worked in this manner for some time, in and about Birmingham, but being wanted at home on some family matters, I walked all the way to Portsea on that business, and afterwards accepted an engagement from John Lally, with whom I stayed for a month or two, then started off to London with 3*l*. in my pocket, and began business again in earnest, and never sold as a help afterwards.

The first place I went to was Woolwich, where I sold out all my stock, boxes and all, but it being late at night I could not get in at my lodgings. There happened to be a wild-beast show in the town, belonging to a man named Pierce, *alias* Glo'ster Bill, whom I knew from having previously met him on several occasions; to him I told my

trouble of being locked out, when he generously offered me the use of one of his empty carriages behind a pair of laughing hyenas, which I accepted ; and in the morning, when I told my landlord where I had slept, he observed : " Yes, I suppose so ; we have got a good many laughing hyenas in Woolwich just now, but they have but two legs." But such not being the case, I would not own the soft impeachment.

After being in and about London for a month or so, I raised money enough to buy a pony and cart of a costermonger ; but as the cart and harness were in very bad order, as I earned money so I laid it out in repairs, until at last I made it a very decent turn-out, leastways I at the time thought so, and was not a little proud of it. But one day, after working at a fair in Essex, I was journeying to London to buy stock, when I met Mat Hunt on the road walking, as his own cart was very heavily loaded. He had sent his man on with it, so he rode with me, and on coming to a steep hill I jumped down to ease my horse a bit, and said to Mat, " Here, take the reins." Mat replied : " No, I am blessed if I do, for if any of the farmers round about here should happen to pass, they will think it's my concern." Mat was not ashamed to ride, but ashamed to be thought

to be the owner of a little turn-out like mine. "Time tries all." For a few years afterwards—but no matter.

I used to go out with a lot of goods on the Wednesday to Romford Market, on Thursday to Bishop Stortford, Friday to Chelmsford, Saturday to Colchester, Monday to Hadleigh, Wednesday to Bury St. Edmunds, Thursday to Diss, and on the Saturday to Norwich, that is, on the market-days as they fell to each of the above places. I used to do the whole work myself, as I could not carry a "help," as that would have increased the load of my tit too much. After having this little turn-out for about eighteen months I bought a big covered cart and a good strong horse. AND I WAS LANDED!

The best fairs are those held in the autumn, as Peterborough, Canterbury, Maidstone, Maldon, Colchester, &c. Maidstone October fair used to be worth about 40*l.* the first day, and on one Saturday at Canterbury I took 27*l.* at one "pitch"—*i.e.*, without getting down. There was an old fellow used to reside at Canterbury that had been in the business in his early days. He lived just through the arch at the end of the High Street, near the Sir John Falstaff Inn, and who in size, voice, and style was not unlike a miniature edition

of Falstaff, only he was of a very sallow complexion, which would not be at all like the ruddy gruff Sir John.

This man used to stand in Canterbury and the markets round about the neighbourhood with goods; he likewise had a shop in the town, and when any fresh Cheap Johns visited Canterbury it was this old fellow's dodge to get them to go away as quick as possible, by telling them what capital places there were within a few miles, and used to stand plenty of drink to make them believe he was a capital fellow. However, they invariably found out his deceit, and would work back to Canterbury after a time, and stay there while they could take a shilling in the place, then chaff the old fellow until they almost drove him mad. He was a very crabby old customer, full of envy and jealousy, and had not been out of the county for years. His usual advice was, "There, I'll bet you five pounds if you go and open at Faversham on Saturday, you will take a score of pounds just as easy as you can kiss your hand," he well knowing at the same time that there was no place at Faversham where Cheap Johns could sell in the market.

In giving my recollections and short biographical notices of the persons I have met with during

my career as a Cheap John, I find I shall not be able to keep them in strict chronological order, some of the events occurring at the beginning, some in the middle, and some towards the close of my own life and in the travelling lives of the persons mentioned. Therefore, as a rule, I propose disposing of each one as far as I have been concerned with him, after beginning anything about him, my own travelling life being about thirteen years; but I have in many cases kept up the former acquaintanceship either in the way of friendship or business with some of the parties for many years after I became a shopkeeper, as some of the dates to the tales or anecdotes will show.

The first one of my many old acquaintances who, as it were, crops up, is—

Tom Hayden, a fine young fellow about twenty-three years of age, five feet five inches in height, and of rather stout build. When I first met him, in 1836, he was managing a cart for Bill Hedges at Mont Fair. At Mornhill they agreed to differ and parted, Tom going to manage a concern for Harry White of Salisbury. Tom was a very good salesman, but very like a jibbery horse,* for if he could not do and have his own way, and that all at once, he would not work at

all. I was with this man two or three times when I first started, and I'll just give here one example of the kind of person he was. We were at Alcester market one Tuesday in the summer, and it was a very fine hot day—a regular “scorcher!” Tom could do no business; he tried hard and his best for a little time, when he in a pet suddenly determined to shut up and to travel all night to Chipping Norton for Wednesday's market. We did so, and when we got there I opened the goods and got all ready for work; but as Tommy did not put in an appearance, I went to seek for him, and at length found him at a public-house getting drunk as fast as he could. I, being tired, sat down to rest myself, and very soon afterwards Tom dropped off to sleep. I soon followed suit, and when I awoke the market was over, so that we did no business after travelling all night to get to this place. Tommy had grabbed at the shadow and lost the substance, for, as we afterwards heard, Alcester market turned out very well for all parties and in all lines of business that did stop.

Tom was always on the very best terms with himself, and when he was asked to sing in company used to give “Will Watch, the bold Smug-gler.” The last I heard of him, some ten years

ago, was that he was keeping an hotel in the Isle of Wight.

Mat Hunt travelling late one night from Colchester to Chelmsford, and coming to a very lonely and dark part of the road, was accosted by two rough and suspicious-looking men who carried a short heavy stick each, with—"Can you tell us what's the time, master?" Mat was alone and had a large sum of money with him, the result of a week's work at Colchester market, besides between 20*l.* and 30*l.* that had been accumulating from one or two little side jobs on the way. Mat Hunt was by no means a timid man, give him plenty of elbow-room and daylight; he was a match for any two ordinary men under ordinary circumstances. But he well knew that these two roughs who had stopped him meant mischief, and that he could not stand any chance with them, they being well armed with heavy and, for their purpose, useful sticks; and as they had everything to gain and he everything to lose, it was necessary to use a little judgment, and instead of attempting to fight them it would be far better to "fight cocum." And Mat was equal to the occasion, for having on him a "duck," *i.e.* an old English watch movement in new German silver cases, altogether being worth in the way of trade about eight shillings; so in

reply to the question of "Can you tell us what's the time, master?" Mat handed his "duck" of a watch over to one of the men and said, "Here, have a look for yourself, my lad, for it's so dark I can't see the time." The man took the watch and they both hurried off together, and Mat was well-pleased to be rid of them at the price. I have heard him many a time declare that he would have given a "tenner" at the moment to have been out of it, for if they had begun to perform on him, as he had no weapon of any description to defend himself with, the two roughs must have succeeded had they tried it on. So he escaped the loss of a good stake of money and a good beating into the bargain by his coolness and ready wit in handing over what appeared to the roughs a fine old English and valuable watch, but what in reality was an almost worthless *duck*! But watches, you know, were made to go.

At a time when Mat Hunt was at a low ebb—he having drunk to an excess and neglected his business—he kept a small hardware shop at Chelmsford in Essex. Mat wished to see his old employer, Bill Hedges, to get some monetary assistance from him, and for that purpose invited Bill and his missus down to Chelmsford to spend Sunday and talk about old times. And as the

two women were like sisters, Mrs. Hedges soon persuaded Bill to accept of the invitation. They had all spent a very agreeable day, and when the time for the departure of his visitors was drawing nigh, Mat thought it would be a good opportunity to introduce the subject of borrowing some ready money, particularly as Bill, who had been imbibing rather freely, was mellow and good tempered. So Mat began to open the business thus: "I know I have been a great fool to do as I have done."

BILL: "Yes, you have, Mat, and I am glad to hear you acknowledge it."

MAT: "But I don't intend to be such a fool any more, Bill."

BILL: "I hope not, Mat."

MAT: "You see, Bill, I've got some stuff left, but it wants sorting up with some fresh goods, and then I could go to work and do very well."

BILL: "I daresay you could, Mat, if you kept steady; and as you say you have seen your folly, why, it's time you altered for the better."

MAT: "Yes, and I mean to and no mistake this time. Now if I had any friend that would lend me a score or a fifty, it would be the means of my getting myself in my old position again."

BILL: "Shouldn't wonder, Mat, but what it would."

MAT: "Now, if you would do it, Bill, and you might without hurting yourself——"

BILL: "Ah! but I shan't, Mat. You have spent your own money, but I'll take —— good care you don't spend any of mine. I thought how it would be; and I've just *felt* what was coming. Come along, Poll; let's be off."

And so the two old pals parted.

"If you would know the value of a ducat try to borrow one," says the old proverb.

Mat Hunt and Ned Abrahams, two old rivals, met at Battle Fair in Sussex, and as soon as business began they commenced their old opposition, which they were both good at. It was about six of one to half a dozen of the other, with Mat Hunt for choice. I had drawn up alongside of them, but as I could see that they were likely to be at their old badgering and chaffing game I moved a little further off, then returned to see the opening of the wordy war. Mat Hunt opened with, "Take care of the Jew pork butcher, he's had the best part of a leg of pork for his dinner to-day; he calls it veal with the crackling on it. Twig his nose; wouldn't it make a good parish pickaxe? Mind he don't take you in with his

blacklead pencils made of the best real coal-dust. Oh, I had a piece of pork, and I stuck it on a fork, and I gave it to Jew-boy-Jew," &c.

Abrahams replied, " Oh, I had a bit of beef, and I stuck it on a leaf, and I gave it to a Christian thief. Look at the man! hear him; why, he's all jaw like a sheep's head. He was drummed out of the regiment he was in for eating his comrades' knapsacks"—with a variety of other epithets and expletives by far too numerous to mention.

But Mat got the people with him; and while all the chaff was going on he offered a gun for sale, and at the same time kept firing a small charge of powder out of it, pointed well up in the air, and afterwards laid it aside to show and expatiate on the merits of some other article of commerce. Presently a countryman made up his mind to buy the gun at the price it had been offered at; and after paying for it put a cap on the nipple, and, by way of joke, pointed it at the Jew, and, not knowing it was loaded, pulled the trigger, and it went off bang! to the great consternation of both. The Jew thought he was killed, and screeched out so lustily that the countryman was alarmed, and could not speak for fright; but the Jew kept up such a bawling about his being shot, and that he should die, and oh! and oh! 'd so long, and so loud, and

withal so grievously, that the people laughed at it all as being a good joke. Certainly Ned Abrahams was much more frightened than hurt, and having made such a spluttering noise about it, the laugh was dead against him, and so high did the chaff and jeering of the people become, that he was obliged to leave off selling for the remaining portion of the evening, while Mat Hunt, who was a great favourite in the district, did a good night's work, for Mat could fight, Mat could sing, and Mat was up to everything—from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter, and knew the price of old rags, and everything else, from a needle to an anchor, and this the burthen of his song for ever used to be: "I care for nobody, no, not I; if no one cares for me." Oh! Mat was a merry man:

"A merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal."

John Stokes, *alias* Fat Jack, was a man that always believed in himself. He was brimful of "wise saws and modern instances," yet scarcely any man that ever lived committed such mistakes and absurdities, so that his whole life was embittered by his folly; for, after making two or three little fortunes of say five thousand pounds each, he left off at

just about the place he first began life. My first meeting with him was at Birmingham, about the year 1835, when he had a two hundred pound stock, a good van and horse. He had at that time not been his own master above eighteen months. He told me that he had taken one hundred pounds a week in the Mile End Road, London, but withal he made one of his own favourite sayings, that is, "Live hard, die hard," come too true to himself, when he always intended it to apply to others. Nevertheless, "Fat Jack" was an out-and-out good salesman, and this is an example of his style :

"Here I have a well-made stock and twenty-four straw-coloured bits: the stock is made of ebony, brass-plated, and beautifully finished; the bits are cast-steel, and every one made to bore a hole where there never was one before. In fact, you could not buy a better lot at any price; it took a man and a boy three weeks to make 'them, and they work nine days a week for nothing and find their own stuff, and glad to get a job. In the usual way of trade the bits are sold at a shilling each, that's twenty-four shillings the lot, and the stock is given in the bargain. Now I'll not say twenty-four, nor twelve, but I'll take half-a-sovereign for the lot. Well, then, say a dollar. No ?

Here, blow old Roper ! say half-a-crown ; I'll have no more, nor I'll take no less. Sold again ! and to a gentleman with a good set of teeth and nothing to eat, large pockets and no money in them ; he lives upstairs and pays no rent. This is the old original and cheap Birmingham, Sheffield, and London warehouse, equalled by few, surpassed by none. Now, then—

“ ‘ On, Stanley ! on !’

Were the last words of Marmion.
Now, had I been in Stanley's place,
And he had urged me on the chase,
A thing I can descry
Would bring a tear in many an eye.

“ What's that, Old Bacon-face, eh ? Do you give it up ? Why, an *on-i-on* to be sure, you fool-and-a-half. Sold again ! You put an *i* in the place of the Stanley, and see what more you can make of it.

“ The next article I have for your inspection is a single-barrelled gun, with a patent breech percussion back-action lock, walnut-tree stock, and screw-twist barrel ; very useful to any of you farmers to shoot over your twelve-acre fields with, up one side, down the other, and round the corners. Here, just you hear what the *Bell's Life* newspaper says in its poet's corner about these guns—

“ The merits of my guns, say I, 'tis needless to descant on ;
Woe to the feathered tribes wot fly—Beware of Joseph
Manton.

"Now this is a regular 'Joseph Manton,' and the price is sixty guineas. What do you think I was offered for this gun yesterday?"

"Oh, perhaps a five-pound note."

"That's where you are wrong, old Johnny Whipstraw. I wasn't offered anything for it, for no one asked the price of it. But the price to-day, as I said before, is sixty guineas. But, however, as there are no guineas now, I'll knock off the pounds and say sixty shillings; and if that won't do I'll say fifty, forty—here, I'll take thirty shillings; I'll have no more, nor never take less, buy it who will. Sold again! to a gentleman with plenty of money, and knows how to lay it out.

"Now, you talk about your talk-about, and stuff and things, but just you look here. Here I have a two-foot Turkey-box brass slide rule. It measures two feet up one side and twenty-four inches up the other, and three feet up the middle—when the slide is drawn. It has a large brass circular joint, and is marked inches and half inches, seven-eighths, six-eighths, five-eighths, quarter-eighths, three-eighths, and sixteenths. Now, in Cambridge town, in Cambridgeshire, they sell butter by the yard. You have it a yard square and a foot thick for one shilling! but you must be furnished with your own rule to measure it by, or else

they will not serve you. That's the way I used to buy it myself when I was at Trin. Col., Cam. Hem! Now, then, half-a-crown, two shillings, one-and-sixpence; here, take it for one shilling. I'll have no more, 'nor never take less. Sold again! to a barn-door savage. Look at him. What a capital face he's got to frighten little children to bed without their suppers!

"The next lot I have to show you is a well-made pocket-knife—a knife, here, with a point like a needle, an edge like a razor, and polished like a two-guinea looking-glass, round joint, square spring, and cast-steel blade. It would frighten a hog, stick a dog, or bleed a cabbage; stab either horse, dog, hog, or devil; kill a cow or mend a plough; nip through the shin-bone of an ox, or the axletree of a coach-wheel; cut nine to ten pounds of meat off a bare bone. And to go with it I have here a pair of Salisbury jockey-trimming shears—a pair fit for a miner, nailer, tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, housewife, or midwife, a ribbon-spinner or bobbin-tosser. They would go through a sheet of copper a yard square and a foot thick, and never injure the edges of them. These scissor-blades are like two lawyers, or a man and his wife, they won't hurt each other, but will cut everybody and everything that comes between them. And

here are a pair of well-made and highly-polished concave razors—a pair here that is hollow ground and highly polished, ground on a four-inch stone, with the maker's name upon the blade, and warranted to shave well. Now, razors are like women, you cannot tell the temper till you try them. When I travelled in Yorkshire I had a partner. He went into the county of Cumberland and got a wife; I went into the county of Staffordshire and got a wife. My partner's wife turned out to be as great a vixen as ever was seen, and I can assure you that my wife was as nice a woman as ever a man need be tacked to. So, you see, razors and women are alike, you cannot tell the temper until you try 'em.

“Now, many of you people that stand gazing here, and looking at *nothing*, might think because I came here offering goods cheap that they are not honestly come by. But I can assure you that I honestly and honourably bought them all, but I never intend to pay for them, and even if I stole them they would not smell or wear any the worse. Honesty is all my eye; your policy is to buy when, how, and as cheap as you can.

“Now, here, I say here, the next lot is a pair of scratchers or curry-combs. Now, these are the sort of things to keep a man warm in the winter without

the aid of a fire or the use of a great-coat. When you rise in the morning, if you were to scratch yourself up one side and down the other with these articles you may depend upon it you would be warm enough for the whole of the day, to-morrow, or yesterday, or next week, or last week, it would make no difference. Now, if the great, glorious, and humane Duke of Argyll had distributed a lot of these combs throughout Scotland there would have been no occasion or necessity for him to have erected itching-posts at every other corner. Now, I only ask five shillings for this pair of aggravators, and if that won't do I'll say four, three, two, one; yes, one shilling buys the pair. Here, as times are bad, and poverty is no man's sin—and I am myself a poor man with only one wife, though I knew a man down Sheffield way as had eight wives, one for each day in the week and two for Sundays, to comb out his hair, with a pair just like these—here, here, take the two for sixpence, but do not tell anybody that I did such a thing. Yes, sixpence buys the lot. Sold again, to a gentleman with his shirt outside his—you know what I mean without my mentioning them. Oh, I beg the gentleman's pardon; I see it's his white smock-frock. 'For it's my delight on a shiny night, in the season's time of year.' As me and my

pal Hal, my boys, was catching of a hare, a game-keeper came up to us, and I said :

“Now, look here, look here, and look sharp, for here I have for your inspection and examination a half-dozen of bang-up locks. These locks, you see, have the keyhole covered with a spring to keep out the wet and dirt, and likewise to preserve the interior works. But you must be very careful how you put the key in the lock, or the spring will send it back with such force as to do you some injury. Now, I sold half-a-dozen of these locks a short time ago to a farmer who on going home, the night being dark, was stopped by four foot-pads who demanded his money or his life. The farmer had one of these locks ready, and said, ‘If you offer to molest me I’ll shoot you,’ and let the key out of the lock with such force that they were frightened and ran away. Three of them jumped over a hedge, and ran down a coalpit and broke their necks, the other one ran into a dry fish-pond and was drowned. So there were four rogues less in the world, and the farmer escaped scot-free, and all through buying half-a-dozen of the patent safety spring padlocks. Here, half-a-crown each, but, &c. &c. &c., a shilling buys the lot. Sold again !

“Here’s a handsome watch, will keep time with

any watch or clock in the kingdom, in fact it will go half-an-hour in twenty minutes.

"The next article I have for your examination is a pocket-knife, with twelve blades and instruments—a knife that for superior workmanship cannot be equalled. The man that made it was bred, born, and reared in the manufacturing town of Sheffield. He served seven years' legal apprenticeship, worked fourteen years as a journeyman, and one-and-twenty years as a master before he was competent to make a knife like this. Now, the first blade is ground and brought to so fine an edge that it would shave a man—if it was only sharp enough. The next blade is for ripping seams, mending pens, or cutting corns; and then here's another blade that is very useful; if any of you have a wife that is troubled with the dropsy, all you have to do is to buy this knife, and with this blade tap her a little below the belt and let the water out fountaineously, and if that does not cure her, nothing will. And then here is a small saw that is made to cut through anything. Now, if any of you people wish to open a bank, all you have to do is to buy this knife, and with the saw you may cut all the bolts, bars, and locks that fasten the bank doors and shutters, and so walk in at your leisure and help yourself. Then there

are two other blades for ordinary purposes. On the back side of the knife you will find, in the first place, a corkscrew, a very handy article: if you should happen to be out with a friend you can say, 'Now you find a bottle of wine and I will find a corkscrew.' There's many a man lost a good glass of wine in his time through not having a corkscrew by him. It often happens that one's friends, when you visit them, ask you very politely if you will take a glass of wine or spirits, when, just as you have said Yes, they accidentally find for the purpose that they have lost the corkscrew, or that the missus has gone out and took it in her pocket: but when it's known that you always carry a corkscrew about you like this, it's then about ten to one but what the wine or the spirits will have gone out too. And look here, here's a punch for making holes in leather, a screwdriver, a gimlet, a toothpick, and a horsepick—in fact, this knife should be called *multum in parvo*, and the price ought to be a guinea; but I'll not say a guinea, nor half-a-crown, two shillings, one shilling and sixpence, say fifteen, fourteen, thirteen—come, I'll take a shilling for the knife. I know a man in York who would give a crown to be able to have a look at it; true, he's a blind fellow who goes about playing the fiddle. Sold again!

"Now, the reason I can sell writing paper so cheap is, I buy it of a man with a large family, and he gives them nothing to eat but white rags!

"Here I have forty sheets of the best Bath post writing paper, as white as milk, as soft as silk, as thick as a butcher's block, and as strong as parchment; a stick of sealing-wax less than a pound weight, and twelve flexible steel pens with a holder. Now, if you wish to write a letter to a friend, all you have to do is to smoke your pipe and think what you are going to say, and the pens will do it all themselves, and the lot for 5s., 4s., 3s., 2s. 6d., 2s., eighteenpence, say fifteen, fourteen, thirteen—a shilling buys the whole lot. Why, there's enough to set up a small stationer's shop. Sold again!

"Now, if I have any of your impudence, old Leatherlegs, off comes your head and a large piece of your neck.

"Here are twelve gimlets that will make holes where there never was any before: they have box heads and steel points, so that they will never bend or break, or even wear out by any fair means. They will last for ever. After that you can get all the money back again by selling them for old iron at the rag and bone shop. Sold again!

"I've never been able to write a word since the Government granted me an annuity in the three-penny-halfpenny Reduced Councils! I have been a *pen-shunner* ever since. Sold again!

"Here's a pair of very handsome cut flint glass salt-cellar. They are made underground, and are cut with and by the light of diamonds. The men that make them work in the dark, and they only come to the surface of the earth once a week, and then only just to see what o'clock it is, and then they go back again directly. Now articles like these are usually sold at two guineas a pair, but I'll not charge two guineas, nor two shillings for them, take 'em for eighteenpence, fifteen, fourteen, thirteen—come, I'll take a shilling for that handsome pair of salts; I'll have no more, nor take no less, buy 'em who will. Sold again! Everybody buys them, and them as do not can if they like. I am sure you will not allow me to stand here barking like a dog in a tanyard, over goods like these at the price; the price is right, and the quality is good: everybody knows it, and them as don't ought to. Sold again to Betsy Blush with a diamond back, a balloon bonnet, and a strike-me-head-over-tip shawl. The cheapest goods in all England—everybody says so."

"I say, Muster Cheap Jack, you ain't got such

a thing as one of them same currycombs I bought off on you yesterday, have ye?"

"Well, old Bacon-face, shall I tell you what I'm going to say? I do not positively know, but as near as I can guess, I cannot tell, though I firmly believe that there is just one left—yes, just one left, and such a beauty!"

"I say, muster, have you ever such a thing as a pair of snuffers by you?"

"No, Tommy, I ain't, but I'll soon make you a pair. Here, Tommy, just you take a pinch of snuff out of this box. It's Grimstone's eye snuff, and will make you wide-awake, if you don't go to sleep. Now, as you've taken a pinch of snuff, and I've taken a pinch, why, we are a pair of snuffers. Ha! ha! mind how you take 'em home, Tommy.

"Now if any of you people can show me the man that struck Buckly! I can tell you that he fell notwithstanding, and not with standing he fell. When last seen he was dressed in a sky-green hat, yellow waistcoat, blue trousers and boots of the gridiron pattern, with a frying-pan round his neck for an eyeglass; his age is about one pound six and eightpence. There he goes—there he goes—that's him! Sold again, and——

"The next article I have to show you is an

elastic belt, well made, and to buckle round your loins to keep you upright and perpendicular in your old age, and prevent your nose from touching your toes. They are silver-plated buckles, and the straps are of the best calf leather. Now a belt like this is a great saving to a man, inasmuch as he can save many a meal by wearing it; all you have to do if you want to save a meal is to buckle in a hole or two tighter, and you will feel as if you have had a tightener and will not miss your dinner for that day. On the morrow do the same, and keep on doing it as long as you please. Sold again, to a newly-married man.

"Now, then, here's a first-rate driving whip, all catgut and whalebone (*snapping it several times*). Come up, I say, do you think I stole ye? I bought you last night, paid for you this morning, and got the money in my pocket now. Four years old and sound, quiet to ride and drive, worth a guinea to work and a pound to kill. With this whip you could cut a fly's eye out. (*To one of the company*): Just allow me to take that fly off your nose, sir. Sold again, to young Killcalf, the butcher. I say, sold again, from the Birmingham and Sheffield warehouse."

Jack Stokes was a great and general favourite in most of the towns and districts he took. His

jolly-looking face and person always made him a welcome guest wherever he went; and I should say that no man ever made such a host of friends as he did while travelling, and certainly no man ever did half or quarter so much private business when on the road; as the gentry, farmers, and tradespeople for miles round would pay him a visit, and not only buy largely from his present stock, but also give him extensive orders to be executed for them when he got to London. Nor was their confidence ever once abused, for a more fair-dealing, straightforward, honest man than Jack Stokes never lived to break bread in this world.

“A prince can make a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a’ that;
But an honest man’s aboon his might—
Guid faith, he mauna fa’ that.”

Joe Poole, or Lushy Joe Poole, as he was generally called, was a strange fish. Ay, and could drink like one too—brandy, rum, whisky, gin—especially gin; wine, ale, beer, or porter was all one to Joe; all was drink that came to his mouth, whether in the morning, the evening, or the noontide of day.

Joe was the son of a respectable and old established tradesman, residing at Shacklewell, in the parish of West Hackney, near London, and a

schoolfellow and pal of Jack Stokes. He was of a very disturbed and unsettled disposition. Nothing could be done with him at school—one of the branches of the British and Foreign, situated at that time in Cock-and-Castle Lane, Kingsland—by the master, Mr. James Hodgkinson; Joe being, in spite of all entreaties, the greatest rascalion and ringleader of all mischief, and at all times readier to play the “Charley Wag” than to be the first in any prominent position in his class or form. This was much to be regretted, for several reasons; one was from the respectability of his parents, who were well known, not only to the master, but also to many of the members of the committee of management of the school. But the most important and annoying of all was, that although Joe was the most incorrigible rascal of the whole school, his brother George was the pet and most prominent boy in it, and who ultimately succeeded to the mastership at the death of Mr. Hodgkinson.

Jack Stokes introduced Joe into the line; but he made no “mark” in it, as he was always a lushy cove, and one of those who when he could not get his drink paid for by any one else, would get drunk by himself on half-pints of beer—he was a Barleycorn worshipper then. Joe had no am-

bition farther than to earn a few shillings by selling on poundage—*i.e.*, so much in each pound's worth he sold—then doing a guzzle with the money so earned.

Joe Poole being at a public-house at Crawford during the fair—he was there selling for Charley Wade—when a country carpenter mentioned that he wanted to buy a stock and bits. Joe rushed off to the drag and fetched the article, which was usually sold, with twenty-four bits, at from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* The carpenter said, "How much?" "Oh," said Joe, "the old price, a shilling each for the bits, and the stock in with the bargain," which was the old "whid" that was cracked over the article when being offered for sale in the drag. To Joe's extreme surprise and delight the man deliberately counted out twenty-four shillings and handed them to him, which done, Joe hastened off to Dartford, three miles distant, and spent the remainder of the day, and most of the cash, in half-pints of beer and half-ounces of tobacco.

The countryman, afterwards finding that he had given too much for the article, went, at the advice of some of the parties present, off to Charley Wade; but of course he knew nothing more of the transaction than that Joe Poole had had it of him, and that it would be placed to his reckon-

ing on the next settlement. Wade recommended the countryman to seek out Joe, for perhaps it was only one of his jokes; "but joke or no joke, it was no matter or business of his," neither was it.

Joe dragged on for a good many years as a journeyman Cheap John, and when not so employed "mouched" about either in the Green Man or Amherst Arms at Shacklewell, acting as supernumerary potman, or getting a few halfpence at setting up the pins at knock-em-downs. Joe, like the sailor in Byron's "Don Juan," thought it becoming to die drunk. For one day he was carried out of the Amherst Arms in a semi-intoxicated state to his lodgings, where he immediately expired.

John Lally was a fine young fellow when I first met him about thirty years ago, and used to dress in a sleeve-waistcoat, cashmere breeches, white ribbed stockings, and ankle-jack shoes. He stood six feet high, stout, and well proportioned, of Irish extraction, born in London. At the age of twenty-six he was at Free Mart Fair, and being introduced to a widow with a small public-house and business, together with four children, married the lot and settled down; paid attention to trade, amassed a nice little fortune of about eight thousand pounds, made his will, left the whole to *his* only daughter,

and died a good Roman Catholic. Talk about Sir Aldeborontiphoscophornio and Chrononhotonthologos!

The second day of Maidstone Fair is not much for business, as there are very few country people about, so there is not much doing until the evening. The morning part of the time is usually spent in larking and drinking about from one booth to another. I remember that on one of these occasions there was a little mummer who was very sweet on a dancer of the same establishment, but the girl's parents not approving of the match, the poor little mummer threatened to make away with himself, but the general opinion of the show-folks was that he would not have pluck enough, although he went into a large pond up to his middle and remained there for an hour and more, the people chaffing him all the while. After that he went into a public-house close by, and asked the landlord and landlady if they would lend him a large carving-knive or a razor, and then he would make away with himself. Several parties volunteered knives that were by no means sharp, when, after a laughable and ineffectual attempt to use one of them, a travelling stall-keeper who was beery and bold said, "Here, if you want anybody to cut your throat, I'll do it for you to-rights;"

then, taking hold of the front skin of the little mummer's neck between his finger and thumb, at the same time squeezing it together very tight, he cut the piece off. The skin drawing back showed rather a large wound, which so frightened the people assembled that they rushed out of the house, fearing they would be charged as accessories. However, nothing came of it, as the wound was bound up, and the little fellow made right, and, being ultimately made very drunk, was sent off with his face blacked and his coat turned hind-side before, to keep, as he was told, out the cold from the wound. But it was admitted by all to be too serious a joke, and might have got a lot of people into trouble. I may add, that the little fellow married the girl after all.

Fred Jolly was about five feet nothing in stature, but a perfect little Hercules in build. His father, a rum old codger, had been a captain in the army, who, after retiring from active service, married his servant. Fred was the consequence. The first time I met with him was at Birmingham, in the year 1836, and as I knew something of his antecedents, I recognised him by the small clothes he wore, as having belonged to his former master, Jack Stokes. I spoke to him, and asked him if he were not So-and-so. He replied, "Certainly; how

did you know me?" I said, "You have a pair of Jack Stokes's breeches on." At that remark Fred laughed, and so did I. Otherwise he was decently and appropriately dressed, having a good sleeve-waistcoat, ankle-jack boots, and a decent cap. After we had spoken together, I asked him why he had left Jack's service. I rather thought it was a ticklish subject, and was therefore guarded in what I said. So, ushering him into the smoke-room of the first public-house we came to, Fred graphically related all his grievances, and the disagreements he had had with Stokes, which are not now worth repeating, he finishing up by observing that if ever he came across his old master again he would knock a corner piece off him.

I stayed in Birmingham some six or seven weeks, doing little or nothing but wasting time, money, and expense of licence, 8*l.* per annum. It was a very common thing with certain people of our class in those days to go to a town they had friends or acquaintances in, and deliberately sit down and squander their whole substance. But at length I, getting tired of the idleness we had been indulging in, said to the party I was working for, "Now if you do not choose to go out and set to work, here is Fred Jolly, who was with Jack

Stokes, of London ; he will do to go with me until you are ready to go yourself. The governor readily agreed to the proposition, so I and Fred started off on our first journey together to West Bromwich that day, and opened the drag in the evening. We tossed who should make the first pitch, and it fell to my lot, and while I was selling, Fred was inside putting the goods to rights, or handing them out to me as occasion served or suited. Fred laughed immoderately at my "whids," which were all new jokes to him, and which he seemed to enjoy amazingly, and the same occurred to me while Fred was at work, but it must be remembered that at that time I was but a lad of eighteen, while Fred was two or three years my senior. We did very well, and the next day travelled on to Abbots Bromley, where, the weather being bad, we hit upon a novel way of doing our business, which I never saw practised before nor since, the same opportunity never having occurred. There is an old Cross with a dome on it, in the centre of the town, with several openings. Up one of these openings we drew the drag, and the people all stood under the dome for shelter while we sold, and we did a very good business. But as Fred afterwards observed, if it had not been for that old market cross, we should not have

taken a "mag," and as we left the place in the morning, he took off his cap and said, "Good-bye, old fellow, and jolly good luck to you, Abbots Bromley."

Fred Jolly and myself having travelled to Leighton Buzzard Fair, we arrived at night, and drew the carriage on the ground we were to use lengthways—a common thing to do, as there is less danger of anything running against it in the dark. In the morning, when we were about to turn the drag face outwards, I at the shafts, Fred at the wheel, we perceived a tressel standing in our way. I called to a boy just passing to remove it, when a big mumper—that is a half-bred gipsy—standing by, exclaimed with an oath, "Here, I'll have no boys moving my things; let it alone." Fred, hearing this, seized the obstructive article and threw it into the middle of the road, which so nettled the man who owned it, that he rushed at Fred, I calling out, not being able to let go the shafts I was holding, "Look out, Fred, he's coming," when Fred met him as straight as an arrow with his left, and after a couple of bouts it was all over with the saucy mumper, Fred exclaiming, as he gave him the finishing touch, "You don't eat beef enough for me, my covey."

Fred was a quiet, good-tempered fellow, with a

keen sense of the ridiculous, and was scarcely ever out of temper. In fact, the six or seven years he was with me off and on, I never knew him so more than half-a-dozen times. But he was a dangerous little fellow when put out of temper by any one interfering with him in his business. We were at Sansdown Fair, a pleasant place situate on a hill near Bath. It was a fine day, and we had a nice lot of goods. Fred was selling spoons, and he had been expatiating on the quality of them, when a rough standing among the company said, "Here, let's look at 'em, gov'ner." Fred handed the man the articles to examine, when, taking one of them between both his fingers and thumbs, he broke it asunder, saying at the same time, "It's broke." This was just the sort of thing to rile Fred, who, stepping down in the front, hit out his right, and landing it on the bridge of the man's nose hard enough for the bystanders to hear the gristle of it go, said, "And that's broke now!" whereupon every one set up a roar of laughter, and shouted from all quarters, "Bravo, little 'un! It sarves him right."

Once upon a time, when Fred Jolly was with me, it happened that a travelling draper, who came over from Chatham to Maidstone Fair every year with a large stock, hired a closed shop for a short term for

the purpose of selling off a lot of soiled goods that had been accumulating with him for some time past. This man was not a nervous man, but a man of nerve. All the established drapers of the town were against him, and one who lived at the very next door used to hang articles out alongside the new comer's, to which doggerel verses in the form of a conversation were appended. I am sorry to say I don't remember them now. Some were very funny, and even witty, as beginning with—from the sheet—

“Dear blanket, like you, we cannot resist
The paws of the dustman or chimney-sweep's fist.”

However, the war of the “sheets and blankets” went on for some time, until put a stop to by the local authorities. Our friend, the man of nerve, was the victor, in commemoration of which it was agreed to have a tripe supper, which we did, Fred Jolly being the head cook and bottle-washer, and while he was busy in the preparation the founder of the feast wrote the following about Fred :

“As black as a coal, and very fond of tripe ;
A darling lover of a pot and a pipe ;
Hawker, pedlar, petty chapman, too :
A jolly Fred, and nothing much to do.”

One night when I and Fred Jolly were staying at a house at Littlehampton, Sussex, there was a man

very troublesome, and the landlady, being a widow, wished to get rid of him, and Fred, knowing this, persuaded the man with his sailor friend to leave, it being late. He did so, and the door was closed, but the stupid girl neglected to bolt it, so that in a little time they walked in again, whereupon Fred took hold of the man and was trying to put him out again, when he seized Fred rather roughly, who exclaimed, "Now, look here, if you rend my clothes I'll muzzle you." But the man took no notice of the threat, and did, in fact, rend Fred's clothes, and Fred did muzzle him. Then the sailor friend interfered, upon which Fred up with his fist, the sight of which caused the sailor to bolt, Fred after him, striking with both hands at nothing, when, overreaching himself, he almost turned a somersault and fell. It was some time before he could rise for laughing at the event. But

"When the fight becomes a chase,
Those win the day that win the race—"

I remember to have read in Butler's "*Hudibras*."

Fred Jolly and Jem Moody going from Dover to Wingham Fair, in Kent, during the month of November, having loitered so much behind the drag, and night coming on, they lost their way, and after roving about for some time without meeting anybody, or seeing any light, they began to fear they

would have to remain out in the cold all night, when a thought struck Fred, who began to bawl out, "Two men lost! whoever will find them and put them on their right way shall receive half-a-crown reward, and a gallon of ale." Jem joining him, and they both having good voices, soon brought a countryman, who was tending his horses some distance off, to the rescue, and who soon put them in the right way.

Harry Perdue was a gross fat Devonshire man, of large size and great weight. I first met with him at Barnstaple Fair. He was then about forty years old, and I think the handsomest fat man I ever saw. It was in the summer-time of 1838. He was in his shirt-sleeves, had on corduroy breeches of the best quality, but not more than one button fastened at each knee; a black waistcoat of the finest West of England cloth entirely open, a black neckcloth once round his neck, one side of his shirt-band and collar below it, the other side above, and every button being gone from the front, thus showing the best part of his bare and manly breast, which he was very fond of displaying—accidentally for the purpose—white ribbed stockings and low shoes. In fact, the way he made himself up for the part, he looked as if he scorned the trouble of dressing altogether, and was the per-

fect picture of a happy-go-lucky, good-natured, jolly fellow.

He had with him at the time Bob Bartlett, his son-in-law, and Jem Moody, as helps or salesmen. Bob was a good salesman, but of bad temper, who if he could not get rid of any unruly fellow by his chaffing him, would invariably turn to Perdue and say, "Look at this man; I shan't bother with him, why don't you get him away? He's interrupting me and the business. I can't jolly him down, so you must settle and do away with him, or I must 'dry up,' for the fellow's bested me;" when Perdue would get down from the cart, and take hold of the "rough" by the collar, and if he could good-humouredly gammon him out of the company he would, but if the cove showed the least disinclination to go by persuasion, the fat man would use such force as few, however strong or pugnacious, could stand up against.

Perdue could take a good deal of drink before it took any effect on him, and it sometimes happened that in treating his men to a drop or two before the commencement of the business at a fair, he forgot they, being so much younger and less seasoned than himself, could not stand it like him, so that it frequently happened that his "helps" were helpless by the time business should have

commenced in earnest. At this same fair, Jem Moody was about three-quarters and an eighth towards being "tight" through having been out on the "loose" all the morning with the governor. He was mounted and selling away as fast and as well as he could, and keeping himself as well together as circumstances would allow. He commenced business by offering a saw to the surrounding company, and with "Here you are, my friends and customers. Now the first article I have for your inspection is a well-made hand-saw—a saw here that was forged on an anvil, hit with a hammer, ground and brought down to a level, true and fine tempered as a cock eel or the mainspring of a watch. The teeth are cut rank and file, like a regiment of soldiers, so that if you were to place a needle on the heel of this saw it would run right slap-bang down to the point and never tumble off once. If you like you could wear it round your neck like a soldier's stock, or a dog's collar, and I'll be bound to say if you were to go to church next Sunday morning with this saw round your neck and the teeth uppermost you would not forget the text coming home. Now, talk about saw, saws, and sawing, of all the saws you ever saw to saw, you never saw such a saw to saw as this saw is to saw. It'll bend upwards and downwards and round-

wards. This way it will make a cheese-cutter, this way a child's swing. Now an article like this is sold in the usual way at about three half-crowns. Now I'll not say three, nor two half-crowns—you shall have this saw for 4s. 6d.; and if that won't do, 3s. 6d., 3s. 3d., 3s.; and if you won't give me 3s. I'll say 2s. 9d., 2s. 8d., 2s. 7d. You won't have it now? Then I say you shall, for I'll do a thing no man in my profession ever did before, I'll take a half-crown for the saw. Now I'll have no more nor take no less, sell or never sell, have it who will, and when I say that word 'I'll take no less'—I would sooner be rammed and jammed into the mouth of a cannon and blowed out the touch-hole before I would alter my mind or price. Hi! hi! sold again to a highly respectable dairy farmer that lives by the waterside; he keeps ninety-nine bulls and one cow and two pumps."

Now Perdue was sitting inside the van leisurely smoking a long clay pipe when, looking up, he perceived that Jem had sold for half-a-crown a saw which ought to have been 3s. 6d. He had received the money and was handing it to the buyer, when the fat man, stepping out on to the platform, said to the party, "Here! let's look at that saw you have just bought, will ye, my man?"

The man handed it up to him, when, after examining the article and finding that he was right in his surmise, he gave it back to the buyer, and without uttering another word, took poor Jem by the scruff of his neck and the back of his breeches, threw him with as much ease as though he had been a baby among the people, and then commenced selling the goods himself, and as cool as if nothing had happened to disturb the serenity of his mind.

No bones were broken, and by the morrow all was forgotten and forgiven on each side.

No man was better known and few more respected in the west country than Harry Perdue; and when he was on the road going to a fair or market, or even on Sundays, when countrymen met him they would touch their hats and say modestly, "How do, Master Cheap John—how do?" while the farmers and tradespeople, and many of the gentry, always had a "Good-morning" or "Good-evening" for him.

Harry kept a public-house at Plymouth, and when in a drinking mood would sit by the beer engine and keep pulling and drinking until he required hooping, and while in this state the "helps" or those who had been keeping him company would get him to take snuff, which would make him

sneeze violently and something besides, so that he used actually to shed tears of vexation.

One day, when at dinner, Fred Jolly asked fat Harry Perdue whether he would have a piece of pudding, seeing that he had none in his plate. Harry merely grunted out "Ah!" and dropping his fat fist on Fred's plate put the large lump of pudding into his mouth all at once, the gravy running down his fat chops and on to his breast.

Harry Perdue died at Plymouth about the year 1855, much and deservedly respected by all who knew him.

Weyhill Fair, thirty years ago, used to be considered a roughish place at times, and the stall-keepers to guard themselves, or rather to intimidate wrong-doers, used to keep loaded horse-pistols by them for their protection at night, and occasionally let one or two off to show they were on the alert. It happened one fair-time that there was a man who used to get his living by spouting a lot of stuff about Rob Roy. He was dressed in plaid waistcoat and a red coat; he used to get the people about him and mouth his nonsense for about ten minutes, and wind up with a shriek, and bawl out, "Oh! oh! the redcoats are after me! Oh! oh! Fire!" And at the word "fire" he used to drop as if he were shot, and that concluded

his performance. He had been doing this several times during the day, much to the annoyance of one of the stall-keepers, who determined to play him a trick, and for that purpose fetched his pistol, and just as the fellow said "Oh! oh! Fire!" bang went the pistol, which so frightened the acting cove that he bolted away as hard as he could go, to the intense delight of the mob, and he was not seen doing Rob Roy any more on that day.

John Sedgwick was a good sound salesman, but possessed little or no wit, yet had great tact, which acted as a set-off with a Master John, who wanted a slow, hard salesman to keep the people together. Sedgwick was selling for Mat Hunt one Saturday at Colchester market; when speaking his rigmarole, among other things he was telling the people that he merely travelled and talked to wear out his old clothes, to keep the rheumatics from his jaws, and the gout out of his tongue; but when he got to the line "wear out his old clothes," a countryman in the crowd called out, "You'll very soon do that, I'm thinking," which caused a great roar of laughter against Jack, who was very badly dressed at the time—in fact, he was, as the old saying has it, "as ragged as a colt."

Boughton Green Fair, near Northampton, which was held in June, used to be one of the roughest places in England. For years neither life nor property was safe; so as soon as night set in, people who had business there were obliged to arm themselves to protect their property from the desperadoes of the place. Robbery with violence was the common order of things, and generally a life or more was lost either at the time or shortly afterwards. The ringleaders were Captain Slash and a man called Culleth Gay, who once tried to let all the animals loose from Wombwell's caravans, so that he and his party might make a rich harvest in the general confusion which would have been sure to have followed. Captain Slash, however, was taken and hanged on Northampton racecourse about the year 1836, since which time Boughton Fair has been much quieter.

In travelling at night in the olden time, that is forty years ago, when it was not so safe as now—besides, people at the present time all travel by rail, so that there is scarcely any road-walking—I remember being on the road one evening in the month of November between Canterbury and Chatham; it was about five or half-past when I saw at the top of a hill which I had nearly reached, a man come from out of the hedge, and looking up and

down the road, saw me coming and alone ; he then crept back again into his hiding-place. I did not like the appearance of things, but wishing to get on, I kept walking until within a few yards of the place I had seen the man emerge from, and then stooping down, I picked up a good-sized stone, and standing in the middle of the road, I very deliberately tied it in the middle of my pocket-handkerchief, and carried it along, swinging from my hand, taking care the party should see it and me, although I did not see him at the time. However I might have looked on the occasion, I felt ready and willing for a tussle, but I was allowed to pass unmolested ; though I afterwards heard that several parties had been stopped and robbed in the course of a week by a man about that part of the road. But my gentleman would have found me rather a difficult customer to have dealt with. I was forearmed by being forewarned, and ready for anybody or anything of about my own weight, size, and age.

A stone in a handkerchief in the shape of a sling is a fine weapon of defence against one person when you can get plenty of elbow-room ; but when attacked by more than one, why, no doubt a six-shooter would be more persuasive !

At another time when I and Fred Jolly were

returning from Canterbury Fair, we heard of men being out stopping people, so I armed myself with a back-saw, and Fred with a stone in a handkerchief, and so walked on ahead of the van in the middle of the road. We walked and talked, and at every bend in the way we kept a sharp lookout; we both well knew that foot-pad coves as a rule are great cowards; we also both knew the value of the first blow, and as I had sixty pounds in hard cash about me, I did not mean to part with it at the first asking. Once at a sharp bend there was a bit of a shadow that looked like a "something," whereupon I said, "Fred, look out, right ahead; are you ready?" "Ready?" said Fred. "Yes, for a good couple. I should like to see a brace just now, but where?" "There," said I, at the same time pointing to what the next instant proved to be the shadow of the arm of a large tree, and nothing more. We passed on, and got to our journey's end all safe and without an adventure.

Michael Fagan, of Irish extraction, born and bred in Sheffield, was one of the smartest and best salesmen that ever travelled in the line. My first meeting with him was at Blackburn Fair, in Lancashire. He had just parted from his brother Pat, and the division of the goods was only half

a stock for each. Mike was about twenty-four years of age at this time; we were very friendly, and took our meals together and in the same house: but the acquaintance was of short duration, as I soon found out that he was of a very overbearing disposition, and although I was only a youth at the time, I could not stand it. The cause of our rupture was this: after tea one day Mike, as he was leaving the house, put his hand into a flour tub and threw some over me, and then cut his lucky. The landlord seeing the transaction, said, at the same time pointing to the tub, "Here! here! after him, and give him the same." I took out a tight handful and got up to his van just as he was putting his foot on the step to mount the platform, the light on the other side burning with a great glare in the front, with perhaps three or four hundred people listening to his man, who was at the time selling, when I sent the handful of flour bang into his face, so suddenly that Mike could not realize the situation, and his ludicrous appearance, before the people shouted with laughter, when suddenly catching sight of me, he got down and came to where I stood; he was very wroth, and said if I did not stand a glass of brandy and water—at that time a shilling—he would roll me in the slush. I refused to do so, for

two reasons : one was, that he had done the same thing to me first ; and secondly, that the money I had was not my own. So he took hold of my collar, and we struggled together, my determination being that if I went down he should go as well ; when, after a sharp struggle and turning a bit, we both fell, Mike undermost, on his back, in one of the holes in the road in the muddy streets of Blackburn.

Isaac Pedley and Dan Belton were both very much alike in age, size, and appearance, so much so that you could only tell one from the other at a short distance, and by the manner they wore their caps. Their age at the time I saw them first was about thirty-six years each. Isaac was the master, and he had an awful squint of the left eye, so he invariably pulled the peak of his cap over the left side of his face, while Dan, his man, pulled his over the right side. I first saw them at Coventry Show Fair, and, struck by their being so much alike, I involuntarily ejaculated, "Hullo! here's the Siamese Twins," which made Isaac very wroth ; but Dan was a good-tempered fellow, who did not take offence at anything. Isaac I seldom met afterwards, as he located at Nottingham, where he used to stand on market-days for months together, very rarely going far away, and returning

directly he had a good stock of goods and a good horse. Dan I met lots of times after he left Isaac; the last time I remember seeing him was at Birmingham.

Poor old Deaf Burke, the pugilist, whom I met on many occasions and in many places, used to say : "I s'pose you are always having a good many larks sometimes ?"

Martin Lyons was an Irishman, and lived part of the year at Reading, and the other time would travel, especially when the autumn fairs were good. Martin had a very strong brogue, and before John Lally married the Portsea widow, had befriended him on several occasions. I remember once at Portsdown Fair, Martin Lyons was very wroth with Lally about some real or fancied slight, and he did not forget to abuse Jack in good set Irish Billingsgate.

Now Lyons was in the act of selling, and Lally happening to pass at the moment, when Martin called out, "Come here, blind Jack " (Lally was very near sighted). "Come here and I'll horsewhip ye ;" and bringing his arm down with such force upon nothing, overbalanced himself, and fell head foremost into a shallow tub of pickled salmon that stood on a stall next to him, which caused a roar of laughter from the crowd as Martin was picked up

with the top of his head covered with smashed pickled salmon. The dealer was much enraged, and swore Martin should pay for the old "kip" and eat it himself; but observed Martin, "I'll pay for it, seeing that I've spoilt yer sale of it; but as to eating, I think I'll never touch a bit of salmon again as long as I live, for I shall always think of the pickling I got myself; but the vinegar has made me sober, so I'll not begrudge ye the money." Martin Lyons was about fifty years old at this time.

The "Cockney-kid:" this cove came from London under the fostering wing of Mat Hunt. He travelled some ten years, there or thereabouts, but he was as a rule so flighty and troublesome that at last nobody cared much about employing him, as he would begin in a good fair, and, instead of doing his business properly, would start at once calling the people queer names, as gudgeons, mackerel-backs, double-distilled assassins, &c. &c., and which he did in a bad or offensive style that at once created an ill feeling between him and his customers, and otherwise he caused more disturbance than he was worth. I don't think, although I knew him the whole time that he travelled, I ever heard him called otherwise than the "Cockney," or the "Cockney-kid," and

occasionally the "Startsman Bloke," which is a distinction without a difference.

It used to be the way with certain of our people, who thought themselves clever—so very *cle-ver*!—when they met another party in the line who was going to do the same market, fair, or other place, to try to make each other drunk, so that the one who could take the most "lotion" without being so, might get the best of it by having the place to himself.

This was a favourite dodge of the "Cockney-kid." I have known him many a time to practise it with younger and more inexperienced parties than himself, also with those older than himself. It often happened that "Cockney," as well as other persons who indulged in this ruse, met with his match, caught a Tartar, or that the victimizer became the victimized, as when the parties were about the same age and experience, and they got together early in the morning, and began plying each other with drink, both having the same object in view, that is, to make each other drunk.

Occasionally it would happen that the one who first opened out his masked battery for the purpose of disabling the other, would be the first to fall in the action by a random shot, in the shape

of a quartern or two of gin made hot to mix in with his grog instead of water, as the more he administered the stronger it became. Again, I have known both the parties to so besot themselves that neither could stand; each had cheated the other of his senses, and both lay in a helpless state of intoxication, and unfit for any business for that day—each biter was bit.

The Cockney-kid had a noisy slashing style of oratory about him, and would bellow out after this manner, "Oh, dear me, yes, I forgot these. Here, I have half-a-dozen knives and forks; the knives are so sharp that one would cut a hair in nine parts out of every eight, cut a crowbar or a blacksmith's anvil asunder, shave a mouse asleep and never wake it once, or you might use either one of them for a razor for yourselves, if at any time you found your housemaid, parlourmaid, kitchenmaid, top garret or any other maid, had been opening oysters with your only one; you'd find one of these knives go over your face as smooth as a snail goes over a cabbage on a dewy morning. As to the amount of mutton either of these knives would cut off a beef bone that had got no meat on it, it makes me hungry to think of it. But sold again! and the last of the Mohicans. Would you believe it, there is just one

more half-dozen of these knives and forks left. The nearer the bone the sweeter the meat, the nearer the ground the sweeter the grass, and nearer the bottom of the box the better the knives and forks. Now these are ten times better than the last rubbishy things sold, therefore I must have a lot more money for these. Never mind, it shall never be said that the old original Cheap John made two prices. Here, half-a-guinea. No, I mean half-a-crown buys this lot. Sold again!

"There, I do declare there's just one more left, and that is the last. You see, the man I had these knives and forks of grows them on his own ground, and he has four crops a year. He's got a nice little four acre farm, and he turns it up edgeways and grows from both sides, and in wet and cold weather he takes his farm indoors to keep it dry and warm, with a tu-ral lal lal lu-ral lir-da.

"Here I have a very powerful burning-glass of the same power and size that Archimedes used when he set fire to the Roman fleet with a glass like this at noonday, by reflecting the rays of the sun on 'em. Now when the sun is very powerful, a man might sit on the top of St. Paul's and burn down the Monument and set fire to the

Thames, the focus is so powerful. Sold again to a gentleman with reddish cheeks, a brandy nose, fiery whiskers, and carrotty hair, and who is going to take his sweetheart out on the salt sea next Sunday to gather blackberries.

"Now, my friends and ready-money customers, the first articles I have to show you to-day is a set of well-made shoe-brushes; one to rub the dirt off with, one to put the blacking on, and the other—and only one left—to put the polish on with. Now these are all han'-made, and would be sold in the usual way of trade at one and ninepence—each, or five shillings a set; but you shall have 'em for half-a-crown. No one blink or squint at that price? Then say two shillings—eighteen pence—fifteen—fourteen—thirteen; there, take the lot at one shilling; the cheapest goods ever seen sold or offered for sale? Sold again, to George, with a nose like the button of a closet door. Sold again!

"Murder in Irish. What's that in English? But here, I've got a fine thing to show you this time. It's so fine that you can't see it yet. Oh yes, here it is. It's a perfect beauty, and in the words of some poet—either Byron or Billy Nutts—it's small by degrees, and beautifully less. I wish I could say the same of old George's nose down there.

Old George there; don't you see him? That chap there with his shirt outside his breeches. Oh, I humbly beg his pardon, as, on second sight, I see it's his white frock. How are you, old George, eh? Here—just you look here what I'm going to show this time. It's a splendiferous silver guard-chain. When I say it's silver, I mean it's the same colour; it looks like silver, it smells like silver, and I shouldn't wonder but what it is silver; for when I was down at Sheffield last I was in a great hurry. I bought two ton and a half of these chains, which the young fellow packed up in a small brown paper parcel, and I really think he went to the wrong drawer, and served me with real silver ones; but that mistake will be your gain, for I shall not charge a pound more for it than if it had been one of them common double Dutch or German things, that are usually sold at fairs and races; but it's an affair in which you must use your own judgments, for I don't say it's silver, or I don't say it isn't silver.

“Now an article like this in the regular trade would cost you about two guineas; for if you was to go into Mr. You-know-his-name's shop, in the market-place here, to buy such a chain as this, his smart, handsome shopman, with his hair all covered with real bear's-grease, cut from the bladder

—of lard, and his teeth curled and his whiskers put a little further back, he would say: 'Walk in, sir; take a seat, sir; a fine day, sir. What can I have the pleasure, sir? Yes, sir. Watch-chain, sir? certainly, sir,' and so on for half-an-hour. For every 'sir' he would charge you half-a-crown. Then you would have to pay about 3*l.* 10*s.* to four guineas for a guard-chain not half so good as this. Now all I shall ask you for this will be one guinea, and just you look how it sets a man off! Look at it on me! Why, if you were travelling on business or pleasure with a beautiful guard-chain like this round your neck, and was to call at one of the principal hotels of the place, and knock for the landlady, the door would pop out directly—What do you say, old Baconface, the landlady would pop out? Well, that's what I said, didn't I? I say if you was to knock at the door of one of the principal hotels in the place, the landlady would pop out, and welcome you with smiles and wiles, and say: 'Walk in, sir; walk into the best parlour. Yes, sir. No, sir.' With a guard-chain on like this you would be sure to get the front row at an execution, or the best pew at a church on Sunday. But I haven't half time to tell you half the advantages the possession of a chain like this would confer; and all I asked you for it was four guineas

—What say? I said one guinea? Oh, well, if I did I'll stick to it, even if I lose money, so one guinea buys the chain. Well, what's the matter now? No one wink, blink, or squint at a guinea? Have you no money or brains, or what's the matter with you? Oh, I see, yes, yes, I see, you want a watch into the bargain, to make the thing complete. I see, you can't go on tick without a ticker; right. Well, then, here you are. Here's a splendid silver watch, duplex movements, jewelled in ninety-nine holes, A 1, copper-bottomed, and goes on wheels. Here's an article fit for a lord, duke, or esquire, a tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, apothecary, ploughboy, or thief. Procrastination is said to be the time of thief—roast beef. Time was made for slaves—and veal stuffing. And the two articles together won't cost you more than a five-pound note. But don't any of you forget to remember that—

“‘He who a watch would wear two things must do :
Pocket his watch, and watch his pocket too.’”

The splendid watch and chain going at 5*l*. No? Then I'll say four; if that won't do, I'll say three; if that won't do, I'll say two. No? Then, well, here, d—— it, I may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. I'll say a sovereign; yes, a sovereign. It's no matter, for I never paid for them; I only

promised to pay. I wrote on a piece of paper, 'I promise to pay;' but as the man wasn't sharp, and I was, I never put down *when*, so that pay-day will never come. One sovereign—20s.—buys the lot. Yes, there she is; she's the lucky buyer. Sold again! Step this way, my dear, but mind the scraper. Here she is, lads; this is her. You have got a bargain, my dear. But mind, when you are timing the boiling of the eggs, you don't put the watch in the pot, and hold the egg in your hand, as my cousin, Betsy Baker, did three Sundays running in one week. Now, my dear, if you don't get a husband and a baby in less than a month, now that you have got such a splendid bit of jewellery—well, I shall say you are very slow for a young woman. Sold again!

"Hi! hi! Here! here! The next wonder I shall show you will be a big man standing upon a small table made out of a heath broom, dressed in a scarlet black coat, who will *not* give you a lecture as long as from here and to-morrow on—What do you say, old Slobber-chops, that I'm a fool? Go home to your mother, and tell her to chain up Ugly; then go to a druggist's shop, and buy you twopennyworth of pigeons' milk, three ounces of the blood of a grasshopper, a pint of self-boasting, the head and pluck of a buck flea, the

ribs of a roasted quid of tobacco, and the lights and liver of a cobbler's lapstone, boiled separately altogether in a leather iron pot, and that dose taken three mornings fasting will make your hair straight and your teeth curly. In the meantime, I have here to offer to your notice a fust-rate pocket-comb. It will comb all the hair off your head, or if you are as bald as a Whig candidate at an election, it will comb it all on again; and this comb possesses the wonderful property of combing, curling, or dyeing the hair all at one time separately and together. I should like to know what looks worse than to see a young man or woman with their hair in an uproar, like a birch-broom in a fit—and some of you chaps down there look as if you hadn't had your hair combed since last reaping-time, when you did it with a field-rake, which is very harrowing to one's feelings. Look at flash Charley, the flying pot-man; see how smart he looks; his hair is well combed and decently brushed, and he curls it every morning on the windlass of the well at the back of his house. He looks, as you see, as flash as the knocker at Newgate; and he sleeps every night in the Queen's Arms—public-house, don't you, Charley? Now, the price. Here, take two for sixpence. Then you will have one for week-

days and one for Sundays. Sold again! to a bald-headed gentleman, the Whig candidate for the Borough.

“Now then, here, I say, here’s your lightning, twopence a glass, and you can have three shovel-fuls of thunder for one shilling. What more do you farming people want? I say you have only to buy three shovelfuls of my thunder, and put it down to the bottom of the roots of your growing crops, when the things will shoot up like lightning. It’s capital stuff, but I’ve got none in stock to-day; call at the proper time, any time to-morrow in next week, then you can have as much as you like. In the meantime, I have here to show you a pair of brass candlesticks, that look as much like gold as ever I see any in my life. Here’s a pair of candlesticks, to light you to bed. Look at them; ain’t they a pair of beauties? And they are just as good in the kitchen as they are in the parlour. But stop, as these are so much like gold to look at, and as constant dripping wears out marble, why, by too much use these candlesticks would wear out at last. So I have here to add to the lot a white silver Britannia metal real bedroom candlestick, one pair of snuffers, one extinguisher, and a save-all, which, by-the-bye, is a very useful thing in a poor man’s house. Now here I have

seven useful articles—viz., namely, to wit, that is to say, a pair of brass candlesticks, that look just like cold—gold I mean. Now, one pair; or a couple, that's two; one bedroom candlestick, that looks just like silver—in the dark; that and a pair before, is three. Then one pair of snuffers, made of the best and the most highly-polished steel. Let's see, that's three articles before now, a pair, that's two, and three before, that's five altogether; then a double-japanned 'extinguisher, that's six, and the save-all, that's seven. Yes, seven articles, and all for 7*l*.

"What do you say, you Jim Crow-looking fellow, that came from old Kentucky a short time ago, where you first learned to turn about and wheel about and jump Jim Crow—just so? What do you say, there are only six articles? I say there are seven. Look here, according to Cocker and common sense, there's one pair, that's two; then one, that's three; then another pair—of snuffers, that's three, and two are five; then one, that's six; then another one, that's seven. There, I was sure I was right. Now for these seven articles I'll take 7*l*.—shillings I mean; yes, 7*s*. No! then say 6, 5, 4, 3, 2*s*. 9*d*. Here, 2*s*. 6*d*. or half-a-crown buys the lot.

"Now this is a nice little useful lot for anybody

that wants to get married. If there's anybody here that don't want to get married, why, I'll make them a present of the lot free, gratis, and for nothing."

"Just hand 'em over here, then, please, mister."

"Hullo! old John Chawbacon, are you alive still? How's your wife, eh, John?"

"Oh, tidy like, thankee, master."

"Oh! then you've got a wife, eh?"

"Of course I 'as. I thought everybody knowed that."

"Ah, then, John, you can't have the lot, for it's for people that don't want to get married; and, as you've a wife, of course you don't want to be married, being already married."

"Please, sir, will you give me the lot?"

"Certainly, my pretty little dear; step this way, but mind the door-step. So you are not married, my little rosebud; growing to seed, eh? You're not married, I say?"

"No, sir, I'm not married."

"But you are going to be some day?"

"Yes, sir, I hope so."

"Hah! then you *do* want to be married; this lot's for them that *don't want to be married*. Sold again!

"Now, just clear the cloth, while I lay another

lot before you, which consists of a set of fire-irons—a nice matrimonial lot. See! the shovel and tongs to each other belongs; tongs—jonks—songs. Here's a stunning poker for any of you married men to tickle your wives in the ribs, or hit her on the funny-bone, while the tongs can be used by the women folks to take their husbands by the nose, or, when they are in a passion, to smash all the plates and dishes with; and with the shovel you can shovel up all the pieces and put them with the ashes of the grate!—Further particulars, see 'Joe Miller,' at page 196."

At one Canterbury fair-time there was a wax-work show exhibiting in a large shop, temporarily engaged for that purpose in the High Street. On a Friday morning of the fair, the Cockney-kid and George Bourne were roving about the city in search of any adventure or spree that might turn up; espying the waxwork shop, they entered, and finding there was nobody there they began altering the number tickets on the figures, so that when the people came in they would find on looking at their catalogues John Thurtell, the murderer of Mr. Weare, described as some celebrated preacher, and *vice versa*. They likewise shifted some of the ornaments, and put the cocked hat of Lord Nelson on the head of Daniel O'Connell, and the hunting-cap

of Sir Francis Burdett on John Elwes, the miserable miser; and after doing this sort of thing for some time, and hearing some people coming into the exhibition, they waited to see the effect it would have; but they were much disappointed, for the people merely looked at the figures, and took it as a matter of course that everything was all right and proper and as usual; even although Cockney had stuck a large Punch nose on the Queen's face, yet no notice was taken of it. I must explain that it being early in the morning, there was no one in attendance to describe the figures to the few straggling visitors.

Cockney and his pal were, however, determined not to be done out of their spree, so when the few persons who had made their early visits had left the place, and being once more alone, they commenced to take an eye out of one of the figures; then hearing some other visitors coming in, each of them took his station at either end of the room, and stood alongside the figure next to them as if they were a part and parcel of the exhibition, and when the people had gone the round of the room in examining the figures Cockney began by calling out, "Look here; if you chaff me any more to-day, I'll come across and strangle you, you old murderer." "And," replied the other,

"if I have any more of your impudence I'll knock your eye out, like I served the Duke; here's his eye I knocked out," at the same time showing the glass eye he had taken from one of the figures. The audience were terror-struck, and rushed out of the place pell-mell, helter-skelter, the females screaming, and the "Cockney-kid" calling after them in a very gruff voice, "not to be frightened, as they were only the two old and original murderers of the Babes of the Wood." "But," added George Bourne, "we didn't hurt 'em much."

The showman, when he found out what was the matter, was very wroth, and threatened to pitch into the pair. But on a sudden altered his mind, and certainly discretion was here much better than valour.

The "Cockney-kid" had a short, rattle-brain kind of life, and died at Birmingham, of consumption, at an early age, in the year 1861.

There was a well-known young fellow in the line who was always called—I know not why—Friday; he was a good salesman, a happy-go-lucky sort of a chap, who was liked by everybody; he was the *protégé* of George Freeman, who was very proud of him. George was always very anxious to be in the Cheap John business, but he was totally unfit for it

himself, but entered into it perhaps more to bring out Friday than anything else. When Friday was selling and doing a good stroke of business, he used to keep taking him drink to encourage him. Once it happened that Jack Stokes was at High Wycombe Fair, and just about to commence, thinking that he had the fair to himself, when old George's concern arrived at the nick of time, and Friday and old fat Jack—as Jack Stokes was always called—began chaffing away at a good rate, Freeman supplying Friday with plenty of drink, which soon took such an effect upon him, that turning round to get another lot he pitched head-foremost into the cart and forgot to come out again. Old George coming up at the moment with some more drink, and seeing what had happened, took down all the goods that were hanging outside, and threw them in the drag on the top of the prostrated Friday, closed the doors, and left him to sleep away the folly he had himself caused, so lost the fair, and left old fat Jack the master of the field.

When I first met Friday at Portsdown Hill Fair he was with Showman George, otherwise George Freeman. It was summer-time, and there was not much Cheap John business doing. So Friday was assisting George in the booth business, acting as

barman, and my first notice of him was in this way. The night before the fair commenced—which was held for three days—myself, Fred Jolly, Chris. Newman, and several others were drinking late in George's booth, which was built up, but not opened for business, only to friends on the road. After awhile, first one then another dropped off, until there were only Fred, Friday, and myself left, the others having gone to their respective domiciles. I had noticed Fred Jolly making himself agreeable to the woman cook who travelled with the establishment; presently they departed quietly, with not so much as a "good-night." I then said to Friday, "Ain't you going to bed?" He said, "No; for if I do I shall not be able to get a wink of sleep, for the stage-struck fellows next us—meaning thereby the mummers—are now beginning to build up, and will be hammering away all night;" whereupon I said the best plan would be to give them some drink to unfit them for their work. He replied, "So I would, if I could get them in." I said I would try and do that, and went out for that purpose. It was hardly daylight, but I could see that there were seven of them just beginning their work. I said, "Good-morning, gentlemen; will you have a drop of anything before you begin to build up?" One or two

of them said they should like to. I answered, "Then come along with me." Friday had in the meanwhile mixed up a lot of gin and rum into a gallon of beer. I said when we entered, "Friday, let's have a gallon of your best beer. Let it be good, as it is for these chaps; they've got a lot of work to do before the morning, and won't have another chance."

Now it is well known that travelling mummers are all rare "belchers." Friday handed them the "lotion" in pint and quart mugs, and they each dipped their beakers in, and as they emptied their jugs they were as soon filled up again by Friday without ceremony. I kept them in conversation about Romeos and Juliets, Williams, and Black-eyed Susans, &c., until the drink took the desired effect, and one by one the princes and kings dropped on the grass floor, and were sound drunk and asleep. Friday let them lie where they fell, and drawing the curtain of the booth, took himself to his temporary made-up bed, and I went to my sleeping quarters in my cart.

When old Sawney Williams, the proprietor, came later in the morning, he was horrified at finding his "rags and sticks"—as a theatrical booth is always termed—just as he had left them over-night

—not a pole or a stick stuck in the ground for building.

Walk up—walk up ! the players here,
 Their characters inquire :
 Abilities known everywhere ;
 You all must them admire.

PIERCE EGAN'S "The Show Folks."

George Young had rather a remarkable career. When I saw him first at Banbury Fair, in 1837, he was wearing a cocked hat, red waistcoat, and a kind of large blue livery-coat with brass buttons, and occupied calling "Lollipop," the sweetmeats being on a common navvy's barrow that had been used for something dirtier than gravel ; he had a short pipe in his mouth, and was ever and anon bawling out in a Billingsgate voice, "Two ounces a penny again—lollipop and pop-loly." There was a lump of the "stuff" in the barrow weighing, I should think, 20lbs. It was queer to look at, being of a dark yellow cast or colour ; he chipped off slices with a small hammer when he had a customer, and seemed to be doing a good trade.

George was about twenty-two years of age, and five feet nine inches in height, very fond of lewd expressions, and repeatedly laughed at his own vulgar jokes. He had rather a good-looking face, but there

was something about it that made one careful of having much to do with him. His "butty," as he called him, came up at the time.

William Carrol was his partner, or "butty," in the "lollipop" business—a dismal-looking man, who had always a burnt short clay pipe in his mouth; he had sharp features, and was smaller in size and stature and a trifle older than Young. Carrol it appears made the "stuff," and Young, dressed up as above-mentioned, sold it. Take them together, they were a pair of the veriest padding-ken rangers it were possible to see or imagine, but "it's never too late to mend."

For in a few years George Young was as popular a man as any one on the road, and well up in the business of a Cheap John. He had a large stock of goods, a double carriage—that is, one end of it for business, the other for living and sleeping in. It was like a river steamer, both ends alike. At this time his wife used to sell like a man, but George was very much despised for it by the others in the trade. But it suited him, as it kept him pretty much in idleness, and he was a sort of person who studied nothing but his own convenience, and very fond of getting the best of everybody and everything.

But George Young, though he passed through

many vicissitudes, prospered, and from the "lollipop" merchant that I first knew him in 1837, he became a great and highly respectable man—a good father, husband, citizen, and Christian, faithfully and honourably fulfilled the office of churchwarden in one of the most populous metropolitan parishes. And I have reason to believe was much and deservedly esteemed by every one who in any way had business or parish matters to transact with him. And such is the life of a Cheap John! "I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy."—But *Mors omnibus communis!*

Aaron Jessell was a smart Israelite. When we first met he was about twenty-five years old. There was always an interest in seeing fresh faces in the business, more especially when the party was a noted character, as in the present case. I first saw him at "Hu'ards Horth" Fair in Sussex; at that time it was a very queer place. The fair was attended by some five or six hundred navvies, who were helping to make the now popular London and Brighton railway. And should any traveller on the line wish to alight at the above-named place, viz., Hu'ard's Horth, I would strongly advise him to look out for the Hayward's Heath Station, and at the present time for Mr. Chart, stationmaster,

who will I am sure, from his well-known disposition, render him any assistance he may require. Hayward's Heath was, at the time I am writing of, in reality a *terra incognita*, and the visitors to the fair on this occasion a rough lot, being principally navvies.

Jessell had a very handsome turn-out at the time, and was travelling alone. I, at the time, was working a concern belonging to John Lally, in conjunction with George Dearing. As soon as Jessell and I met, we fraternized at once. He told me that he was having another carriage built—handsomer than that he was using, and that he lived at Ramsgate at the time, but that he wanted to leave the southern district, and break new ground. Hearing from me that I had travelled through Lancashire, Yorkshire, and all the Midland counties, he wished me to join him, which I agreed to do, after the few fairs were over for which we had started the present concern to work. I joined him at Battle, on the 26th of November, 1888, and we went to Dover, where we met Friday and another young fellow, with an establishment belonging to Mat Hunt. And when we began business, I saw for the first time a dodge peculiar to Aaron. It was his method, when he met any one else in the business, to declare war;

and, for that purpose, he used to have on hand a quantity of Dutch pencils. They cost 9d. per gross, and were done up in dozens. He would untie a lot of these, and throw them away all over his opponents, and the boys and girls, men and women, would scramble after the pencils, and in their haste to get them would put the opposition in peril of having their concern turned over, or thrown down, if it was on two wheels. As soon as Jessell and Friday began business, Jessell showered a lot of these pencils on poor Friday's head, which made the latter very wroth. Besides, Jessell had a box, about half the size of a tea-chest, with something inside looking like a ferocious black dog. It was called a devil, and as soon as you opened the lid it would spring up; and it was a great lark to pretend to prevent the "animal" getting loose. It was a dodge that would be sure to draw the people away from any other concern; so that the first day of Dover Fair was spent between the "Johns" in opposition. After it was all over, Friday remarked, "Never mind, Mr. Aaron Jessell, Esquire! the next time we meet, I'll lay you a new hat (*i.e.*, a guinea) that I'll have a —— devil that will lick yours into fits."

Tom Macabe, a quiet harmless Irishman, and

Aaron Jessell, met each other for the first time at Bolton Fair—I had met Tom before on several occasions. As soon as Jessell began business he commenced his old Dutch pencil dodge, and showered several dozen in their loose state over Tom, who, not knowing Jessell or his little game, could not make it out; but suddenly rushing inside his van he drew forth a box containing broken scissors, knives, razors, chisels, &c., which had been accumulating for some time, and taking up three or four at a time, let go at Jessell; the articles in their transit flying open made it anything but pleasant to him, who, holding up his hands to guard his head, had his fingers cut through to the bone, with several scratches and bruises besides on his hands, till he could stand it no longer, when he jumped down from the van and fairly bolted, amid the laughter and derision of the mob. And Tom was declared the victor—Aaron had caught a Tartar at his own game.

“When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war.”

Sometimes, when in a country where there were large villages, or small towns, we used to work what was called “eastery,” or private business. It is to go and set up in or near the centre of the place, and give out—that is, cry the place.

If there was a regular crier we paid him his fee, and borrowed his bell; because, to do the job was more interesting to one of the party, and we could say what we *chose* instead of telling the crier, who could not be expected to do the work so effectually as one of ourselves. It was generally done on horseback, which gave it a more singular and imposing appearance, and, the party being a stranger to the place, the people would be sure to come out of their doors to listen and see what it was all about. The tale generally began by ringing the bell three times in a very distinct and decisive manner, then calling out something to attract, such as—"O yes! O yes! O yes! Lost, stolen, or strayed away, a four acre field, a pond and a windmill; whoever has found the same may keep the lot, as the owner does not want them any more." And then give out the proper thing, that is, ring the bell again three times, followed up with the three O yeses. "This is to give notice, the London, Birmingham, and Sheffield warehouse has arrived in this place, and will sell, this evening, a large and varied stock of goods, opposite the King's Head. Sale to commence at six o'clock; calicoes at a farthing a yard, &c.," and say anything else *ad libitum*. So that at night there used to be a crowd of three or four

hundred people, according to the size of the place.

At one eastery Aaron Jessell was going to cry the place, and the "Cockney-kid," who had never seen the thing done, was going to watch Aaron without his knowing it. But Aaron was made aware of what Cockney was up to, though not seeming to take any notice of it. So when Aaron began his first cry, Cockney crept into a doorway some little distance off. Aaron, who had any amount of cheek, began, after doing the ringing and O yes business—"This is to give notice, to be seen a live gudgeon, commonly called the Cockney-kid, commonly called the Startsman Bloke, commonly called the Cool Assassin; there he goes—there he goes!" There is no telling how long Aaron would have gone on, had not the Cockney-kid bolted off as he did.

At a time when Aaron Jessell had opened what was termed a bazaar at Leighton, Friday and I were selling in the evening in the open air from a van in the same town. One night, about twelve o'clock, on returning to our carriage, the watchman was passing, from whom we begged a light, when just at that time a man came up and put the light out; he was about thirty years old, a big powerful fellow, too much for me to tackle;

but on my telling him not to do it again, after I had obtained another light from the Charley, he struck me on the nose a rum 'un; and Friday, upon seeing which, ran down to the hotel for the governor, thinking it a rare catch for Aaron, who, upon coming up, struck the big fellow a rare punch, but which did not seem to make any impression upon him, and said he would fight Aaron for a fiver. "Done," said Aaron, and each held up their hands in fighting attitude, when, after sparring a bit for an opening, and not fancying the fellow, Aaron suddenly exclaimed "Namus!" thereby meaning, cut, run, take care of yourselves.

Friday and I bolted into the van; and Aaron, after dodging round the man several times, as a pigeon does before it takes its direct flight homewards when it is thrown in the air, cut away all at once, and never stopped until he had got into the hotel and up the stairs into his bedroom, leaving the fellow in the middle of the broad road fighting at nothing, and perfect master of the situation. The next morning Aaron looked very queer on the big fellow calling to know if he meant to have the match for the "fiver," when Aaron got out of the scrape by vowing he never said he would fight for 5*l.*, but that he would run

him for that amount, which he was still willing to do.

Aaron Jessell and myself arrived in London on the night the Royal Exchange was burnt down; we put up at the Angel, in Farringdon Street. The next day I went to the White Lion at Paddington for the purpose of seeking out Friday, being commissioned by Jessell to offer him good terms to join us. I found him out after a little inquiry, and by my persuasion, and Jessell's salary, induced him to join us at once. And I have no hesitation in saying, "we three"—viz., Aaron Jessell, William Green, and Friday, were a match for any six handsellers then on the road, masters or men.

We travelled thus for six weeks or two months, carrying everything before us. Jessell was not a man to do things by halves—he must be best at everything he attempted, and never knew of such a word as "fail." He used to say—"Fail! fail!! fail!!! We fail! ha! ha! but screw your courage to the sticking place, and by the holy-jumping-mother-of-Moses—who was my uncle—we'll not fail."

When we got to Manchester Aaron said he was going to lie up for three weeks, it being Passover time; but as this did not suit either me

or Friday, we both went to Birmingham, and sold goods at several markets round about there for a short time, when Friday joined Chris. Newman, and remained with him for several months.

Aaron Jessell had a brother named Harry, who used to travel about with us. He was a good salesman, and a very handy fellow; being a Jew he wore a very long and jet-black beard—beards were not usually worn at the time—and in joke would often call out to a person, "Silence, black muzzle! and if you don't go away I'll come down and give you three rounds for half-a-crown; and if I don't knock a limb off every time I hit you I'll charge you nothing for my time—there'll be no trouble in the matter."

Harry used to amuse the people sometimes by putting a small pair of black boots on his fingers and dancing a hornpipe *à la* Wizard Jacobs, which he did very effectively. The dodge never failed to draw the attention of the people.

Harry, asking a person one day to write a letter for him, the man observed, "What! can't you write?" Harry replied, "Oh yes, I can write very well, very well indeed; but the worst of it is I can't read it afterwards, nor anybody else." Harry was a rare fellow to say anything, and to stick to

it; he never gave way to anybody. I was with him on one occasion when he gammoned the people in the parlour of a public-house that the Battle of Waterloo was a sea-fight. "For," said he, "the word tells you so. It was fought on the *water* on the river *Loo*! Now, put 'em together, and what have you got but Waterloo! I was there and *see* it all. Now, if it hadn't been a *sea*-fight how could I *see* it?"

When there was anybody Harry could not convince—against his will—he had a way of getting out of the dilemma by what he called "queering his opponent," which was in this style—"Well, never mind, look here; three weeks afterwards previous to this, and long before yesterday came, as I and my uncle Moses was," &c. &c. Then he would tell the company another story full of absurdities, with neither beginning, middle, nor end to it, until he had completely mystified them. He was one of the rarest chaps at "kid," *i.e.* gammon, out. It was always better to believe him—at all events to pretend to do so—than to dispute with him on any matter, however absurd it might be.

"Harry Jessell's gratitude!" used to be a by-word on the road. It came about thus. At Tenterden May Fair the second day was usually spent

by the travellers in riot and dissipation ; and on the occasion to which I allude there was a set of skittles placed on the side of the road, which was a very wide one, and arranged so as the people could play there as well as in an alley. Now it happened that Harry Jessell, although not at all given to drink, had been imbibing enough to make him more than merry ; and seeing a young fellow in the act of throwing at the skittles, took the ball away from him and began knocking them down himself, and in fact very much interfering with the company, who were all of a kidney and strangers to Jessell and our crew. The young man did not like being balked, and wanted to get the ball back from Harry, who pushed him away, and that somewhat roughly, I admit. This was just enough for the young fellow, who was connected with the market tollman ; who, besides keeping a china and glass shop, did other duties, such as head-constable and sweeper of the magistrates' office, and of course was glad of a job that was likely to put a few shillings into his pocket. So away went this young fellow to the magistrates, who were sitting at the time, before whom he swore that Harry Jessell had knocked him down and trampled on him, and otherwise ill-used him. The magistrates granted a warrant at once

for the young fellow and his friend had made such a mountain out of a mole-hill, saying they knew Jessell for a desperate character, and that he was in the habit of knocking down and maltreating any person without the least provocation, &c. &c.

As Harry was quietly walking up the High Street, a short time afterwards, never dreaming of what had been going on in the magistrates' court, he was apprehended on the warrant previously obtained, and brought before their worshipful worships, and although six witnesses swore that all Harry did was nothing more than merely pushing the young man on one side in a friendly manner, and taking the skittle ball from him more in a joke than in anger, yet Justices' justice ruled, decreed, and ordered that the defendant must pay forty shillings and costs, or be confined to Maidstone Gaol for the space of three weeks, and to hard labour.

Now this was the first fair of the season, and Harry was not in a position to pay the fine and costs, and the thought of having to go to prison nearly sent him crazy. At that time he had not a *knighted* cousin as a Master of the Rolls—by *St. George* he had not—and even his own brother he had grievously offended, and the party he was working for did not feel inclined to

advance the money. In fact, it is always thought to be a bad plan to let journeymen Cheap Johns get into debt with their employers. It is bad in two ways, for if they owe their governors a few pounds they are working an uphill game, or against collar, and that don't suit their book, and it destroys the independence which is, and always should be, between the master and the man, for there is no line of business out where, for many reasons, "Jack should be as good as his master"—that is, they should be perfectly independent of each other.

In the after-part of the day poor Harry was brought down from the lock-up to the inn where most of the fair people were putting up at, preparatory to his being sent off to Maidstone Gaol in a one-horse shay properly guarded by the town constable, when one Charley Stewart, an old and respectable showman, said that it was a pity to let Harry go to quod for a few pounds, especially as he had a brother living at Maidstone who would be very much disgraced thereby. "Now, lads," continued Charley Stewart, "it's no use talking without doing. Sympathy without relief is like mustard without beef, and of course, as you all know, you can buy sympathy at about a shilling a cartload, and that looks cheap enough for any-

body. Now I sympathize with Harry Jessell to the tune of 1*l.* 8*s.*, that's half the fine and half the costs. Now who'll go the other?" "I'll go ten shillings," said I, and there were about ten travellers who made up the amount of the fine and costs in half-crowns, &c., and so Charley Stewart handed to the constable in charge of Harry the required sum—viz., 2*l.* 16*s.*, and the prisoner was released from the limb of the law.

No sooner was Harry liberated than he went across to the china and glass shop, where he found the young fellow who had been the cause of his trouble, and informed the young man the fine and costs had been paid, and that his governor wanted to see him over at the inn directly. The young fellow, who gave a jeering smile, followed Harry to the inn, who, motioning him round the back-way, and then suddenly pushing him into one of the stables, turned on him with, "You swore I knocked you down, which was a lie, you thief!" and then Harry let fly at him right and left, and, to use the late Jerry Noon's favourite expression, and one that Jessell also frequently indulged in, he "knocked a corner-piece off him every time." The fellow yelled most fearfully, which brought the people out of the house, and among them his employer and relative the constable, who tried to collar

Harry again, but was met by such a blow on the nose from "Nobody-knew-who," that he did not try it on again, although six feet high, and strong made in the bargain. Of course Harry Jessell made himself scarce, and the constable and his man were hustled, jeered, and pelted with mud and turf, and could get no redress that day, as their mothers—the great Unpaid Old Women—had left the office where they usually sat, and on the morrow they thought it would be dangerous to attempt to lock any one up, as all the townspeople now began to talk the matter over, and all those who knew anything about the case said that it was a great shame to swear what they had, and get a warrant by falsehood; and all voted that the constable and his *protégé* had got their deserts, and so the constable let the matter drop.

On the following week was Ashford Fair, and as there were more shows than necessary, old Charley Stewart lowered his price very early in the day to one penny, and the people, rushing up in such numbers, broke down the parade, and with it most of the show fittings and fixtures. When Harry Jessell was told about it, instead of going to lend a helping hand to the old showman, like the others, he merely observed, "Serve the old fool right; why didn't he prop it up stronger?" Now as old Charley

Stewart was the first to propose, and contributed so largely in raising the money to release Harry from durance vile, "Harry Jessell's gratitude"—i.e., none at all—became a byword.

There was a poor little chap that used to work about Manchester. He stood upon one box and sold from another. I think he lived on two penny-worths of rum—of which he could drink about a bucketful a day—and a Lancashire oatcake. He was always in a state of semi-intoxication. He had but two sayings—one was "Go the rig, teapot," and the other, "Stand back!"—which he would continually bawl out, whether there were any people about him or no. He usually had for sale about three dozen leaden spoons, a pair or two of braces, and a few waistcoat-pieces. When Aaron Jessell beheld this man at Stockport market he was quite shocked, for he had never seen anybody like this person in the business before, and thought it the height of impudence for the little fellow to pitch so near us; so as soon as the covey began jabbering away on his small scale, Jessell was up and showered the pencils on him, and the people scrambling for them pushed the poor little fellow on his head into his own box, heels upwards, where he struggled for a time, and when he released himself he found the mob had not taken only the pencils, but the entire

stock of his own goods as well, so that he was completely ruined. However, upon appealing to Jessell, that worthy gave him five shillings to reinstate himself, but the little fellow would not take the "hush-money" unless Jessell stood a pint of rum into the bargain.

The last I heard of my old pal and contemporary was that he died at Panama, on his way to Australia. The reason of his departure was, as reported, a wager between him and another as to who could eat the most of a shoulder of mutton. Harry won the wager, but died under the experiment.

At about the same date I heard of the death of our mutual friend Friday. The young fellow was served with a copy of a writ, and failing to put in an appearance, the grim King of Terrors took him in execution one day as he was travelling across a moor in the North of England.

John Green—my brother Jack—was about twelve years old when I took him away from home to travel, and he learned to patter in about six months. John was a good boy, but very mischievous, and full of larking, dancing, and singing; in fact, before he learned to sell he used occasionally to give a song on the platform, such as, "By the margin of fair Zurich's waters," or "Jolly

Nose," both very popular in their day. Jack being a brother, did pretty much as he liked. Sometimes he would bolt away and join some rival concern, and when he was tired of it he would return to me, and, *sans cérémonie*, would go to work just the same as if he had not been away for more than an hour or two. His style of doing that sort of thing was about the coolest I ever knew of.

The late Mr. Albert Smith, the humourist and novelist—and whom, with respect to his popular entertainment of "Mont Blanc," at the Egyptian Hall, Barnum, the American "dodger," claimed as a brother showman—has immortalised my brother Jack in his "Comic Tales and Pictures of Life at Home and Abroad," where, in a picture entitled "A Little Talk about Bartholomew Fair—Past and Present," after giving a general description of the fair and its visitors, he says: "The principal traffic of the fair, beyond the business transacted in gingerbread husbands and wax-dolls, from fourpence to three shillings each, was monopolized by several men in tilted carts, who were haranguing little mobs of people, and apparently disposing of their wares as fast as they could put them up for sale.

"There were such frequent bursts of laughter

from the buyers that we were attracted towards one of these perambulating bazaars, in the hope of participating in their merriment." Then he speaks of John Dean, an old hand in the line, but one with whom I had but little intercourse. Albert Smith describes him thus: "The proprietor of the cart was a tall, burly fellow, in a round hat and knee-breeches, something like an aristocratic railway navigator." The "picture," I must admit, has more truth than flattery in it. I stood next to Johnny Dean on the occasion referred to. My brother was working with me at the time. But I must let Albert Smith tell his own tale in his own way. He then proceeds thus:

"Not fifteen feet from the cart of this man there was another similarly laden, and a constant fire of salutations and mock abuse passed between the two vendors. The merchant, however, in this case, was a mere boy—he could not have been above fourteen—but carrying an expression of the most precocious meaning we ever beheld. He was not a whit inferior to his adversary in ready slang, as his following oration over a two-barrelled gun will testify:

"'There's a little flaw in the lock, to be sure, but that don't hinder it's going off. I sold the fellow for two pounds to a farmer in Leicestershire, and

I'll tell you what it did. The first day he took it out he fired one barrel, and killed six crows as he didn't see; he fired the second, and shot nine partridges out of five, and the kick of the gun knocked him back'ards into a ditch, and he fell upon a hare and killed that. These guns will shoot round a corner and over a hayrick, and they are used to fatten the paupers that are turned out of the unions for not paying their income-tax. They load the guns with fat bacon and shoot it down their throats.'

"Of course this was a safe *entamure* for a laugh when he had done talking about the gun, which, however, he did not sell; he took up a whip, and cracking it two or three times in front of his cart, recommenced:

" 'Here's a whip, now, to make a lazy wife get up of a morning, and make the kettle boil before the fire's alight. It ever makes my horse go, and he's got a weak constitution and a bad resolution; he jibs going up-hill, kicks going down, and travels on his knees on level ground. When he means to go he blows hisself out with the celebrated railway corn as sticks sideways in his inside, and tickles him into a trot. Who says a crown for this whip?'

"There did not seem much disposition to buy

the article, so the seller commenced a fresh panegyric :

“‘You’d better buy it; you won’t have another chance. There never was but two made, and the man died and took the patent with him. He wouldn’t have made them so cheap, only he lived in a garret and never paid his landlord; but when he went home always pulled the bottom of the house upstairs after him. If any man insults you, I’ll warrant this whip to flog him from Newgate into the middle of next year. Who says a crown?’

“There were two or three other carts of a similar description in different parts of Smithfield; but these fellows evidently enjoyed the supremacy. How many profits had to be made upon the articles, or what was their original cost, we know not; but we bought four pocket-knives, each containing three blades, with very fair springs and horn handles, for sixpence! We had a little conversation afterwards with the first-mentioned vendor, who was, out of his rostrum, a quiet, intelligent person, and he assured us that at Wolverhampton the ordinary *currycombs* of the shops were being made by families for ninepence a dozen, the rivets being clenched and the teeth cut by mere infants.”

My brother, being at Greenwich Fair on the

following year, Mr. Albert Smith sought him out, and had a long afternoon interview with him at one of the principal hotels, where, in a private room, he paid for a good dinner, followed with, as Jack expressed it, "real red port wine" and as much brandy-and-water as he liked to call for, and "real foreign cigars."

Mr. Albert Smith was, I believe, at that time writing some work for which he desired to glean some information of "life on the road," and particulars of several fairs which he mentioned. When he had obtained the desired information he presented Jack with half-a-sovereign, and a "whole handful of orders" for one of the London theatres. So after the fair was over on the Easter Tuesday night, the next day Jack and some of his pals went up to town to go to the theatre and have a spree into the bargain. But on their arrival at the place of amusement, Jack had managed to lose all the orders for admission. But not to be balked of the night's entertainment, he had perforce to stand "Sam" for the lot, and the whole of them remained in London for the rest of the week, "out on the spree."

Several letters passed between my brother and Albert Smith, which Jack was very proud of, and showed them about so often that at last they got

fairly worn out in the service. Of this I was, not made acquainted until some time after their destruction, and when I had expressed a wish to take care of them for him. I more than ever regret the circumstance just now, as the letters would have been useful and interesting to have introduced into this work of mine. But whoever would have thought of my ever being engaged in writing a book to be printed ?

I was given to understand that Albert Smith sent my brother some of his works, but I never had an opportunity of seeing what they were, except the "Comic Tales" just quoted, in which he winds up the picture of the Bartholomew Fair for 1842 thus :

"Beyond these features"—that is, the Cheap John element of the fair—"there was little to notice; the vitality of the fair was evidently at its last gasp, and the civic authorities did not appear inclined to act as a humane society for its resuscitation. A little trade was maintained by the sale of portable cholera in the shape of greengages; but the majority of the stalls were sadly in want of customers. Even the Waterloo-crackers, unable to go off in a commercial point of view, failed to do so in a pyrotechnical one. Had we waited until midnight, when all became still, we might

possibly have beheld the shades of Richardson, Saunders, Polito, and Miss Biffin, with their more ancient brethren, Fawkes the conjuror, and Lee and Harper, waiting amongst the pens, or gathering together their audiences of old in shadowy bands to people the fair once more; as Napoleon collects his phantom troops in the Champs Elysées, where, since he has been buried in the Invalides, he must find it far more convenient to attend. But there was no inducement to stay until that period, and we left the fair about twenty minutes after we entered it, having seen everything it contained, and deeming ourselves fortunate in having been only once violently compelled to buy a pound of gingerbread-nuts, by the sheer force of a young lady who presided at the stall, and who appeared in a state of temporary insanity, caused by the lack of customers and limited incomes of the majority of the visitors."

I well remember the last—the very last—Bartholomew Fair I attended was in 1842, and it was a most wretched exhibition to what I had known it, for beyond Wombwell's and a few gingerbread and other stalls, and two Cheap Johns as I remember, that is, Johnny Dean and his man, and myself with my brother to assist me. If there were any others, as asserted by Mr. Albert Smith, they must have

worked in a very obscure part of the fair, and did not fall to my notice, though that could hardly have happened, for I had to run all over the place to find out the proper person to pay my toll-money to. The name of the person was Mr. Shanks, and I made some mistakes by asking several people, "Are you Mr. Shanks?" One in particular, who was a very tall and "shanky"-looking individual, to whom I put the question, "Are you Mr. Shanks?" looked at me very doubtingly before he answered the question, to see if he could find out what I wanted, or to see whether I was making fun of him. However, at length, turning on his heel, he said, very abruptly, "No, sir, I am not Mr. Shanks."

At last, I thought to myself, I am taking a great deal of unnecessary trouble in the matter, for, as I have twenty shillings to pay Mr. Shanks for my standing for three days, why, Mr. Shanks will soon find me out, so I took no further trouble about that worthy. But it was not long before I had the honour of receiving a visit from him, when he demanded and received the toll-money.

I have at times taken large sums of money at Bartholomew Fair, when in its zenith; but, as a rule, "Bartlemy" was not a favourite place with many in our line of business. There were too

much bustle and noise, and unless you knew just where to pitch for it, very little could be done. But we could not always get the place we desired, that part of the business being under the control of the City functionary.

I always acted under the advice and tuition of Jack Stokes, who was well versed in all the ins and outs of the place, and a native of London; besides, he would occasionally come and help me for an hour or two. He was at all times a good salesman, and I used to think he showed better form at old Bartholomew than anywhere else; his style of talk and jolly appearance seemed to suit the place and the people, and the people and the place him.

My brother, too, always got on very well here; but it was never ground that suited me, therefore I never did much beyond superintending and handing out the goods as they were required.

It may seem strange to some of my readers to be informed that Cheap John should have his likes and his dislikes as to the place he should sell his goods in, but I can assure them that there is a great deal in it, and that every man has his favourite towns and counties, in which he can work with more comfort to himself, and take more money than his compeers. Then, again, some men have such pecu-

liar dialect, that they are scarcely understood in the county next their own. Such a man was the great big, ugly, burly "Staffordshire Jack." He would mount the platform, and begin: "Nuo, juntmon, it bee moi torn to toll you-r tow or thray dundering grit lies; an' if I duana toll you-r more lies foive munfts than you-r con prove trow in a wouk, you-r wunna blove ot at oll. I say, ould gol, dunna you-r hov ony wonking nor locking rondi at I, vor moi ould yoife be locking on; shoi's os jolos os yot ould block chop in you-r plau house, on sho be as ogly as son, cros os you-r dovol, on no hor so plosont." And in that style he'd hammer out all the old and usual "whids," which to persons away south of his county would be painful and unpleasant to hear, and, to use a modern metaphor, would puzzle half-a-dozen Philadelphia lawyers to under-

Harry Perdue had a very marked west country brogue, which was very noticeable out of his own district. I could mention many other instances. Several Jew salesmen had a peculiar spluttering, a good deal of which wore off by practice; then there was the Scotch and Irish element that had its marked peculiarities.

The markets and fairs in Sussex in general, and

Brighton in particular, were my strong and favourite grounds.

Bartholomew Fair continued to drag on, without its shows or exhibitions, for the City authorities kept on year after year charging more and more toll, until at last the excessive charges amounted to an absolute prohibition. In 1849 an experiment was tried to establish another fair on the usual three days on a large space of ground in the New North Road, Islington, but it failed to attract attention. In 1855 Bartholomew Fair was held for the last time.

When I settled down and retired from the travelling part of the business, my brother John had the concern at a gift, which unfortunately for him and myself was his ruin, as whenever he had been doing bad business, or spending his money in waste, he always came to me to replenish, and, never having been denied, it made him careless of the future.

My brother, who had pretty much his own way all through life, died in London, in 1867, of consumption. Poor Jack! a tear to thy memory. "I could have better spared a better man;" but *Requiescat in pace*.

Sometimes when in London, buying goods or on

passing through, if I had time I used to visit the best places of amusement, for instruction as well as for pleasure. In fact, people who travel as a rule are fond of theatricals. Whenever we visited a large town for the first time we used immediately to ask if there was a theatre, and if one was open we were sure to pay it a visit. I actually walked one day from Maidstone to London to see Macready play Iago on the occasion of Mr. James Anderson's benefit; because, as that great actor usually played Othello, I thought perhaps I should never have another opportunity of seeing him as Iago. I have seen Macready and Phelps as Macbeth and Macduff, with Mr. George Bennett as the First Witch; Farren and Bartley as Peachum and Locket. I have seen that wonderful cast in *King John* at Drury Lane, the original cast of *London Assurance* at Covent Garden, and of *Money* at the Haymarket, also that of *Les Huguenots*. There were giants in the theatrical world in those days, with no mistake about the matter. But at this period we get splendid scenery, machinery, and decorations, with legs! and burlesque. And if there happens to be a decent actor or actress in the company, he or she is lauded up to the skies by critics, and puffed up by

ten or twelve advertisements in the newspapers—paid for at so much per line. Bah! “all leather and prunella!”

Harry White, of Salisbury, whom I have incidentally mentioned at page 35, met with a disastrous death. Harry, who was a very careless man, was returning home from Weyhill Fair, and was riding on the cart without reins, and on going down one of the hills the horse began to trot; and Harry, who tried in vain to get him to go steady by talking to him, tried to jump down and catch hold of the horse’s head at the same time; but he fell in the attempt, when the horse trod on him, and a wheel went over his body, which gave poor Harry his *quietus*. I did not know much of his abilities, as he was about forty-five years old when he died, which was about a year after I commenced “Cheap Johning.”

James Crocket, otherwise Colonel Crocket, the Lion King, was the son of James Crocket, the showman; his mother, at the time of James’s birth, was being shown as a giantess in a large carriage of natural curiosities. His father and mother dying young, Jemmy joined the Ranger Brothers as a cornet-player, at which he was very proficient; and afterwards, for a consideration, became “Lion King;”

and it is worthy of remark how the mixing with or trading in wild animals alters the nature of a man. This young fellow, from being good tempered and jocular, became morose and sombre, and was never seen to smile for several years before his death, which took place at Cincinnati in America.

It happened once that three Cheap Johns, whose names it is now not necessary to mention, met at Sunderland—I think it was in or about the year 1838—and just to show the jealousy with which they regarded each other, although they had never met before, I relate the following. The business to be done in the place was not more than sufficient for one, yet neither would go away or give in to the other, although there were plenty of other places within ten and twenty miles to go to. So after various arguments, each in favour of himself, it was mutually agreed that each should have two days in a week, and that would vary the business, and likewise be fresher for the people. Then came the difficulty of choosing the day; as, of course, in all manufacturing districts Monday, Friday, and Saturday are the best, so they got over that by agreeing to varying the days for three weeks; but the first wet night

that came upset all their arrangements, as the one whose turn it was that night insisted upon opening the next day. So after that they all swore they would open every day, which they did, and if they had been left to themselves would have been all ruined, as neither would have given way while he had a shot in the locker; but the authorities stepped in and stopped all future display, as they got so vehement and hot in their language that it led to several breaches of the peace. And since that period only one Cheap John at a time has been allowed in Sunderland.

When I was very young in the business I went to a place called Hadleigh in Suffolk, and there were two fishsellers from London selling their goods in the market-place. Some one had reported that the fish were not wholesome, so the chief constable took upon himself to seize it as it was exposed for sale, and took the two men before the magistrates, who at these places generally sit on a market-day.

When the men were brought up and asked their names, one replied "John Cannon," and the other "Fred Bullet." Upon hearing the names pronounced the Justice took a good look at them

through his spectacles, and then took the spectacles from his nose and had another good look at them. The clerk also peered at them over his specs, and then observed, "John Cannon and Fred Bullet—very curious that two men should be together with names so correspondingly." However, after doubtful glances, curious half-smiles, and asking each which was Cannon and which was Bullet, the case proceeded. The chief constable said, from information received, somebody had bought some fish of these men and told him it stank, so he seized the lot and brought the men before his worship. The police surgeon was sent for, and in the meanwhile the men were asked whether they chose to say anything. Cannon and Bullet, true to their names, began by saying that they did not believe the constable, and that they had attended the market before, and had never sold an impure article. "Oh, of course not," said one of the old Great Unpays, "you won't cry stinking fish, but we shall hear what the police surgeon says in the matter when he comes." Messrs. Cannon and Co. defied the surgeon or anybody else to say the fish was bad, and kept jabbering away both at the same time and in elegant "Billingsgate," until the constable returned; but he came without the

doctor, who had gone to attend an urgent case out of the town, and the people at his house could not say when he would return. This statement made Messrs. Cannon and Bullet more boisterous than ever, and put the Justice in an awkward dilemma, who, having held a consultation with the clerk, decided on sending for the assistance of the principal fishmonger in the town, and to that purpose a messenger was despatched to request his immediate attendance. In the meantime, the police constable informed the magistrates and their clerk that he had found, among other matters, on the defendant Bullet, the printed paper here produced, which in his (the constable's) opinion was a somewhat suspicious document, and as "from information received" he found that London fish-dealers and costermongers—many of whom were violent Chartists—had a secret language of their own, he had endeavoured to read the printed paper in question, but found so many words and phrases that he could not understand that he had his private reasons for thinking that there was a "something in it" that looked in itself suspicious. The constable then handed to the magistrate's clerk the handbill, of which I subjoin a copy:—

Slap up Tog, out and out Kicksies Builder,

AND

TILE MAKER,

34, Weston Street, Somers Town.

Mr. H. nabs the chance of putting his customers awake, that he has just made his escape from Russia, not forgetting to clap his mawleys upon some of the right sort of Ducks, to make single and double-backed Slops for gentlemen in black, when on my return home I was stunned to find one of the top manufacturers of Manchester had cut his lucky and stepped off to the Swan stream, leaving behind him a valuable Summer stock of Cantoons, Merinos, Buckskins, &c., &c., Velveteens, Moleskins, Cords, Plushes, Swansdowns, &c., &c., and I having some ready in my kick, grabbed the chance and stepped home with my swag, and am now safe landed at my little crib. I can turn out Summer Toggery of every description very slap up, at the following Low Prices, for READY GILT—Tick being no go.

Upper Benjamins, built on a downy plan, a monarch to half a finnuft. Slap up Swell Dress Togs, 2 couters 3 quarters and a peg. Slap up Velveteen Togs, lined with the same, 1 pound 1 quarter and a peg. Moleskin ditto, any color, lined with the same, 1 couter. A pair of Kerseymere Kicksies, any color, built very slap up with the artful dodge, a canary. Pair of stout cord ditto, built in the "Melton Mowbray" style, half-a sov. Pair of very good broad cord ditto, made very saucy, 9 bob and a kick. A pair of long sleeve Moleskin, all colors, built hanky spanky, with a double factment down the side and artful buttons at bottom, half-a-monarch. Pair of stout ditto, built very serious, 9 times. Pair of out-and-out fancy sleeve kicksies, cut to drop down on the trotters, 2 bulls. Waist Togs, cut long with moleskin back and sleeves, 9 peg. Mud Pipes, Knee Caps, and Trotter Cases, equally cheap, to be had at the above manufactory.

A large assortment of Tiles of every quality, to fit all sorts of Nuts. Kids' Caps of every description.

A decent allowance made to Seedy Swells, Tea Kettle Purgers, Head Robbers, and Flunkeys out of Collar.

N.B. Gentlemen finding their own broady can be accommodated.

Observe the Address!—34, Weston Street, Somers Town.

The reading of the handbill caused a great laugh in the court, and I may here remark that the bill in question had been very freely distributed about London at the time by a puffing tailor, who had a turn for flash patter.

The fishmonger of the town, having received a hurried message to the effect that the magistrates wished to see him immediately about some fish, thought that perhaps it had been determined, for some reason or another, to get up a dinner in connexion with town matters, so, with the idea of facilitating the business, he attended the court with a fine large cod and some samples of other fish he had in stock.

The magistrates explained to the fishmonger that they required his evidence as to the condition of some fish that had been seized that morning by the constable. Here Messrs. Cannon and Bullet not only recognised the fishmonger, but also the very fish he had brought with him to show the bench, and for the purpose of disposing of the same. "Didn't we sell you that fish you have got with you? Didn't you buy that large cod of us?" said Cannon. "And didn't you buy them soles and that John Dory of us?" said Bullet. The town fishmonger admitted the fact, whereupon there began a consultation with the magis-

trate, the clerk, and the fishmonger, all of whom retired into a private room for further debate. At length they returned to the court. Then the chairman, with many "hems" and "ahs," addressed the defendants by saying that unfortunately in this affair there had been a failure of justice, and under the circumstances the defendants would be discharged, but with a caution.

But Messrs. Cannon and Bullet did not intend to take the caution or the discharge, but insisted that they had been illegally arrested and detained. Moreover, they had lost their market, and likewise their characters, which they wanted cleared up, and that they would not have had it happen for a thousand pounds—it was as easy to say a thousand as a hundred. They declined taking the fish again—they must consult their solicitor, Mr. Charley Philips, when they got to London—they must report the circumstances of the case to their friends, some of whom were mayors and aldermen, and them as wasn't mayors and aldermen expected to be so—all their friends were members of the great Fishmongers' Company, who had got a large hall of their own—that their own standing counsel and attorney-general was Mr. Charley Philips, and he was just the man and gentleman to show the bench of magistrates something as wouldn't agree

with them or the balance at their banker's.—They'd got characters and reputations that was not to be trifled with or trampled upon, and that the bench, their clerk, and the constable must be prepared for the very worst. Lawsuits was expensive matters, because they cost a lot of money, and Mr. Charley Philips was by no means a cheap man of law, particular when he'd got hold of a good case, &c.

The upshot of the matter was that the bench, with their clerk, took the town fishmonger into their confidence, and bid him make the best bargain he could in purchasing the whole of the fish seized, and compensating Cannon and Co., and to that end they adjourned to the nearest public-house, where, over a few pots of beer and sundry quarterns of gin, and a great deal of argument *pro* and *con*, the matter was at last amicably settled, and Bullet and Cannon returned to London on the morrow morn wiser and richer men.

One Maidstone Fair time I saw one of the gipsy Lees called "Jemmy" fighting with a man much bigger than himself. Tom Rosseter, the mumper, was seconding his brother-in-law, Jemmy Lee, when, as Jemmy kept throwing his man very heavily, he said, "My dear *blessed* brother, don't throw the *blessed* man like that, or you will be sure

to kill him." "Well," said Jemmy, "but my dear *blessed* brother, if I don't kill the dear *blessed* man, why, the big *blessed* —— will be sure to kill me, and so I must keep on throwing the dear *blessed* man, for you see what a *blessed* big dear fellow he is to me." To understand this little tale my readers must be informed that in general conversation the gipsy people are much in the habit of palavering one another over with "my dear *blessed*" this and that, also of kissing each other, and, stranger to say, that when they are quarrelling or fighting they "bless" one another and kiss one or the other who has the best of a round. After a decided sharp blow there is a kiss and "I hope, my dear *blessed* brother (or cousin) I did not hurt you." Then they go at it harder than ever.

Travelling from Manchester to Birmingham I lamed my horse, and, as the veterinary surgeon I employed informed me it must of necessity take some week or two before the animal could be expected to travel again, I purchased, or more properly speaking had a "chop" with a wooden bowlmaker from Chesham, in Buckinghamshire, whose name was Bates, and whom I had met with on the road, for two dogs and a light cart he possessed. Dogs in those days were much used for travelling far and fast. So as to lose no time

nor money while my horse was under the veterinary's hand, I made up a good selection of goods and started off the next morning to Evesham, next to Tewkesbury, then to Gloucester; from there to Ludham and back to Birmingham in a week. When I got back I found the bowlmaker I had the dogs and cart of in great tribulation. He repented of the bargain, and had realised the fact that he could not get on without his dog-team, and had never stirred out of Birmingham since he parted with it. I had taken great care of the dogs, and they had become very fond of me even in the short time that I had had them. I travelled not less than a hundred and forty miles in seven days, and had plenty of time to sell my goods. However, as the man so regretted the bargain he had made, and he had a very capital donkey, a dark-brown one, with a coat as sleek as a race-horse—we came to terms for another "chop." The landlady of the Rose Inn, where I was staying, lent me a pair of excellent saddle-bags which, with the donkey, answered my purpose for the time being. But with a light load, say two hundredweight, and a couple of good-bred dogs and a properly-built cart, a person could run round England in less than no time; and then the turn-out is so very inexpensive. However, the law now prohibits the use of dogs for

draught. The Act was passed some twenty years ago, as the poor animals used to get very much abused by some people, although a majority of the persons using them took great care of them, and treated them well, as they were like costermongers' donkeys, the whole living of a family depending on them.

Christopher Newman, who was a most industrious man, commenced business when he was about twenty-three years of age. He had no experience before that time, and so jealous were all in the line that they would not let him know where the best places for buying goods were; indeed, this was a common circumstance, and all sorts of expedients were resorted to. Harry Perdue used to go so far as to open other people's packages to look at the goods and find out where they came from, as the invoices were generally sent inside the cases, postage at that time being sixpence, eightpence, or tenpence for a letter.

However, Newman made his way very well, and being very abstemious and a good worker, saved money fast, and opened a large wholesale and retail warehouse at Birmingham; worked hard, married, had two children, worked, worked, worked, made a great fortune, when the "King of Terrors" called on him suddenly one morning. A glass or two of

good sherry and a biscuit might have saved his life. No; what then?—Why, then he died, aged thirty-three.

One of the greatest "cuts" I ever knew was once when a man was speaking of Chris. Newman, and saying what a good sort he was, upon which the other said, "What do you mean by saying that? Why, d—— me, sir, he never called for a bottle of champagne in his life!"

Certain people who really believe in themselves, and are constantly cuddling the idea that money makes happiness, and are always remarking if others did this or that, instead of doing which or what—meaning thereby making money and forfeiting all other pleasures in this life for the one object, and having obtained that, what is the result? Sardanapalus's maxim of "Eat, drink, and love, the rest's not worth a fillip," is, to my thinking, worth a whole host of money-grubbers, who live by and for themselves; for when they do take their hook, who cares for them? Why, nobody but the parties that are interested in their wills and testaments. Then the expectant relatives are longing to see what the old fool leaves behind for them to enjoy, and then go into mourning. "Relatives," says Charles Mathews, in that most excellent of all performances of his, "*The Game of Speculation*"—

"Relatives put crape on their hats, but the crape soon wears out."

I knew a man in our line ; he was a good sort of a fellow at one time ; was sociable, merry, hearty, loved company and life, made a nice little fortune of seven or eight thousand pounds, retired from the Cheap John business, wrapped himself within himself, got miserable, didn't know what to do ; being a Roman Catholic, took to daily confession, absolution, and that sort of thing, and got whispered to death by the priests, and they took care of the whole of his money for him ! Oh, Jack ! Jack ! But we are enjoined not to speak ill of the dead. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

Being at Sevenoaks, in Kent, one Christmas-time, there were some men employed in excavating some old ruins, and in doing so dug up what appeared to be old silver coins. The men got to drinking and wished to dispose of their "find," so Fred Jolly bought what looked like a pound's worth of silver for a few pots of beer ; but he soon found out his mistake, as they were not silver, but kept that to himself. And when we arrived at Littlehampton we met an old Israelite we had seen before, of the name of Levi ; I think he was a Dutchman. Fred said to Levi, "Oh, I am so glad to have met you, Mr. Levi, as I have

got something I want to sell you that I bought of some navvies—fine old silver coins that they dug up at Sevenoaks when we were there; I have kept them on purpose for you, and there they are, look at them, rare old Roman, or some other sort of silver coins." Fred and Levi soon struck a bargain, and, when done, I said to Levi, "Now I have always had my doubts about those coins. What are they?" "Oh, silber! silber! Mr. Green; Lebi knows, leabe it to Lebi, he knows silber in de dark by de feel." Levi had a young man with him who kept scrutinizing the pieces and jabbering to Levi in Dutch or German. Levi answered him with, "Hah, don't I know '*duck*' silber? I tell you Lebi knows, leabe it to Lebr; as true as I'm here, silber." Still the young man would not be satisfied; so, taking a file, tested and found them spurious and worthless; and after any amount of jabbering Levi found out that he was done brown! at which he got into a violent passion, and cursed Fred in two or three languages, in which the words "Sononean, sheet gonnof," were often repeated. Fred enjoyed the joke very much, as he had got the grin on the right side this time.

Levi was about sixty years of age, and an oily fat man, and one of those persons who thought it

superfluous to put on more than one clean shirt a week, or even to indulge in the luxury of a bath. Levi coming into the parlour of a public we were staying at in the summer-time, took off his boots to dry his feet by the fire, for it had been raining a good deal during the day—when Fred Jolly said, "Here, I say, Levi, this is not the proper thing to do; you ought to have a room to yourself if you wish to indulge in this sort of thing." "Yes," said another party present, "I smelt them yesterday, and it was very disagreeable." Levi answered, "Did, my tear! Ah, you should smell 'em sometimes, ven dey hab not been vashed by de rain vorter coming into de boots ob mine vots got de holes in it. Ha! ha! ha!" Levi treated the affair as a good joke, and was in full glee, thinking he had made a good hit about "de rain vorter and his boots," when Fred Jolly shouted out, "Levi, do you want to buy any more old coins?" "Oh, you tief! you cheat! you gonnoff!" and swore all manner of oaths; but the more he swore the more he stank, till he set all the room sneezing at first, and then, by the perspiration getting stronger, he fairly stunk us all out of the room, the landlord included.

Levi could never stand being asked to buy old coins. But Fred never met him for years after the

transaction but he always shouted out, "Do you want to buy any old coins, Levi?"

"Oh, go to de debil, you tief you!" was the invariable reply.

My first meeting with William Last, *alias* "Tubby," was at Brighton, in or about the year 1838; he was just five feet in height, small limbs, and very quick in his movements, light complexion, no hair about his face; and from having travelled a good deal in Scotland, had acquired a habit of taking snuff continually in large pinches, but he was very clean withal, and a funny little fellow, full of chaff, but easily pricked, having a bad temper. When I first met him he was at low ebb, and with his wife, a fine handsome dark woman, quite double his own size, was assisting another party stuffing dolls ready for Birmingham June fair. Tubby did not like the job at all, and was most of the time while he was at the work in a sour mood, and about once in every hour, upon a slight provocation, would rise from his seat and pitch into his better half, which did no more harm than to cause laughter, as the good woman, by merely turning round her nether end towards him, would annul any attempt he made to strike her, and the little fellow would spend his fury very impotently, just like throwing a few peas on the

side of a big drum—they would make a great noise but do no harm. In cold weather Tubby would always wear his spectacles in bed, to keep, as he said, his eyes warm. His clothes, which were always too much of a fit, gave him a rather knowing appearance; and when he laughed or said anything he was pleased with, the whole of his big nose used to work up and down in a very comic manner. Tubby was anything but a religious little man, yet when he spoke seriously he always ended with the set phrases of "Pray God," or "Good God, keep us."

About the year 1855 Tubby was in Brighton. He came all the way from Inverness to sell me a lot of deer-skins. After I had done business with him, we adjourned to the Shades in connection with the Clarence Hotel, in North Street. I was wearing at that time a pair of Scotch tweed shepherd's-plaid trousers of very large pattern. Tubby stayed in Brighton two or three days, during which time we went to the Shades on several occasions. One day he called at my shop, when he was told that I was out, and that if he could find me he was to say that I was wanted on business. He volunteered to find me, and for that purpose entered the Clarence Shades, and looking anxiously about, the barmaid said to him—I at that moment

being in a different compartment to the one I generally used: "Are you looking for Mr. Green, sir?" Tubby replied, "I've only come to look after his trousers, my dear; show me them, and I'll find the rest of him," which caused a great roar of laughter; and I never had any peace in my shepherd's-plaid trousers any more, for, being so chaffed by the *habits* of the Shades, I was compelled to throw them aside. Tubby told me I was wanted at my shop, and, as I turned to go, said: "Lor, how you have altered! Why, when I first knew you, you used to call for a glass of grog, and then leave half of it. Now you not only drink the grog up, but you lick the spoon as well."

Knott Mill Fair, Manchester, at Easter, used to be very large, both in respect to shows and people. I do not think it is so much thought of now, as I have not of late years heard it mentioned in conversation. I remember being there about 1839, when there was a large circus. I forget whose it was, but it was a very good establishment, as I recollect. I should not have thought about it, only for something that happened which began in a joke and ended somewhat seriously to some parties present.

When the circus people had got what they

considered a sufficient number of persons to constitute a house, the usual cry of "All in to begin" was given, when, as the horses were going up the rake to cross the stage, a half-drunken fellow, rather in good humour than anything else, took hold of one of the horses by the tail as it was being led by, and gave it a sharp tug, when, to the man's astonishment and the people's mirth, the tail came off in his hand. It was a false one, and fastened on with straps to the horse's stump of a tail—a very common practice with circus managers to set a horse off.

The man having so unexpectedly obtained possession of the horse's tail, threw it—to the great annoyance of the circus proprietor—among the crowd, who threw it from one to the other, and in the scramble and uproar several people got very much injured, and had to be taken to the surgeon's. But the best of the joke was when the horse was taken into the ring, and a young lady in white, and ribbon bows to any amount, came tripping in on the light fantastic toe, to perform her act of horsemanship—for it must be understood that a woman always does horse-*man*-ship! No sooner had the "bob-tail" commenced running round, than the people, seeing the ludicrous figure he cut with his stump tail cocked up with not a vestige of hair

upon it, shouted again and again, and when he had gone through the first set of his evolutions, and had stopped at one side of the ring to gain breath and let Mr. Merryman have his little bit of nonsense, a man among the audience hung his hat up on the horse's stump of a tail, which made the people almost frantic with laughter, so that the performance was soon brought to a close.

I am just reminded of a chase we once had after some hard cash. In the old coach times we sent from Aylesford, in Hampshire, about thirty-six years ago, a parcel containing 24*l.* principally in silver. It was booked to a party at Salisbury, and as the coach passed through at night the parcel was given to the ostler to give to the guard. However, much to our annoyance, the parcel never reached its destination; and, after several journeys to Aylesford, we could get no tidings of it. In talking to the ostler, who well remembered having received the parcel, I asked him what he did with it. At first he said he laid it upon the corn-bin, and afterwards that he gave it to the guard; but that worthy could not recollect getting it, or delivering it at the place it was addressed to, so that it appeared to all parties concerned that our parcel had either been lost,

stolen, or mislaid. While talking over the matter, I saw there was a large space between the corn-bin and the wall, so I took the opportunity of looking for it there, and sure enough there was our parcel safe and sound. The theory of the case was that the ostler had laid the parcel on the corn-bin, and had afterwards lifted up the lid in a hurry, and by the action had thrown the parcel behind, where it had been ever since.

Robert Hales, the Norfolk Giant, was born near Yarmouth, of a large family of giants and giantesses. Joe Laskey, the proprietor of a large travelling show, being once at Yarmouth Fair, a young woman of great height walked up to see the show, when Joe, with an eye to business, took her name and address down, and waited upon her friends the next morning. They being family people, that is, people with a large family, readily came to an arrangement for their daughter to travel with him as a giantess, and I believe she was the tallest and finest female that ever travelled in that capacity, as far as my experience and knowledge go in the matter. Joe, artful Joe Laskey, to make certain of keeping her, married the lady. After travelling for a year or two they were showing at a place within eight or nine miles from Plymouth; as a coach for London drove up to change horses at

the inn near which the show was standing, a young sailor, who had just been paid off from a ship at Plymouth, and who was a passenger on the coach, got down while they were changing horses and ran up to see the show, when, to his great surprise, he saw his own sister, Mrs. Laskey, walking down the caravan.

The young sailor was Bob Hales, who was at the time just nineteen years of age, and a tremendously fine-made fellow into the bargain. Bob was immediately introduced to the husband, Joe Laskey, who declared that his newly-found brother-in-law should not go on to town by the coach, so they got his luggage off without more delay, and from that time Bob was installed a giant *par excellence*, and I suppose they—that is, Bob and his sister—were the finest pair in Europe, for Bob, though not so tall as his sister, was, for a giant, the best-looking man I ever saw, and when he was twenty-four years old weighed thirty-three stone, and said to be (*in the bills*) seven feet eight inches high.

Joe Laskey made "a hatful of money" while he had these brother and sister giants. Shortly after this they took a professional trip to Jersey, where Mrs. Laskey was taken ill and died. Joe hired a vessel, and conveyed her remains by sea

to Yarmouth, and from thence by land to her native village close by. Here Joe, "Joe the artful," saw a sister of the defunct Mrs. L., who, although not so fine a woman as the first, was better looking, which perhaps made up for it. "Happy is the wooing that's not long doing." So thought Joe, for he nailed the sister at once for a wife and a giantess. But Bob, not being agreeable to the marriage of a deceased wife's sister, kicked up a row in the matter, and left the show and started on his own account.

Joe Laskey, after travelling a few years longer with his second giantess-wife, lost her by death and then came to grief, as, from having one of the best and most successful of travelling shows, he lost his all for want of novelties—his "occupation was gone."

Bob Hales, after travelling some time on his own account, met the great Barnum, who offered him a good salary to appear at his New York Museum, and the giant, being tired of travelling "cribb'd, cabin'd, and confin'd" to a show, accepted the Yankee's offer, and was away from England a few years, and when he returned took, in conjunction with two or three others, a large public-house and gin-palace in Drury Lane, London, and they did a roaring trade all the time the novelty

lasted, when, falling out among themselves, the partners seceded from the business and left it to Bob, who went on for a time proper and profitable enough; but, whether from bad management or other causes, Bob came to grief, and had to pass through the Bankruptcy Court, and afterwards went travelling again. Now decay gradually but surely set in both in health and purse, and he died shortly afterwards, and was buried in his native place.

Bob was a sociable fellow, of good perception and agreeable bearing, and when in conversation his countenance would light up so that it was a pleasure to be in his company. He paid me many visits at Brighton while his affairs were being settled with the Bankruptcy Court. The process was tedious, so that Bob would often run down to get out of the way of those, of all men he had the most dread of—lawyers. I could relate many anecdotes connected with his life. One or two must suffice. While he was with Barnum a tall fellow came to see him. The great Yankee showman wanted a giantess to show with Bob. The thing had been frequently discussed, as Bob had often mentioned the circumstance of his first exhibiting with his sister—Mrs. Laskey number one—as the brother and sister giants. So it was soon arranged that

this new-comer to town should be engaged to personate a giantess, which proved very successful for some time. Then Barnum, in one of his thousand and two dodges to make the place attractive, announced in flaming posters and advertisements that the giant and giantess had made a match of it, and were to be married on a certain day at one of the principal churches in New York, which ceremony was actually solemnised, to the intense delight of the New Yorkers, and the filling the pockets of that Napoleon of humbugs—Barnum. But, said Bob to me when relating the circumstance during one of his visits to me at Brighton, if they had “tumbled” to the swindle the people would have annihilated us, and torn the place down.

On one of the many occasions that I dropped in on Bob when he was keeping the Craven’s Head, a Drury Lane gin-shop—for I never went to London on any description of business, but that I always made time to call in and “shed a tear” with him, for convenience and “days o’ lang syne.” On the particular occasion I allude to, seeing a stranger to me with Bob in comfortable quarters behind the bar, I said, “Bob, who’s your fat friend?” “Oh,” replied Bob, “that’s my wife I told you about having married at New York. We

have just been talking about old Barnum, and saying what a fellow he is at humbug!"

"Ay," said I, "the very Napoleon! But, Hales, ring the bell, and let's liquor up, and talk and think of Barnum only by the title he gave to himself—namely, 'The Prince of Humbugs,' for he says in his life, written by himself: 'The titles of "Humbug" and "The Prince of Humbugs," were first applied to me by myself. I made these titles a part of my stock-in-trade, and I may here quote a passage,' he continues, 'from "The Fortunes of the Scattergood Family," a work by the popular English writer, Albert Smith: "It seems a great thing to be a humbug, says Mr. Rossett; I've been called so often. It means, hitting the public in reality. Anybody who can do so is sure to be called a humbug by somebody who can't."'"

Puffing is a delicate art, not to be acquired by study, or practised with any high degree of success by the unlearned. Even those "professors who have raised the wind and themselves most successfully by puffing, will admit that the practice of the art becomes every day more difficult, and that superlatives, notes of admiration, and words from the Greek lexicon are beginning to lose something of their attraction.

Few men have done so much or so well in the way of puffing, as Barnum. Witness the manner in which he introduced General Tom Thumb to the British public. That was a master-stroke, and no sooner had he left England for Ireland and Scotland, than he kept his printer's ink going on here, as the following will show :

"GENERAL TOM THUMB.—IMPOSITION.—General Tom Thumb (now in Scotland, from whence he proceeds to Ireland) respectfully announces that in consequence of many persons having been disappointed in seeing him in London (as his levees were suspended on account of a slight cold), he will visit London in March or April next, for a short time only, previous to sailing for America. To save the public from imposition they are informed that various persons at the penny shows in Holborn and the fairs, and one also at the Egyptian Hall, have assumed the name of Tom Thumb, but that the *smallest* among them is *at least four times* the General's size."

Bravo ! old boss, bravo ! If so, these dwarfs must have been of the average size of the human race. Barnum seems to have overlooked this fact, as, indeed, he was in the habit of overlooking facts altogether when they stood in the way of his shillings. Long may he live and prosper, representing, as he does in his own person, one great feature of our times—the widespread trickery and imposition which extend even to the preparation of infants' food and other necessities of life.

The British public—that discerning public, so often apostrophized—did (with a little assistance from America) build Mr. Barnum rather a handsome house, which he called “Iranistan.” The high-priest of humbugs proved his gratitude for the gift by writing a book to show how utterly unworthy he was of such bounty, and to open the eyes of that public so that it may not throw away shillings on any other deluder except himself. But, however, the public seldom grow wiser by experience, and I dare say if General Tom Thumb was now to set out exhibiting Barnum about the country under the title and style of the “Prince of Humbugs” he would have no cause to complain of want of support from an enlightened and—British Public!

Of his house he named “Iranistan” Barnum in his life says :

“Visiting Brighton, I was greatly pleased with the pavilion erected by George IV. It was the only specimen of Oriental architecture in England, and had not been introduced into America. I concluded to adopt it, and engaged a London architect to furnish me with a set of drawings in the style of the pavilion, differing sufficiently to be adapted to the spot of ground selected for my homestead.

“On my return to the United States, I brought

these drawings with me, engaged competent architect and builder, and gave him instructions to proceed with the work not 'by the job' but 'by the day,' and to spare neither time nor expense in erecting a comfortable, convenient, and tasteful residence.

"The whole was finally completed to my satisfaction. My family removed into the premises, and on the 14th of November, 1848, nearly one thousand invited guests, including the poor and the rich, helped us in an old-fashioned custom of 'house-warming.'

"When the name of IRANISTAN was announced, a waggish New York editor syllabled it, *I-ran-i-stan*, and gave as an interpretation that *I ran* long before *I could stan*. More correctly, however, the name signifies 'Eastern Country Place,' or, more practically, 'Oriental Villa.'

"In deciding upon this kind of house to be erected I determined, first and foremost, to consult convenience and comfort. I cared little for style, and my wife cared still less, but as we meant to have a good house, it might as well at the same time be unique. In this, I confess, I had an 'eye to business,' for I thought that a pile of buildings of a novel order might indirectly serve as an advertisement of my various enterprises. It is

pleasantly situated at the terminus of two rail-roads."

Bravo again, old hoss ! Bravo !

After this little digression about Barnum, I will now introduce to the notice of my readers a fresh subject.

There was a young man who had worked with nearly all the Cheap Johns round about London. I never knew his proper name, but he was called "Seven Legs," from the fact that he had travelled for some time to exhibit a horse that had seven legs. He was, like most men used to a showman's life, always trying to swallow his own voice, and which seemed to get lower and lower by degrees. He had, however, rather a pleasing manner, and was decent looking ; he stood about five feet five inches in height, and had a strong lisp ; he was very fond of selling tea-trays, and would talk over them as long as the person he sold for would allow him ; he declared the paintings were done by members of the Royal Academy, to get their hands in for some great works of art ; also, that the person who painted the one he now held in his hand and offering for sale, was now engaged by King Louis Philippe, painting a large picture to represent the taking of Algiers.

"Seven Legs" was tediously elaborate at all

times over the tea-tray and tea-board business. At about the time I write of he received from an unknown hand the first Part of a work entitled *The Illuminated Magazine*, in which there was an article called "Pictorial Passages from the Life of Theophilus Smudge;" and as I happen to have the identical number by me, perfect except the wrapper, I take the liberty of making the following extract from it, more particularly as "Seven Legs" was always of opinion that the author of the article in question had him in his eye, and had taken the hint from his flowery description of the paintings on tea-trays, and not, I think, unreasonably so; for, coupled with the fact that "Seven Legs" received the number of *The Illuminated Magazine* from an unknown hand, the author of the "Life of Theophilus Smudge," after giving an account of how his hero was first connected with fine art from the fact of being engaged in touching up lamp-posts, then painting marine views for every fishmonger from Mile End to Knightsbridge—the payment for which he "took out in fish—from salmon and shrimp sauce to blosters," he proceeds thus :

"'I cannot imagine what he could want with me,' said I to my landlady one morning; 'you say, Mrs. Dobbins, he called just after I went from .

home last evening, and left that card? I looked at the said card again, and it only informed me that I was expected any morning before eleven o'clock, at the Birmingham depôt of Messrs. Glaze and Baker, Hardwaremen, 243, Long Lane, West Smithfield. 'Business most likely,' I thought; and, with my usual alacrity, finished my breakfast, and at the specified time I entered the shop No. 243, Long Lane, and was soon upon business terms with one of the partners of that respectable firm. 'You think, then,' said he, after a few preliminaries, 'you could manage to get up some battle-pieces on tea-trays cheap? they are the most likely things to sell as novelties in our business; the public have so long feasted upon peace and plenty, surrounded by a halo of flowers; the happy family in a golden circle, and mamma's darling. I dare say you know that subject, sir, with a border of Chinese griffins? You see, sir, it is absolutely necessary to keep pace with the bursting improvements of the present age. People require more stirring subjects; their energies are alive, and if you can assist us in feeding them, we shall thus add to the glories of a great nation; inculcate a deeper love for the fine arts, degrade those that persist in keeping to the old patterns; and above all (that which will cause us the highest

gratification), we shall afford you an excellent opportunity to get up your name, Mr. Smudge.'

"Mr. Glaze most amiably then proceeded in a highly polished strain, which he had doubtless acquired by long communion with his own tea-trays, and concluded by offering me fourteen shillings each, if I would undertake one dozen at that price, a sum which he assured me they had never before proposed to the most 'talented' artist in their employ, and which, with feelings entirely benumbed with gratitude for the very delicate and all but parental manner in which these overtures had been conducted towards me, I readily accepted. The blank trays were sent to my lodging, and forthwith I commenced upon my new work of art.

"I here beg to say, that as it is my earnest intention to dispense liberally every information connected with the voyage of art in which I have been engaged, as a set of landmarks either to be gained or avoided, as circumstances may dictate, by the younger and inexperienced traveller in the same region, that intention must apologize for this statement of the method I pursued in my first attempt in the grand historical. Having obtained an unparalleled illustration of indiscriminate fire and slaughter in the perfection of a coloured print,

purporting to be a faithful representation of British valour as displayed at the battle of Salamanca, I traced by puncture the outline of a few of the most daring perpetrators in the scene, foreshortening a drum and a dragoon in the immediate foreground, each having been destroyed by a wound in the head: displayed the field-marshal, with his staff, upon a small hillock in the middle ground—their private freehold ever since battles were first painted, dotted in some rows of heads in variegated military ornament, and left the rest to smoke, and then, by means of a pounce rag, quickly transferred this performance to each of the trays, and found that by painting them in parts—a sort of half stencil, half legitimate—to my surprise I could, with tolerable assiduity, realize four guineas a week; for, that day fortnight from my first interview with my new and generous patron, my countenance and his beamed upon each other with mutual recognition—with, on his part, a slight peculiarity, which, after some few seconds devoted to recollection, I discovered partook partially of resemblance to a drawing I had made in my primitive call to the profession, from a series of studies of the passions by Lebrun, called ‘*Surprise.*’ This expression he more decidedly seized on as I pointed to the dozen of

trays finished outright, and which my landlady's son Bob had assisted in conveying, and was now conjointly engaged with me in displaying separately.

"The other partner, Mr. Baker, being in the counting-house, the things were there removed to be reviewed and talked about by the two commercials, whilst I remained in the shop, in anxious speculation upon the result of my first exploit in this line of business, though apparently regarding some of the ornamental produce which I was absolutely looking through. At length I was summoned to join the two gentlemen of Birmingham hardware celebrity, when Mr. Glaze, who appeared anything but the sleeping partner, addressed me thus:—'We are extremely well satisfied with the manner in which these articles have been got up; but'—that awful but!—'we have made a mistake, mister, in the price. We find after adding the expense of polishing, stoving, &c., &c., to your part of the undertaking, our profits will be too small to allow you more than twelve shillings each.' 'Bravo!' said I mentally, 'this is a better reception than I anticipated;' at the same time pretending to be in an arithmetical labyrinth, from which I gradually emancipated myself. I told the gentlemen I would undertake a further

order on the last price—of course I would; and all that I have before mentioned, in the way of surprise on the part of my employers, was but as a particle in comparison, when, at the end of a fortnight, I returned them as many trays as realized the same amount as my previous undertaking. The money was, however, paid; and as, no doubt, they deemed it as much their duty to watch my interest as carefully as their own, a third order was given, but not without another reduction of two shillings on each performance, which affected my income not a fraction, seeing that in the same ratio I increased the number of battles with the decreasing price.

“The third batch brought matters to a close, and revealed not only the secret of my early compliance to their sliding-scale and my ability to meet them, but a clear demonstration of the adage, ‘That money is the sinews of war;’ for, upon inspecting my last efforts, a sudden dawn of intellect—as it so happened—appeared on the brow of Mr. Glaze, which he communicated to me in a mesmeric form: that is, by smartly thrusting his elbow under my fifth rib as he said—‘Very good, mister, very good; but we can’t be done any more in this way. No, sir, we see your system; why, these last are almost all smoke!’ ‘Certainly,’ I rejoined, ‘as

a fair dealer you must allow the justice of having less fighting for ten shillings than for fourteen; consequently, when you made your first reduction, a whole regiment went into smoke, and with your last I followed the same mode of economy, and gave you still more smoke and less murder.' It may be, perhaps, needless to remark, that at this candid avowal my business ceased—this determined my line of battle. In this short experience I had rendered myself equal to my talented friend Mr. Glaze—had proved myself as great a general. I regretted my capacity—but so it was."

At one time "Seven Legs" sold for George Young at the fairs in Kent. At Maidstone, when he had been working hard and was about to retire for the night, a tall, genteel-looking woman came up and claimed him as her son. "Seven Legs" declared loudly she must be mistaken, "as he never had a mother that he was aware of," which made the people laugh at the poor woman; but she still persisted that he was her son—her truly begotten son,—and that she would go home and fetch his own father, and for which purpose she left the spot, but soon returned with a farmer-looking man, who, as soon as he saw "Seven Legs," bawled out, "Yes, that's

our boy Jem, as sure as eggs is eggs," which so confounded poor "Seven Legs" that he was struck dumb; but soon recovering, he called out for his master, and when George Young arrived and mounted upon the platform, "Seven Legs" explained the matter; then turning to the woman, said, "Here, missus, look here! this is my father. Now, if you are my mother, just you tell these people here, how, when, and where—only don't let your husband hear it—how it all come about." This was a poser for the poor woman; but after a little conversation over a glass at a neighbouring public-house, the woman was at last convinced that she had made a mistake in the matter—"It is a wise father that knows his own child."

At Abingdon Fair there was a person named Smith, who was the proprietor of a "mumming," i.e., a theatrical booth. He had been doing very bad business, in consequence of a lot of counter-attraction, notably a large travelling-circus, which had taken the lion's share of the money in the place. Now, there were three boys connected with this circus, who have since become very popular in the equestrian world; but of that anon. Now, one of these brother boys was well known for his "kid," that is, gammon and devilry, nor were the others

the thickness of a sheet of fine writing-paper behind him in larks, jokes, and spreeds of every description.

Now, the eldest brother, who I will for convenience and obvious reasons call No. 1, said to Smith, the proprietor aforesaid, "Look here, Smith. We know that you have been doing very bad business here. It's no use to deny it, for we know just as well as you that it is so. Now a lot of us chaps propose to assist you to-night, as it's the last one, in getting you up a rare full house to help you and your 'school' to some *dinarly* and *mungarly*," i.e., money and food.

"Well," replied Smith, "it's very kind of you, very kind indeed, for I can assure you I have hardly money enough to pay for horses to draw us away to-morrow, and I have not paid the tollman yet for the ground he trusted me, having known me so long, and I should not like to let him in for it, if I can by any possibility get sufficient money together to pay him; for if I do not pay him it will make it bad not only for me, but everyone else for another time."

"All right," said the other. "Now look here, Smith. There's me and my brothers and four or five more of us mean to tog-up for you to-night, and come and work on your parade. We'll have

a bit of fun of our own without interfering more than we can help with your chaps, and will work well to get you a bursting house. I heard you tell the landlord of the house where you are stopping at, that you had no money to pay him, when you asked him to find you in horses to get away with, and that made me think about this dodge of ours, and all the stall-keepers' people and Cheap Johnny coves that can get away, have promised to come and see us do our little hanky-panky business outside, and then pay for admission like other people, just to give you a leg-up. Oh, you'll have a rare houseful, and no mistake about it."

"Well," said Smith, "I am sure I am very much obliged to you all; so to-night when you have done your last house, I shall expect you; or perhaps you could come to my concern before you commence your own business?"

"Yes, that's what we propose to do. We are all coming before our own business begins, so you be ready for us half-an-hour before your usual time, and we will all be there—a little hundred of us."

So this young fellow summoned up all the young chaps connected with the circus, the shows of every description, and all the Cheap John helps

and others he could get hold of, and made arrangements not only to get Smith a good house, but to have a rare spree among themselves in the bargain.

About six o'clock in the evening—it was the autumn time of year—Smith's regular people turned out on the parade for their first house, or performance; when up rushed the leader of the circus mob, dressed up after the manner of Richard III., the others dressed out in all manner of fantastical shapes, followed by all the other show-people, Cheap John boys, &c., &c. The leader knew well how to work outside, and he and the others caused a lot of fun by their antics, and the people rolled up in shoals. The consequence was that there was a bumping house, to the great delight of Smith, the proprietor, and his mummers, for it looked like their getting something to eat, at least for that night, which had not been the case of late.

When the players had given their last dance, and the usual shout of "Now, then, all in to begin," they went down the rake—that is the slanting-board, with pieces of wood nailed across to prevent the feet from slipping—for the purpose of commencing the play—the Tragedy, Farce, Comic Song, and Pantomime, in the orthodox twenty minutes. But they had reckoned without their host, for the

travelling boys were there before them, and those who intended to take part in the impromptu piece had got possession of the stage; when the ring-leader, who I will call **FIRST MOB**, rushed on and began *à la* King Richard.

FIRST MOB.

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made a flaring light by the aid of grease-pots——

“Bravo! bravo!” shouted the travelling-boys, who had dispersed themselves amongst the audience. “Bravo, Mr. Macready; Bravo, Macready! Mr. Macready, ladies and gentlemen, all the way from London, for this night only! Bravo! bravo!” The lads had got the audience with them, for they began to laugh, and also to applaud.

FIRST MOB (*in continuation*).

And all the clouds that lower'd down our chimney pots
In the deep bosom of the coal cellar bu-ri-ed.
Now are our brows bound with oak-apple trees,
And our bruised legs and arms hung up to dry;
Our almshouses changed to merry meetings,
And the cold winter nights coming to give us chillblains.
But a horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!
If you haven't got one bring a donkey.
What ho! a donkey——

Here the **SECOND MOB** rushed on.

Hullo, Richard, my pipkin! You are the cove I want——

"Bravo! Bravo, Vandenhoff! Vandenhoff for ever!" shouted the lads.

SECOND MOB.

Thus far into the bowels of the land have I come to fight the crooked-back tyrant, King Richard. Oh, there ye are! Come on, and blowed be he that cries—Hold, enough!

THIRD MOB.

Bring in the prisoners. You are the man that struck Buckley.

FOURTH MOB.

No; I'm the man that Buckley struck.

FIFTH MOB.

Bring in the prisoners; convey them to the eastern dungeon, then let them all be killed for the pigs' supper. Tyrants, thy time is come; take that one away and let him be greased all over, and I sup off him to-night; so stuff him full of sage and onions, and mind you baste him well. Ah! King Richard here! This to thy heart (*sticking FIRST MOB in the back*),

who replied:

That's not the place for the heart, stupid!

Then followed a general fight, with all of them rolling about the stage alternately killing each other. The FIRST MOB then addressed the audience, telling them that was the end of the dreadful tragedy, and he hoped they liked——
"Yes! yes! yes!" resounded from all parts of the house.

While all this was going on, Smith and his poor half-starved mummers were dumbfounded. They

at length rushed upon the stage with Smith at their head ; they tried to entice the boys off, and attempted to address the audience, but as they were enjoying the fun amazingly they would not give the manager a hearing. The boys in possession of the stage called out to some of their pals, and together they turned the manager and his company off ; and being thus the masters of the position, one of the party sang a comic song, the burden of which was, "Oh, cabbage, cabbage, cabbage!" which was encored three times. A comic dance then followed, after which they announced that the performance would conclude with a grand pantomime, entitled, "Harlequin Butcher ; or the Sheep's Head and Blood-stained Worsted Stocking," when, as all the lads were well up to the comic business, they made a very lively affair of it, tumbling about, posturing, singing the well-known clown's song of "Hot Cod-lings" and "Tippitywitchet," and with any amount of "Here we are's" brought the improvised pantomime to an end with the old and orthodox finale :

Troubles o'er, joys in store,
Think not of the past,
Life is short, mirth and sport
Cannot ever last,
Cannot ever last,
Cannot ever last.

This "hotch-potch" performance over, the audience of the first house thinking it would be repeated, told all their friends "what a spree it was," and not only induced others to pay for admittance to the second house, or performance, but did so themselves. The consequence was that the place was again crammed. Some disappointment, however, was expressed when the regular performers commenced the old and worn-out stock piece of "William of Normandy," so that Smith had to go upon the stage and appease the audience by stating that the celebrated company of London performers that had appeared at the first performance would reappear later in the evening. And which the travelling-boys did when they had done their own work for which they were engaged in various parts of the fair; the result was another full house, and Smith and his Co. realized between five and six pounds by this mad-brained spree.

I have known this dodge to be done on other occasions, but never with such monetary success as on the occasion I have just recorded.

To those of my readers who have been in the habit of frequenting circuses, particularly one denominated, and justly so, "The Mammoth," the name of Messrs. J. G. and W. Sanger will be familiar to them.

The first time I met Charley Wade was at Maldon Fair in Essex; he was then, as he is now, a very thin wiry man, of Dominie Sampson like appearance. At that time I suppose Charley had been at the "game," as he always called it, some years before, and had left off and began again. He was not at all up to the trade at that time, about 1842, but he has been at it ever since. I met him in London some years back, when, after the recognition, he told me he was still at the "game," and that it was as good as ever; "for, you must know," said he, "we takes about the same as we always did at places—eights, tens, fifteens, and twenties,"—that is pounds, at a market or fair. Charley is one of the least expensive men I ever met with in the whole course of my travelling experience. I don't think he ever spent twenty shillings in waste in his life, and he was sixty-five when I last met him. He would never go to the expense of a new trace if he could make a bit of rope answer the purpose. I have known him wash his face at a rivulet, and not wipe it with anything, but let it dry by the sun or wind. And of his extreme thinness, I may observe, that I was once on a jury at the Lewes Assizes, some twelve years ago, when two carriers were being tried for robbing a granary attached

to their stables, when "Carrotty Charley," the detective who was employed in the case, stated in his evidence, that he found the skeleton-key produced on one of the prisoners; when the counsel engaged for the defence took the key, and holding it up, said, "Is this not an ordinary door-key?" "Yes," was the answer. "Then why did you call it a skeleton-key?" "Why, because it has been filed to make it open the lock." Whereupon Baron Pollóck, the learned judge who presided, said, "Hand me the key," who, after carefully looking at it, continued, "Gentlemen of the jury, there is the same difference between this key and a skeleton-key as there is between a skeleton and a person that is as thin as a skeleton;" which was just Charley Wade's case.

Charley Wade, who was always a very careful, shrewd, far-seeing man, invested largely in freehold and leasehold property. He is very much respected by all who know him; and as in his youth he never did apply hot and rebellious liquors to his blood, his age is as a lusty winter—"Frosty but kindly."

Add to these retired leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure.

somebody* said, "And he gave it for his opinion, that whoever would make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together"—and them's my sentiments.

Sammy Shnoodle was a good old Israelite, who used to travel with what is called a shallow. A shallow is a flat basket about three feet six inches long, two feet wide, with sides or edges rising four or six inches. Sammy was not in the Cheap John business, but used to be among them a great deal. As we travelled faster, and with more liberty and convenience than many others, when we started from one place to another, any one of us would feel a pleasure in franking Sammy's shallow, weighing about forty pounds; as he was very useful in finding cheap places for certain goods when in London, and he would execute any commissions without any expense, and pay for the goods himself, and send them anywhere. And if the person did not happen to meet him again for a month or two, it was of no consequence; although Sammy travelled in the way described, it was not because he could not do otherwise, for his brother allowed him a competency, but for sheer love of the life.

His stock consisted of spectacles, rhubarb, silver pencil cases, sponge, and black-lead pencils, earrings, wedding-rings, pocket-knives, steel pens, &c., &c.; all of which could be displayed in a minute, as he merely tied an oilskin cloth over his goods, and his shop was closed, or when he took off the covering his shop was opened.

Sammy's brother was a merchant at Chatham, besides being one of the largest contractors of turnpikes; so occasionally Sammy was put on for a week or two as a toll-gate keeper. I expect there was some "special" business in view when this happened. I remember once going to Stroud Fair; there were some eighteen or twenty carts, carriages, and every description of vehicle that usually attend fairs, all in a line. On arriving at Stroud gate, who, to our great surprise, should come out to take the toll but Old Sammy Shnoodle. The first arrived said, "Hullo, Sam, my fine fellow, how much?" "Sixpence," replied Sammy. "Ha! ha!" said the party, "don't you wish you may get it? Here, lads," he shouted to all behind; "here's old Sammy Shnoodle a turnpike-man, and wants sixpence toll from us chaps. Why, Sammy, I wonder you ain't ashamed of yourself to want tolls from old pals—oh, Sammy! Sammy! I am ashamed of you." And so talking and admonishing, passed

through the gate without paying. The others all coming up and greeting him with, "Hullo, Sammy! how do, Sammy? Why, who'd a-thought to see you here! How long have you been turnpike-man?—take all the stuff you can of the chaps behind, and stick to it when you have got it. Good-bye, Sammy—good luck to you, my boy—I wish you was on the next gate we come to. Make all the other people that come along to-day pay double," &c., &c.; but not one of the party paid a mag for toll.

Sammy was very fond of company, and found the life of a turnpike-man dull—and it may be remembered that the elder Mr. Weller, turning suddenly to Mr. Pickwick, said, "Werry queer life is a pike-keeper's, sir. They're all on 'em men as has met with some disappointment in life." Now although this was not exactly the case with old Sammy, he nevertheless found it a "werry queer life," and, as before observed, being fond of company, he had two women to beguile the tedium of life at one of the gate-houses he was doing duty at. His brother hearing of it, paid him an unexpected visit one night about twelve o'clock, when he said, "Hullo, Sam! What's the meaning of this? Who are those two women sitting by the fire?" "Dose vimen is my vashervimins and her sister," said

Sammy. "I must have the vashervimins, and her sister come vid her for company's sake." "I can't allow such a thing," said the brother. Then Sammy replied, "Then you must keep your turnpikes yourself, for I can't and von't keep them unless I have company."

On one occasion I had to go from Ashford Market to the Brighton May Fair, a distance of about fifty-four miles. We had to start as soon as the market was over, as there was only one day to do it in; so we travelled that night about twenty miles of the journey, when we found a nice piece of "tober" by the side of the road, and drew off, intending to start again about four in the morning. As soon as we had done so, we took the horse from the shafts in a minute and popped his nose-bag on. Old Sammy Shnoodle and my brother Jack were with me at the time. My brother soon rigged up a place under the drag for him and Sammy to lie down for a few hours. Sammy, not being used to that sort of thing, kept knocking his poor old nob against the bolts of the springs or against the axletree. When he had got comfortably settled down into the straw, it being the spring-time of year, and the wind getting up, it became very cold, so that poor old Sammy could not get off to sleep, but kept saying, "Jack, Jack,

Jack ! dere's the vind again. Hark at it. Oh, oh, how it do blow !" &c. When we arose to start early in the morning, Sammy complained that my brother Jack did not act fair, as he took nearly all the *clothes* !

Sammy was very fond of his brother, as he had a right to be. I once met him at Guildford Fair, when, as he was looking very glumpy, every one that he was acquainted with asked him what was the matter, when he related to them his brother's death. It appears Sammy was sent for in a hurry one day to the Tower, where his brother, who used to buy Government stores, had gone for business purposes, and died suddenly. And Sammy, when telling the story, which he did at least twenty times that day, would shed tears and relate how he was fetched to the Tower, and his own words were, "Ven I come dare my poor brother Jonas was dead," and then he could get no further for grief—real grief.

I have been told that old Sammy walked from London to Free Mart Fair, Portsmouth, which is seventy-two miles, and stood on the same spot fifty times—that is, for fifty years. He was a wonderful walker, especially for so old a man. When I first saw him, thirty-five years ago, he was about sixty or sixty-five years of age. He was always a thin

man, and having lost an eye and continually wearing a black pad, gave him rather a sinister look, but when he was spoken to his face used to brighten up. He was very shrewd in his expressions, and his usual style of addressing anyone was, "Vell, my fine fellah," or "I'll tell you vot it is, my fine fellah." But everybody liked Sammy, for he was full of jokes. His usual cry was, "Buy, buy, buy away, buy away ! All prizes, no blanks !" and, addressing a female, would say, "Have a bit of rhubarb, ma'am ? do you good ;" or to a countryman, "Buy a knife, Jack ? cuts beautiful. It cut a tree down, Jack," &c., &c.

Sammy's brother was a very rich man, and used to allow him a guinea a week, which he ultimately raised to two guineas, with a proviso that he did not go travelling in the country with his "shallow." To this he appeared to comply, but never kept his word, at least only at such times as there were no fairs on that suited his book. Then he would always be throwing himself in his brother's way to let him see that he was keeping his word—for the time being.

In getting anybody to address his "shallow" for him, he was always very careful in telling them to write "Samuel Levy."

Jem Adams and Ben Broone were at Brighton

Races with their show of "wonders." They had a mongrel dog, of decent appearance, but in reality not worth twopence. The celebrated canine fancier known as "Handsome Jack" took a liking to the animal, and wanted Jem Adams to sell it to him unbeknown to Ben. Jem gave the dog a wonderful character, but said he dare not part with it without Ben's leave; so "Handsome Jack," who was always reckoned to be as artful as a waggon-load of monkeys, tried to persuade Ben Broone to sell the dog without Jem's knowledge, but with the same result, as the two had "got up" the affair purposely. At last Jem Adams agreed that if "Handsome Jack" would stand a sovereign, he would steal the dog, and would make Ben, his partner, believe it was lost. The canine fancier fell into the trap, and procured a man with a bag and cautiously got the dog into it, and sent the man over the hills into the town by a byway. The next day Ben went to the canine establishment of "Handsome Jack," and asked him if he had seen anything of his valuable dog. Jack declared in the most vehement manner that he had not. The next day he again called and asked the same question and got the same answer. On the third day the partners called together, and received jointly the same reply to their inquiries, when the part-

ners split, and told "Handsome Jack" that he was quite welcome to keep the buffer, as they had got the ten shillings each. The biter was deservedly bit, as the parties had changed the dog for one that did not do the wonderful performing tricks that they represented on the canvas outside their show.

Thirty years ago there was always a great number of poor horses to be had cheap, so that showmen, stall-keepers, and other travelling parties would speculate in them, and those not in immediate use were turned out to grass on Chatham Lines, to the number of perhaps fifty or sixty, and when the boys and journeymen were sent to fetch them away at the close of the fairs in that district, they had to bring them through Chatham, Rochester, and Stroud, &c. On the road, when they were nearing a town or large village, they would ride some of the horses circus-fashion, sometimes standing on one and sometimes on two or three, and they used to cut all manner of antics—some standing on their heads on the bareback steeds, for there was no fear of the knackers taking fright and running away. They would now and then make a grand halt, when the best speaker would give out, "The Grand Circus Company, with their magnificent stud of horses, will go through their

matchless performance of horsemanship, vaulting, tight and slack rope dancing, somersault-throwing, together with a large and varied collection of wonders of the world, as camels, dromedaries, zebras, and mules, on this day at two o'clock, and evening at six, at or in such and such a place.—Admission—give what you like.” And when the people went to the place mentioned by the young dogs, they found that they were—sold again! Many a man who has cut a good figure in the equestrian world may date his success from the days that he was sent, *nolens volens*, to fetch up the fair folk's horses.

I was at Stroud Fair in the year 1842, when one of the present largest circus proprietors in England was among the boys that used to give out the grand performances of the Olympians, &c., by way of a lark, as they were bringing up the knackers from grass when the fair was over. One night, when the fair was closed and these lads were going in for a snooze, they espied a poor country-looking man standing by, when one of them said to him, “Well, mate, what are you doing here so late?” The man answered, “Well, my lads, I have not anywhere to go to, and no money to pay for a night's lodging.” “I suppose you are honest,” said one of the lads. “Oh yes, masters,”

returned the man; "I'm honest enough." "Well, then, look here; if I put you into my stall you won't meddle with anything, will you?" "No, really that I won't, masters." "Well then, come along with me," said Jemmy Newsome, and taking the man to a stall that was closed in for the night, said in a quiet voice, at the same time gently pulling up the cloth, "Here, get in quietly and creep in the corner, where you will find some straw and plenty of covering." The man crept into the stall; the other went to his companions a little distance off to enjoy the fun. They did not have to wait long, for presently there was a scream from a woman's voice, and the man—the proprietor of the stall—bawling out, "Help! thieves! murder!" The people were sleeping in their stall, and the poor countryman had got into their temporary bed. The stall-keeper seized the countryman, who, frightened and struggling to release himself, pulled the owner of the place and his wife, in their night-clothes, outside the stall, to the delight of the young rascals who had been the cause of the countryman getting into trouble.

George Freeman, *alias* Showman George or Shoful George—who I have incidentally mentioned before in connexion with his man "Friday"—was

a big, stout, free-spoken, and rather jolly fellow, who kept a large drinking-booth at fairs and races during the summer months, and in the winter hawked butchers' cutlery. Although I knew him for many years, I do not know anything of his history. I sold him about the year 1854 a strong dog-cart for a five-pound note. Several years afterwards I met him with a cart looking somewhat like the one I had sold to him, when I said to him, "George, what did you do with that cart I sold you?" His reply was, looking at the one he was then in—

"Why, this is it: this is the cart I bought of you."

"Nonsense," I replied; "this is a better and newer one than I sold you."

"I tell you this is it," he said. "I have had new shafts to it, and they are new wheels."

I replied, "That is not the same body I sold you."

"Oh no. I have had a new body built to it, about a year ago, but it's the same cart: the same springs, the same axle, therefore it's the same cart, for I have never had another since I bought this of you, so this must be the same one. Is there anything more you want to know about? but you may depend it's the same old cart."

Jacob Jewell was a little Israelite very near as thick as he was long, a good-tempered little fellow, that used to travel with a fancy stall, and do a little bit in the Cheap John way, after his own fashion, at some of the back-end fairs when business was good. At Hereford Fair a big fellow was abusing Jacob and calling him bad names, because he would not sell him something just at the price he had offered, and wound up by saying he had a good mind to give him a good hiding for his being saucy; and, raising his fist to put his threat into execution, when just at the moment, and when Jacob was in peril of the big fellow's mutton-fist dropping him a hot 'un, Jem George, a well-known horse-dealer, was passing, and hearing the big 'un abusing Jacob, urged him on; and suddenly turning to face the rough, said, "Look here, it would serve the little Jew rascal right to do as you say, but mind if you do hit him, hit him like this"—at the same time letting go his left, and giving the man such a nose-ender that sent him all abroad, to the infinite amusement of the bystanders and the great discomfiture of the bullying rough.

Emy Fairbanks was a tall, powerful man, and when I first met him about forty-five years of age. A rare fellow at opposition. Mike Fagan and

he once met at Newark Fair, and the people that knew them both expected some good sport, and no sooner had Mike mounted the platform to commence, than the other's foot was on the step of his own carriage to begin business as well. And directly they began there was some sharp firing between them, Mike calling out, "Faith! and your Irish, and your breed's bad," which very much vexed Fairbanks, because he was English, while Fagan was most unmistakably Irish. So he called out, "What do you mean by calling *me* Irish! it is *you* that are Irish, you ——." "Ha! ha! ha! ha!" jerked out Fagan. "There, I tould ye so. He can't stand to be called by his true name; the bog-trotting rascal denies his Ould Ireland for a mother." Fagan got much the best of the bout, as directly a man loses his temper it is sure to tell against him. Mike, when asked by some of his countrymen why he called Fairbanks a "Bark," *i.e.* an Irishman, said, "If I had not put the 'Bark' on him he would have put it on me, so I had the first pull."

Moses Jacobs *alias* Ugly Mo, an Israelite rather under the average size, was a fellow that seemed made of cast-iron or bell-wire, as he never appeared tired or done up, but would work all day and all night too if he wished, and he would live on the

smell of an oil-rag. Mo and his man were having a great breakfast one morning at Newcastle, off a twopenny buster and a small bit of butter, with some wishy-washy coffee, when Mo exclaimed to his man, "Chuck rumbo" (eat plenty), "my lad, for you will get no more till night," meaning they would be so busy all day at the fair there would be no time to think of grubbing.

Tommy Rosseter was a mumper—that is, a half-bred gipsy cove, a wiry fellow of about nine stone, and the terror of the gipsies. Gipsies are not generally big men, by that I mean fat men. Tommy used to fight all comers, and would travel many miles to be at a place where there would be sure to be some fighting "Romanees." Ascot and Moulsey Races used to be great tryasting-places. Tommy married a "Romanee" girl named Barbara, and it was very often a roaring lark to see Tommy fighting a Romanee. Barbara fighting somebody, for she did not care much which she tackled—man or woman. She was once a fine handsome gipsy girl, but after a few years of knocking about and roughing it, she was anything but clean in her person or manners. In fact, at times she was dressed as no "Meg Merrilies" ever attempted. They had a dog belonging to them that would be sure to begin a quarrel with another

"buffer," whenever his master or mistress found a match: in fact, Tommy, his wife, and dog were always fighting; and how they got their living was a mystery, for his time was always taken up in slogging or getting well again.

Being at a fair in Kent, one of the young bloods of the town asked permission to try his hand at the Cheap John business—no uncommon thing—and was getting on tolerably well when some of his pals gave him the "Miller;" that is, a lot of flour is wrapped up in thin paper about the size of a fist, and when thrown, the first thing it comes in contact with, breaks and smothers the party all over.

Some people take to the Cheap John patter very quick; others, although they have the gift of the gab when they are on the ground, as soon as they mount the cart, are dumbfounded.

Shannon, who had been ring-master at Sangers, Circus for many years, took it into his head that he could "clown," as he knew by heart a lot of their sayings—so one day he asked the governor to let him try his hand at it, which being granted, he put on the clown's dress, got mugged up, and went into the ring—Sanger acting as ring-master for the occasion. When Shannon should have commenced, he could not utter a word, much to

the chagrin of the governor, who was completely sold, and the business of the "act" spoilt.

"Every hero that loses his life in the battle-field must not expect a marble monument." So, in the calling of a Cheap John, all do not succeed that enter the business. There is a great deal to be learned, and a great deal to be unlearned. And those, as a rule, succeed best who have begun life in general, and that of a Cheap John in particular, on the bottom round of Fortune's ladder, which must be climbed firmly, slowly, and surely. The fourth, fifth, and sixth rounds are very dangerous, as the aspirant for fame and riches frequently turns giddy on reaching that portion of it; and in his over-anxiety to reach the seventh, before properly balancing himself and his accounts, often falls to the ground, and is thereby cracked! Yet, by perseverance and industry, he may, on a second attempt, by working up more steadily, ultimately gain a good and firmer position, and remain, amid a few rocks and shoals, fixed for years, in the meanwhile bringing up his wife and family respectably; then die a good age and colour, have a decent funeral, and a tidy-looking tombstone, with a suitable epitaph *In Memoriam!*

ers there are who ascend so rapidly up the

ladder, that they reach the top round before any of their compeers ; then as suddenly slip down to the bottom, and are irreparably smashed ! They then have to work out the remaining portion of their lives as helps to others, who they formerly, and often in a very sneering manner, passed by so rapidly on their upward journey ; or take to hawking small wares in and about the outskirts of the grounds of their former greatness and prosperity ; and at length finish their days in the workhouse of their native town or union, and are borne to the grave, "after life's fitful fever," to the dirge of—

Rattle his bones over the stones,
He's only a pauper that nobody owns.

Many persons are uncommonly anxious to get into the Cheap John line of life, who have not been brought up to it from the bottom, or any other round of the ladder, but to other trades and professions, which give them not the least qualification for the business. It often arises from a disturbed and unsettled mind, as some people are never contented with their present position, but are envious of others, and are continually "shadow-grabbing ;" such persons think the life of a Cheap John to be all honey and sugar-plums. I have known lots of cases where men, who have been

brought up as publicans, butchers, bakers, candlestick makers, sapling lawyers, and saw-bone surgeons, &c., &c., take up with the business, either by buying some established concern in its entirety, or—which is mostly the case—starting a new one, and having a cart built in a very superior and costly manner; having better horses, harness, &c., than anybody else, and promising themselves that they shall be able to swallow up everything and everybody on the road.

Such parties mostly reckon without their host, for they have had no experience, and viewed only the sunny side of the matter, by having seen a few Cheap Johns take a great deal of money at some one or two fairs or races, and become envious of their apparent success, choosing to forget that it is not every day that there is a good fair, or that there is such a thing as foul weather; nor do they ever trouble themselves about the cost of the wear-and-tear in travelling turnpike roads “Once a Week” “All the Year Round;” they do not “Enquire Within,” or have an “Interview” with any one to ascertain the “Reason Why” the established and experienced man should know “How to make a Penny become a Thousand Pounds;” nor do they ever write to the editor of any journal that may be “as familiar in their mouths as ‘Household Words,’”

for a line of instruction in his "Notices to Correspondents," as to "The Dictionary of Daily Wants" of a Cheap John.

The usual consequence is, that these envious and inexperienced persons soon find themselves on the "Road to Ruin," and therefore no "Wonder" that they become "Poor Gentlemen," and without "Money." They should bear in mind "The Story of the Life of Charles Dickens" and "Oliver Twist," who had some "Hard Times" in "The Battle of Life," and of their being saved from "The Wreck of the *Golden Mary*" by "Our Mutual Friend," "Nicholas Nickleby," just as they had finished relating "A Tale of Two Cities" to "The Village Coquettes" and "Martin Chuzzlewit," during which time "The Cricket on the Hearth" had been chirping merrily, while the "Chimes" from Rochester Cathedral were heard, when "Seven Poor Travellers" commenced singing "A Christmas Carol," taken from the pages of "The Child's History of England," to "Barnaby Rudge," who had just returned from "The Old Curiosity Shop" with "Some Pictures from Italy," "American Notes," and "Sketches by Boz," to show "Little Dorrit," who was busy cleaning "Master Humphrey's Clock" with some leaves of "The Pickwick Papers;" when "David Copperfield" entered and

informed the company assembled at Gadshill that the "Great Expectations" of "Dombey and Son," regarding "Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy," had not been realized, and that they had seen the editor of "Household Words" and "The Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi" with "Boots at the Holly Tree Inn," taking "Somebody's Luggage" to "Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings," in a street that has "No Thoroughfare," nearly opposite "Bleak House," where "The Haunted Man," who had just given one of "Dr. Marigold's Prescriptions" to an "Uncommercial Traveller," who was brooding over the unfinished work entitled "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."—But, Dickens and daisies! I must get on with Cheap John.

I well remember a rackety, hare-brained young fellow, who was the son of a popular and eminent clergyman, and who was being brought up to the medical profession, having an itch for the life and adventures of a Cheap John. He made it a practice to associate with them when and wherever he could find them; and for that purpose he would run down by road or rail to fairs, market-towns, and races, to be with them, and to ingratiate himself in their favour, would stand no end of good dinners, with an ample allowance of drink to follow, for being allowed the honour of having a

turn on the cart, to sell their goods for an hour or so. He was, for an amateur, very clever at it; and, having learned all the patter-clatter, he used to work away in right-down earnest, most of the Cheap Johns feeding him with remarks to enable him to reply, and get the laugh. He was very fond and apt in interlarding the usual old "whids" with Latin phrases; and had he been content to have paid for, and had out his spree, without interfering with his studies, there would have been no great harm done.

But when he came to his money at the death of his father, nothing must do but that he must start as a real Master Cheap John; for which purpose he had a slap-up cart built at Maidstone, bought a pair of valuable horses, new and elaborately plated harness—everything to be better than anything else out.

He spent over a thousand pounds at the start, which, after working very hard for about two years, he contrived to make into a penny—just reversing matters that are to be found contained in a work I have quoted, entitled "How a Penny became a Thousand Pounds." He started with a lot of "tin," but had not sufficient "brass" or *physique* to stand the wear-and-tear of the life. So, what with general mismanagement, putting up at the best

hotels, and living in every way in an expensive manner, not knowing the best markets to buy his goods in, most of which he left for others to do, who in return *did* him, and as a Cheap John came to grief, and returned home to live with his widowed mother and his sisters.

At the death of his mother he had the remaining portion of his fortune; but although he did not again enter into the Cheap John business, he never did any good for himself, and came to an early grave by that most fatal of diseases, consumption.

I could relate many other instances of persons who entered the business with money but no experience; but they all tend one way—that is to failure—hopeless failure! and prove the truth of Pope's line, that—

“A little learning is a dangerous thing.”

I have also known many other parties to fail in shows and exhibitions that have entered the business without understanding it. The number of tolerably well-to-do people that have had a *penchant* for setting up theatrical, or, as they are termed, “mumming” booths, is something astounding. From being “stage-struck,” and viewing the life of a travelling theatrical manager as nothing but a

bed of roses and posies—the love of hearing their own “sweet voices,” getting the indisputable right to take all the leading parts in tragedy and comedy—have been the incentives. A list of the failures and disappointments in this line of business alone would fill the pages of a good-sized work.

Sons of the clergy, lawyers, eminent medical men, gentlemen and tradesmen, having more money than brains, have gone to swell the number, both as managers and mummers; but failures, vicissitudes, and an early grave are the general results. Some few exceptions will be found in some of our metropolitan and provincial theatres, and more especially so on the Australian stage.

I particularly well remember some respectably-connected young fellows starting an exhibition of mechanical figures, models and movements, at Sheffield. They had a very superior mechanical “Storm at Sea,” with the waves and boats working, and a great variety of other things of a kindred character; their show, vastly superior to any of the others, fitted up with every convenience, and the proprietors in every way superior to the usual run of show-folk. But still they could do no business, because they did not understand a bit

the working of the "slang" or getting the people in. They stood next to an old showman in the same line of business, who was crowded during the whole of the fair, while these young fellows were doing nothing. One was dressed as a harlequin for outside attraction, but he only served as a butt for the clown on the other show; the consequence was, that after working another fair or two, they sold the lot at an awful sacrifice to the old showman who stood next them.

In an open fair quality would stand no chance against experience; and however dirty and vulgar-looking an old showman might be, or however inferior his exhibition might be, he would have the power of drawing the people into his concern and amassing money, while respectability and quality would starve by his side.

In my early days the Midland and Northern fairs were, as a rule, held to be superior for showmen and exhibitors' business to those in the Home counties. But in either district there were frequent failures arising from inexperience of the parties concerned, or collapses from death or "hard-upness." But from whatever the cause, it was always the plan to transact business on the spot, that is, during the holding of the fair. And when one person had not got sufficient money to

complete^{*} the purchase, one, two, or three more would join him to make up the amount, and after everything, as the lawyers say, was "signed, sealed, and delivered," the concern would either remain for a time in shares or would be "knocked out" at once, that is, resold by auction among themselves and the profit divided.

At other times the concern would, by mutual consent, remain in shares until the end of the season, to enable one or two of the parties to pay the others out, in the meanwhile paying a rental for the use of it.

In my time I have had thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, and so on of shares of all descriptions of shows, theatrical booths, circus, wax-works, wild-beast shows, mechanical figures, toy-stalls, drinking-booths, and I do not know what else, and they have always come out at a profit. I do not for the moment remember a single instance to the contrary. Cheap Johns are little bankers and money-lenders in their way. For as a class they are always thought to have ready money to buy or make advances on every description of commodities, from a penny peep-show, a cage of monkeys, a pair of rattlesnakes, to an elephant. All have not money to spare beyond their own business, for as fast as money is taken it must be

sent off again to the manufacturing districts for stock to take the place of that just sold; quick returns and ready money being the essence of Cheap Johnery.

"More money is made by scheming than hard work; and a good schemer is better than a great eater," were very favourite sayings of Harry Perdue, and he was at all times ready and willing to advance money on any description of property, or in any speculation he could see his way clear in. And I think I have done my fair share in that way.

Proprietors of collections of wild beasts are at times very much straitened in money matters from the heavy losses they occasionally sustain from sudden or other deaths of their animals. Then they must at times buy when things in their line are offered, whether they are in immediate want of them or not. Circus proprietors again frequently meet with severe losses. I have known a man lose the whole of his stud in a few days, or even hours, by one or more of his animals taking some infectious disease, the glanders for instance.

So that with one cause or another there was always plenty of money-lending or advancing going on, and at which many a man travelling

fairs and races has become a little millionaire.

I have known as many as eight or ten people to have a share in an elephant—the same with lions, tigers, wonderful horses, with more or fewer legs than ordinary, and monstrosities of every and any description. It would be curious property to pass under a will, two-thirds of a Hottentot Venus, half a Malay, the sixth of a female dwarf, the fourth of a mermaid, the third of “Mahowra,” the Cannibal Chief; a fifth of “Toby,” the learned pig; one hind-leg of an elephant, or the fifth quarter of a lion, together with various other limited and unlimited shares. I have known shares in all manner of funny things to be “swopped,” as, “I’ll give you two shares in the Cannibal Chief, one in the mermaid, and 30*l.* for one-fifth of your lion!” “No, give me 35*l.* and one-third of your Hottentot Venus, and then I can talk to you; or so-and-so, then I’ll do so-and-so; or my pair of rattlesnakes for your kangaroo!” Verily there are more ways of making money than are dreamed of in your philosophy, Horatio.

Roderick Palgrave was considered by all who knew him to be the best showman of a “bad slang” that ever travelled. He would get hold of any black girl or woman, dress her up, and then

show her as one of the greatest novelties ever seen. His carriages, horses, &c., were of a very queer and rumbly-tumbly description. He had a large slap-dash painting of an Indian woman fighting a boat's crew of English sailors, and slaughtering them right and left.

When I first saw him thirty years ago he was about thirty years of age. His dress was peculiar, inasmuch as he wore strong and very heavy hob-nailed boots, corduroy trousers, black waistcoat, a light blue bob-tailed coat, with brass buttons, and a black stock, so that he looked half-genteel, half-clumsy ; but that was hid from view when he was playing the organ, and only seen when he came to the steps to give out the particulars of the wonders to be seen within : he was deeply marked with small-pox. He had a very good method of speech, and when Rod had a good day's work before him he did not take the trouble to wash his face, but would comb his long black hair instead. He usually held a long wand in his hand, with which he continually struck the large painting to draw the people's attention towards the wonderful works of nature, and held forth thus :

"Come and see *Ti-e-ta Massula*, the real *Esquimaux*, black savage, wild cannibal, wild woman. Alive ! alive ! She partakes of all her food in its

raw state^o (*rapping the picture*), as raw lights, raw beef, raw fish, live rabbits, pigeons, fowls, ducks, and geese, &c., &c. Her drink! her drink, you'll understand, is train-oil; she will swallow half a pint this time in the presence of the company, or the money shall be returned. Now, walk up, it's only one penny; a penny will admit you."

And when the carriage was being filled, it was funny to see the people get behind each other, all the parties seeming to have an idea that the nearest would stand a good chance of being eaten up alive. When Rod had shown the company a few tricks with a pack of cards, he would say, "The next is the Indian female," and, drawing the curtains aside, would show a little inoffensive-looking black girl, with a ring on her nose, and a quantity of beads about her dress. He would then say in his softest manner, "The female is from Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope. She is a king's daughter, and dressed in the costume of her ancestors. The female will walk down the caravan. The female has the privilege of going round if any one of you think proper to encourage her. She will return thanks in her native language. That concludes the exhibition!"

Doubtless the pleasure is as great
Of being cheated, as to cheat.

Formerly it was much the fashion for Cheap Johns to go in for what was termed "bazaar business," that was, to take for short periods large premises eligibly situated in the principal streets of any large town. This sort of business was found to be very handy to fill up the slack time. Beyond that, as a rule, it could be made to be very profitable. It is a sort of business I have in my time done a good deal at. The plan was, having secured a good position, to fit up the shop with the lighter and most fanciful description of Sheffield and Birmingham goods, then, by the aid of a few paper flags and silken bannerets, and a large musical-box or two, to make the place as attractive as possible. But the most important of all things was the "wheel of fortune" caper; that was the profitable part of the business. Many, very many, of the Cheap Johns of my young days were enabled to retire from the business altogether out of the money they had made by bazaar work.

Not that I have anything to complain of in respect of the bazaar trade, for I have at times done very well at it, but of late years the trade, like the name itself, yclept "bazaar," has been gradually going out of doors. There are many ways to account for this, as now-a-days what are known as "fancy shops" keep the same description of

goods that we were in the habit of introducing for sale all the year round ; and another thing, perhaps the most important of all, is, there no longer remains the chance or opportunity, call it as you will, of getting a closed-up shop in a good position, which I reckon as a sure indication that business, as a rule, is much better, and at all events more firmly fixed than it was from twenty to five-and-twenty years ago.

When I first opened a shop at Brighton, and soon afterwards let my brother Jack have the cart and stock, I had promised myself that I should work various towns, as Southampton, Portsmouth, Worthing, Bognor, Hastings, Eastbourne, &c., in the bazaar business at the times when those towns were considered to be busiest ; but every year the difficulty of obtaining a closed-up shop for the short period I required it got greater and greater, so that I had at last to abandon it altogether.

Oh, that blessed wheel of Fortune ! it was all a little game, and the people, " oh, didn't they seem to like it ! " All prizes and no blanks, one shilling a chance ; and when a young lady got for her prize a pair of razors, she was allowed to put them back, and by the payment of another sixpence could have another chance, when she might perchance obtain a currycomb, a saw, or a red waistcoat, or a young

man would get a pair of sidecombs, a German silver thimble, or a pincushion, and so on. All that used to amuse the people, and did not hurt Cheap John.

But some one or two would be sure to get, and legitimately too, a good prize during the evening, as a half-guinea workbox or a guinea clock. Then they, with many more of their friends, would be sure to come again to try their luck, and ultimately well pay for their great prize.

At one period, when I was working in the Yorkshire districts, I went very largely into printed books. They were a marvel of cheapness in their day, and supplied a great want. They were got up on the factory principle by a man named Pratt, at a place called Stokesley, in Yorkshire. We used to buy them at five, six, and seven shillings per dozen; taking them one with the other, sorted up, they cost about sixpence each.

The works consisted mostly of novels, as, "The Farmer of Inglewood Forest," "Fatherless Fanny," "Romance of the Forest," "St. Clair of the Isles," "Children of the Abbey," several by Fenimore Cooper, as "The Pilot," and others; "Lives of Highwaymen and Robbers," "Lives of Pirates," "Every Man his own Farrier," Poems, and some religious works by John Bunyan and others.

For a time they blended in very well with the ordinary goods carried by Cheap Johns, but after a while it was found that they worked off best at small country fairs, by having a stall made with two or three planks, and filling it with these books for an afternoon and early evening trade, at a time when there was no trade from the cart being done.

It was only at small town and village fairs that these books sold. In the large cities, or borough towns, of course, people would buy a better got-up work at the money. I have said they were got up on the factory system; that's what I used to say when selling them. "Now, the place where these books are got up, they put a lot of old linen rags in at one end of the building, which are converted into paper, then printed, bound into a book as you now see it, and the price is but one shilling. Here you have the life, travels, toils, and troubles of 'Fatherless Fanny,' showing how she never had a father, but that she was won at a raffle, sent to a boarding-school to be left till called for; how the gallant, handsome, and young officer of the One Hundred and Ninety-fourth brought a rope ladder one night to her bedroom window, and ran away with her to London, where he seduced her, and made Fatherless Fanny a mother—all for the small charge of one shilling. Yes, one shilling buys the

pathetic and heart-breaking tale. Or you can have 'The Life and Adventures of the Farmer of Inglewood Forest.' He made a large fortune by discovering a composition which, properly applied, would make three crops of wheat, oats, or barley grow on the same land every year, and if you buy the book you will find how he made the stuff, and then all you farming people can have three crops grow on your own land every year, and all for the low charge of one shilling."

I never see any of these Yorkshire books about at book-shops or railway-stalls, so that I expect they have gone out of the market by being superseded by others, got up better in the way of print and binding. But thirty years ago they were the cheapest series of books published, and a great many thousands of volumes were sold by Cheap Johns and by people that kept book-stalls in markets.

Talking of books and bookselling reminds me of my first meeting with Charley Sweet, at Town Malling Fair, in Kent. Our acquaintance commenced with a row, but ended in a friendship which lasted the remaining portion of his life. Charley was of very gentlemanly appearance, without trying to be so, and he was exceedingly good-looking, about forty years of age, five feet six-and-

a-half or seven inches in height. He had been in good trade circumstances, but had led a very fast life, and was at the time of our meeting a book-auctioneer, taking shops in different towns for a month or so. It was at the November Fair of 1841, I and Fred Jolly had taken up the ground allotted to us, which was about the middle of the town and exactly opposite to a shop then hired by Charley Sweet, as a branch shop for the time of the fair, from a larger one he had at Maidstone, six miles' distance. Now it so happened that when we began to sell, the people's backs were all turned against Charley's shop, and he could not get a customer in; so, after trying repeatedly, he in despair took up a book and sent it through the glass window at me. I caught the book, and looking at it, and discovering it was an improper one to offer for sale, I began chaffing about the description of books he sold.

Now at this time we used to buy an article with gilt edges, ruled, and lined, and published yearly at 3s. 6d. or 4s., with an almanack and some very good stories; but after March, when they were returned to the publishers as being unsold, they used to take off the leather covers and put the insides into a fancy and coloured wrapper, and sell them to hawkers and dealers at 1l. per

gross or 1s. 8d. per dozen. We always had a large stock of them, as they were excellent selling goods. Our price was two for 6d., and we told the people that they contained all the best tales of the day, and by the most approved authors, such as "Tom Jones," "Gulliver's Travels," "Gil Blas," "Dick Turpin," &c., according as we judged of the tastes of the company. So when we came in contact with a travelling bookseller we could give him the "go by" with our library! and as Charley Sweet had chosen to be contrary, I let go at him, so that he put himself in a far worse position by sending his book at my head, for I immediately commenced selling our wonderful works. I laughed at him for having broken his window, and chaffed him right and left, and did a brisk trade for awhile, and as business began to lull a bit Charley came to me with "Look here, old fellow, I only did that to try to get the people's attention, for I can't sell a book." "Well then," I said, "you had better get on while we are quiet, and for that purpose we will rest for one hour, so as to give you a chance of doing some business." So Charley mounted his rostrum again, but he could not get a soul into his shop. We had made all the fun, and completely taken the wind out of his sails. There is not the scope

in the bookselling business as there is in the miscellaneous collection of articles kept in stock by a Cheap Jack, to make any telling or mob-pleasing speeches; so, seeing Charley's forlorn hope in getting the people into his shop, I said to Fred Jolly, "Go and look the bookselling cove out a decent 'pitch' in the centre here, and out of the shop, to give him a chance," which Fred did. Then Charley mounted his rostrum *al fresco*, and did a tidy bit of business, until we could give him no longer time. And as we began again it was Fred Jolly's turn to patter. So mounting the cart he began with his well-known and highly-pleasing "Hi! hi! here! here! bow-wow! I'm a coming! Here, you farming gentlemen, you sons of the soil and ardent lovers of toil! Listen to me, and make your fortunes out-right and down-straight. Cease wasting your time and capital by growing carrots, turnips, or parsnips, and such like common truck. Here I've to offer to you, men of Kent, or Kentish men, a new article of commerce. If you are only careful and carry out my instructions, you can grow three crops in one year, and each crop worth a little fortune. Here, just you look here! here they are! This packet contains just one hundred roots or slips of the new article in agriculture I have to offer to your notice. I'll

warrant every root or slip to grow and 'come to perfection: if not, I'll change any that fail when I come here again next grass—with my lass. Mark me, this packet contains just one hundred of the best-made highly-polished and pointed Redditch——

"What do you say, Old Gooseberry Nozzle? You don't want any *radishes*! Well, who said you did? I said nothing about radishes. I said Redditch. Yes, Redditch, which is a place in Worcestershire, and twelve miles from Birmingham. It is noted for its needle manufacturers, of which seventy million, or billion—I forget which—are said to be made weekly. Yes, my stony and flint-hearted Christians, these are Redditch needles, and if you only set them in your land and use the right sort of manure,—mind ye, you must be very particular about that—yes, set these needles in your land, and in about four months one day and two minutes you'll find them all grown into crowbars! or I'll eat my hat, then swallow my boots." This bit of a "whid" being new to the place, caused a general roar, and all the people left poor Charley Sweet's and flocked round our concern, and we carried all before us for the remaining portion of the day, and Charley closed his drum up in despair.

The next day we made a different arrangement with Charlie, as we found him to improve on acquaintance; and from being a surly old buffer, as we at first took him to be, he proved himself to be nothing but an out-and-outer, a thorough good fellow, and we became sworn friends from that time until he died, which was about five years afterwards.

From the date of our first becoming acquainted, whenever we met Charley, Fred Jolly or myself would get a company together for him to commence his book-sales with, and help to make the running for him. We bid or praised up his goods: in fact, often acted as "puffers," or "bonnets," to give him a leg up.

Charley Sweet was wonderfully fond of good living in general and hot duck-suppers in particular. He afterwards lived in London, and when I used to be in town on business matters I generally called upon him, when we invariably went to one or more of the London theatres together; and when we returned home, however early or however late, there was sure to be something nice and hot for supper,—duck and green peas, chicken and ham, salmon cutlets, or anything else that was best and in season, with all the necessary *et ceteras*, including wine. But alas! Consumption had

painfully and very manifestly marked poor Charley for its own. I remember remarking to him one day, by way of half joke and half seriously, "Charley, you have consumed so many good things of this life in your time, that some day it will be all *vice versa*, they will consume you."

He used to write to me from time to time how the disease—consumption—"was queering him," and as he gradually and most surely got worse, he used shorter and shorter sentences, such as "very queer;" "getting worse;" "breathe through a pipe;" "doctor's orders, must not go out;" "cried yesterday;" "low spirits;" "got a writ;" "King of Terrors;" "failed to appear;" "won't wait;" "shall be taken in execution;" "good-bye;" "God bless you;" "soon all over!" "Oh, ain't this too solid flesh melting, that's all!" &c., &c.

One of Charley's dodges to get goods when he was going to the bad in health and purse was to go into a wholesale place, where they sold books or paper, or other things that he could use by way of trade, and then ask to be obliged with a fifty-pound Bank of England note in exchange for fifty sovereigns, for the purpose, as he used to say, of forwarding the note in a letter to one of his wholesale people. The transaction would invariably bring about the remark, "Is there anything in our way

to-day, Mr. Sweet? Can't you give us an order this time? we can use you well," &c.; to which Charley would reply: "Well, you see, I'm in a bit of a hurry to-day. I must send off this fifty-pound note for some goods I had the other day of a party who deals in just your style of things; he always uses me well, you see, and always lets me have a month or two's credit. This fifty pound is due to-day, according to my own promise; I must send that off at once, so, you see, I've got no more ready money by me, just now; in fact, I did not think of buying—only just stepped in to exchange the fifty sovereigns for the Bank of Englander you were kind enough to let me have. But—yes—I suppose you can serve me as well as others; that is, the stuff at the right price, and a month or two's credit." The reply was, as a rule, just what Charley was fishing for: "Oh, certainly, Mr. Sweet; you can have a parcel of our goods on the same terms." And then he would give a bouncing order to as much as they would go to, and a little more.

After that Charley would go to another business house in his line and ask for change of a fifty-pound note—it being the same one he had received for his fifty sovereigns, and want to be obliged with some smaller notes, as he had several

sums to send off to different people for goods he had had; when, as a rule, the same question as before would be put to him, as, "Is there anything in our way to-day, Mr. Sweet?" "Well, you see," Charley would reply, "I think I buy my goods at Messrs. So-and-so's a trifle cheaper than you charge. I certainly did want a few of your goods; but, you see, I have done enough, I think, for to-day. I have just done such and such an amount to-day with these people," at the same time showing the invoice of the goods he had just purchased at the house where he got change for his fifty sovereigns. The conversation, as a rule, ended in Charley's giving them an order too. Of course this little "caper" would only "wash" once.

Poor Charley's wife was a very good-meaning woman, but she had a tongue, and would continually upbraid him on account of his free living and wenching; for, to say the truth, he was at all times and places, fond of a petticoat! and his mode of living—that is, moving about from one town to another, and taking shops for limited periods regulated by the population of the place and other circumstances—favoured his inclination.

When Charlie was on his back, and well-nigh "used up," Mrs. Sweet's clack did him more harm

than the disease—"Consumption's ghastly form." In fact, I think Charlie died on purpose to get out of her way and tongue. For at length came

The groan, the knell, the pall, the bier,
And all we know, or dream, or fear.

And poor Charley Sweet—by the aid of an undertaker, one or two old pals, including myself and Harry Jessell, whom Charley had at one time terribly offended by calling him "a neatly-bound and small paper edition, with *brass edges*, of Shylock;" but they, through my aid coupled with that of Fred Jolly, had made up matters and become fast friends—was taken to

The undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns.

* * * * *

"Ulloa! Ulloa, Muster Cheap John! Ulloa, I say!"

"Well, what's the row now, old Copper-nose, eh? What do you want?"

"I want a sovereign."

"I daresay you do; there's a many more like you about."

"But I want my sovereign, I tell you. I give you a sovereign just now."

"The devil you did! Then I'm very much

obliged to you, although I haven't the most distant idea of how, when, and where."

"I give you a sovereign, I tell you."

"Then, as I said before, I'm very much obliged to you."

"But I did give you a sovereign, I tell you."

"Well, how many more times are you going to tell me? It's pretty near time you gave me another now."

"Well, I gave you a sovereign just now."

"Well, I'm very much obliged to you. Have you ever another one to spare at the same price?"

"No; it's the only one I had. I received it just now for my wagers, and when I bought this pair of candlesticks of you just now I gave it to you in mistake for a shilling. I only had two pieces of money about me; one was a sovereign, the other piece was a shilling. I get a guinea a week, and had just received my wagers when I bought these candlesticks of you for a shilling, and when I went home to give the old woman the sovereign I discovered it was only a shilling, so I must have given you the sovereign."

"Stop, stop, old mate; that's rather a serious bit of business. If you are a hard-working man, and only get a guinea a week—that is, a sovereign and a shilling—of course you know what you

have done with your coin. It's quite certain you bought a pair of candlesticks of me for a shilling——"

"But I gave you a sovereign."

"Fair and softly, old mate. Let's argufy the topic properly. Now you're a hard-working man and I'm a hard-working man, but it shall never be said that the old original Cheap Jack of all, him as comes from Birmingham and Sheffield, ever bested a poor working man out of a penny, save and 'cept in the fair way of trade. Now if you did give me a sovereign——"

"I tell you I did; I give you a sovereign in mistake."

"All right, old pal, then you shall have it back again if I've got it. Now, as all you people that are standing round me must have seen, I put all the money I take into this bowl; there ain't no mistake about that, is there? So that if this poor hard-working man did give me a sovereign——"

"I tell you I did; I give you my own and only sovereign."

"Will you hold still a bit while I explain matters to these people? As I was about to observe, if this hard-working man did give me a sovereign in a mistake, all I can say is that he

shall have it back again. I can't say fairer than that, can I? Now, my old pal, just you step up here, and look over this bowl of silver for yourself; and if you find a sovereign among it it is yours, as I am sure I have not taken a sovereign of anybody to-night. Now look well over the bowl, and sing out loud when you come to a sovereign. For never be it said that the old original Cheap Jack of all ever cheated a poor, hard, industrious working man out of his wages. What do you say?"

"Why, I've found it; I've found my sovereign."

"Then jolly good luck to you, my boy! I told you—and all these people heard me—that if there was a sovereign in my old bowl, it did not belong to me; because, as I said before, I have not taken a sovereign of any one to-night. Of course, yours was all a mistake, and I am only too glad that you have got it back again. Now mind you take care of it this time, for mayhap you won't find every one so honest in his dealings as me, although only a Cheap John, born without a shirt, one day while my mother was out, in a haystack, consequently I've no parish, for the cows ate up mine; and therefore I've never not no fear of going to the workhouse. Besides, I've more ready money than the parson. So it ain't a

bit likely^o that I'd rob a poor hard-working man on a Saturday night out of his wagers."

I should think that I need scarcely inform my readers that the above *ruse* is a regularly manufactured one; got up for the purpose—a collusion between Cheap John and a pal, and mostly practised in the neighbourhood of London, where the working classes most do congregate, and invariably put in practice on a Saturday night. It is supposed to inspire confidence between Cheap John and the public—some of whom are apt to exclaim, "Well, that Cheap Jack must be a honest sort of a chap anyway, or he'd never have given the poor man his sovereign back again."

The above dodge, although I have so circumstantially detailed it, was never a favourite of mine. There always appeared something so shallow and transparent in it, that I never cared to adopt it. But old Joe Poole occasionally introduced it at times when he has worked for me, getting my brother Jack or some old pal of his to work the oracle with him. I am rather inclined to think that the *ruse* originated with Joe Poole. He was the first I ever saw work it; and I know he always introduced it when and wherever he could get the opportunity. The last time that

I remember to have seen Joe Poole alive, he was working for Charley Wade, in the Mile-end Road, London. It was on a Saturday night, and I had been doing some business at two or three wholesale houses at the East End, when, hearing that old Charley Wade was working in the district, I made an especial point of seeking him out to "tak' a cup o' kindness—for auld lang syne;" and there was old Joe Poole just in the thick of his sovereign caper; and it certainly seemed to go down better with the Londoners than I had ever seen it before with the country-folks at a market-town or fair.

Joe Poole continued for the remaining part of the evening, having got his audience in a perfect good humour. He did a fair amount of business; the first lot he introduced after the sovereign trick was a pair of decanters, which he set forth thus:

"Now here's just one more pair of fine cut flint-glass decanters; they are represented to hold a pint, but they would contain a quart if you could get it all in. You may hit 'em, you may kick 'em, you may knock 'em, but you can't break 'em, or bend 'em.—They are the glass of fashion, and the mould of form, and the observed of all observers—Don't you see? Hem! Shakespeare. This is

the last* pair, and the price is, &c., &c. Sold again!

"Now here I have a pair of bellows for sale; but you must be very careful how you use them, or they will blow the pot, fire and coals slap-bang up the chimney—they have got such a strong blast! Sold again! to a respectable lady, sent down from heaven as a blessing to a man, and not like a plague and a bother, as some women are. Let me feel your flesh, my dear, if it's only the tip of your pretty little finger.

"The next lot I have for your inspection is a very handsome telescope, with three draws and five glasses, concave, convex, and cataract. You may see, if you put it to the right focus, the Rock of Giberalter, the Island of Malta, Sardinia, and Naples, Vandiemans's Land, and all the slaves at work. I actually saw eighty-seven thousand miles distant through it the other evening. Ha, ha! I saw the moon; and that is allowed by all astronomers to be eighty-seven thousand miles distant from the earth. Now when I was in the country, I have asked 10*l*. for a glass like this many a time—but I never got it; so I cannot expect to get as much to-day. At that time I used to let my beard grow a good length, and pull it out and sell it for shag tobacco. The glass going at twenty shillings.

Sold again! to a gentleman that lives in "his own house, and farms his own acres :—Long Acre and Pedlar's Acre.

"Here! I say. Here! here!! here!!! The next lot I have for your inspection is half-a-dozen teaspoons. Now many of you people don't like to give your children silver teaspoons, for fear of their gnawing the silver away. And I can only tell you, that if they gnaw these for a month, they will never gnaw half-a-pound of silver off all the lot.—What do you say, you Chawbacon? Do you say there's none on? You are right, my friend. Why, you are as good as a witch; therefore ought to be first ducked in a pond, and then burnt on the spot. No, my friends, Chawbacon's right—there's none on 'em; but I'll tell you what they are made of. They are made of the best and the hardest of Britannia metal; they are white throughout; they are equal to silver, only a good deal better for use; and they always look the same, smell the same, feel the same. But no matter—

When Bishop Berkeley said 'there was no matter,'
And proved it—'twas no matter what he said.

But what's that to do with you joskins? Spoons is the order of the day. Here's spoons for six,

and tea and sugar for one. Sold again! and this time to my old sweetheart of all. She is a prime girl, she is; she is A. Number one, copper-bottomed, and can sail as well in her stays as out of her stays; she is full-rigged, and carries a lot of canvas. But I must not tell tales out of school, as I am going to dress myself all out in my best, and go to tea and shrimps with her next Sunday.

"Here, the next lot I have is a pair of patent spring braces. These are the sort to buckle your small clothes up tight, make you walk light and be a good figure; the more you draw these up the lighter you'll be, and if you draw them up too tight they will pull you off the ground altogether. I once sold a pair of braces like these to a farmer who weighed twenty-two stone; he walked and moved so light when he wore them that his friends did not know him; and when he got into the scale with the braces on he could not pull down ten stone. The braces had eased him of more than half his former weight, and left him so much less for his legs to carry. Now you can bring up your old braces and have them exchanged for new ones by paying the difference; the new ones I charge you a shilling for *each* brace, and allow you one shilling and sixpence *per pair* for your old ones; so now's your time to get a bargain; you may do just what

you like with me now, for I am in a good humour; you can use me as easy as an old slipper. Here, here, I have just got some news for you; it's the very latest: 'Last week a poor woman was safely delivered of a young child with a wooden leg. The supposed father is a Greenwich pensioner. Taken from the *Greenwich Gazette*.' Now, then, as I have just got rid of that rubbishy pair of braces that I've had so long, I'll show you some of a new pattern, better, longer, and stronger than those I just sold. Here, here, and the price is only sixpence. Sold again! the braces and the man!

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, the next 'grand and useful article' I have for your inspection is a capital snuff-box, made in imitation of a watch, with steel chain and a gold-looking key, and a smart seal. You observe you can wind the watch up, and I believe it will go half an hour in twenty minutes, and 999 seconds and a quarter, there or thereabouts; but I can't say to an inch or two how it will go; I know it will go, and that fast. Now if you wore a watch and hangings like this, I believe you might walk into any hotel in England, Ireland, or Scotland, and call for what you liked, and remain as long as you choose, and the landlord would never think of asking you for your reckoning until you

yourself^{*} called for the bill, as he would very naturally say, 'Look what a splendid watch and hangings he has got.' And if you were going along a dark road at night, and any fellow was to ask you the time, you could pull such a watch as this out and give him a crack over the head with it, and then say it's just struck one. The lot for 10*l.*; then say 40*s.*; say 20*s.* Sold again! Oh—

I can beat a bull or fight a cock,
I can a pigeon fly;
I'm up to all those knowing tricks
While I my hardware cry.

"Here's a useful article I have for your inspection and selection; it's a well-made bread-tray. Now no family should be without an article of this description, as you can save enough breadcrumbs, out of a family of six or seven, to keep any quantity of fowls, and in the course of a few months have a farmyard filled with poultry. You see it's double japanned and well-finished.

Can you rocker Rumanie,
Can you patter flash,
Can you rocker Rumanie,
Can you fake a bosh?

"Here! I have to show you a very excellent pocket-book, with leather covers and four pockets,

one for cheques, one for bank-notes, one for gold, and one for silver. It has edges gilt with real guinea-gold, contains a quantity of well-lined and ruled paper, likewise a stranger's guide through London. It informs you that if you go down such a street and turn down such a square, and pass through such a passage and up such an alley, you will find yourself somewhere else; so you keep going on and never lose yourself while you have a guide like this. Sold again! this time to a man that has been a Welsh son-of-a-cook, with one eye on the pot and the other up the chimney.

Stow your gab and gauffery,
To every fakement I'm a fly;
I never takes no fluffery,
For I'm a regular axe-my-eye.

"Well I never! did you ever? Oh my eye, here, here's a pair of the best brass candlesticks, with a patent shover-up and a good pusher-down. Now the nozzle of these candlesticks will hold a short eight or a long six; they are buffed and burnished and well finished, and the weight of them is something under two pounds and a half. Now you all know the price of old brass; you know it's worth at the very least one shilling the pound; so you see you would get half-a-crown's worth of base—brass I mean—material. But I never stick at what an

article is worth, as that's just as much money as it will bring—sing Ri-tu-ral-li-day. And with the lot I have got a pair of highly-polished steel spring snuffers with extra fakement; they will either snuff a candle out or snuff a candle in, they are not at all particular which; and with them I have a snuffer-tray, double japanned inside and outside, and all round the edges. Sold again! to old Farmer Bullwood, of Slush Common."

Of the thousand-and-one characters that I have met with during the last forty years, certainly one of the most remarkable was Elias Eldred. I first met with him about the year 1841. He was some ten or eleven years my senior, being at the time about thirty-four years of age, but having travelled all his lifetime, was better "up to snuff" than an ordinary man would be at fifty. He was spare built, all bone and muscle, five feet eight inches in height, very persevering and active, one who would get out of bed in the middle of the night for a bargain. He was up to all kinds of dodges in or out of business. His ostensible calling was a bazaar or fancy-stall keeper, a kind of travelling shop, in which he did very little except buying the goods. He also dealt in anything and everything that went upon four legs, from a racehorse to a pig. He used to buy horses for other travelling people on a kind

of half-pay and half-trust system, but he took care the poor folks did not get what they required. His game was to keep on chopping and changing with them, so that they seldom or never got out of his debt. He liked to have the party's name written across a piece of paper with a stamp attached, commonly called "a bit of stiff." There was another kind of paper Elias was very partial to, known as a B.S., or Bill of Sale. He was at all times very anxious that people should take his word for truth, although a greater dealer in falsehoods never existed; and when he was about to do anything radically wrong, "a robe of seeming truth did hide his crafty observation" as he would speak to several of the travellers in this manner:—"I can't think why So-and-so does not get on better. He owes me money which I can't afford to lose. I have let him have a horse many a time when he could not have got from one fair to another, and I never got a shilling by him in my life." That was enough said, for in about another week the man would be sure to be sold up, and in the most merciless manner, unless he paid a large sum of money down by way of extra interest.

His game was besting everybody, whether it was for pounds, shillings, or pence. At one time he cheated a poor farming man out of his milch cow

in exchange for another. The man was in liquor at the time, and when he came to his senses he went right away to another part of the country, and his poor wife took it so to heart that she died shortly afterwards. Elias was a man that would at any time buy a beast that had come by a questionable death, and I have often heard him declare he could not fancy sausages! Whenever he sold a cow or a calf that was fit for the butcher, if the buyer did not take the precaution then and there to mark it in such a way as to be sure to know it again, Master Elias would be sure to substitute another one of about half the value; and if he got into trouble through his nefarious dealings, he would talk and argue for a week together to get out of it—but never “part” except it actually came to be a magisterial case, and then only at the last moment, and when he had worked down the difference to about one-half of the original claim.

When Elias was at a pleasure fair, and there was no cattle-jobbing to be done, he would “pitch the hunters,” that is, put up the “three sticks a penny” business. I remember at Lye Green Fair there was a stranger in the business, who came from somewhere out of Kent, at which Elias took umbrage, looking at the man as an interloper, and they soon came to words, and when the ever-

bouncing Elias got the opportunity he gave the stranger a strong hit when he happened to be looking another way, and he was good at that sort of cowardly thing, or taking advantage of any person sitting down, or when half drunk ; or when a fight had taken place between two men he would be sure to show off upon one of them after it was over, or when one of them was half licked. But, however, on the occasion to which I allude he had reckoned without his host, for no sooner had the stranger recovered from the shock of the fierce blow he had received, than he was upon his pins and, squaring up, let go his left, and countered with his right, in prime style. At it again he went—left, right—right, left—all his blows well planted, and as straight from the shoulder as an arrow. The mob rallied around, and although Master Elias Eldred held many *in terrorem* by his bounce, he had but few real friends in the field. Many kept a civil tongue in their heads as a matter of policy, and they were only too glad to see a chance of his getting a good drubbing. A ring was formed, and the stranger got a seconder, and "Time" was called for the second round.

Elias was a bit astonished, but was afraid to give in thus early in the contest, well knowing that if he did he should lose caste amongst those he so

long had boasted over. "Time!" shouted the late Tom Maley, the pugilist, who had just arrived on the scene, and who always liked to see a good mill, all on the fair and square.

"Now then," said Tom, "mind, my lads, a good fair fight, no flinching, and may the best man win."

The second round commenced with a little cautious sparring on both sides, the bouncing Elias looking very funky. He found he had caught a Tartar this time. He also knew Tom Maley as a fighting man, and as one of the most scientific of his day, and that made him nervous. After a while the stranger let go his left; it landed slap and sharp on Elias's tater-trap, and made his ivories rattle a good 'un; he got well home too with his right; ding-dong was the order of the day.

"Follow him up," said Tom Maley.

"Let him have it," shouted the mob. "Bravo! that's a rum 'un for you, old Elias." "He'll take all the bounce out of you this time. Why, your own mother won't know you in a minute."

"Now bustle him," said Tom Maley; "you have got him to-rights now. Let go your left straight."

And sure enough the stranger did "let go his left," and with his right administered such a slashing "upper-cut" that Elias was sent to grass to

rise no more off it. He was finished, doubled-up, and done for, amid the shouts and jeerings of the mob.

O what a fall was there, my countrymen !

Elias, like all braggadocios, was but a puffing, boastful fellow, so the next morning off he goes to the magistrates' court and asks for a warrant, at the same time piling up the agony, and telling a great many falsehoods in connexion with the matter. His worship, however, failed to see the necessity for granting a warrant, but granted a summons to be returnable the next day, when, on the case being heard, the magistrate told Mr. Elias Eldred that, in his opinion, he had brought the trouble upon himself, and that in his (the magistrate's) private opinion it served the plaintiff right, and therefore the case would be dismissed, with all costs to the plaintiff.

I had but one business transaction with Elias, and of that he never forgot or forgave himself nor me. It came about thus :—In the autumn time of the year, when business was very good, although the roads were at the time very bad, I being heavily laden required a help-horse, and therefore bought a rough, shaggy-looking animal of Eldred to help me out of my difficulty. As a

horse, it certainly was "a rum 'un to look at," but yet I thought I could distinguish some "go" in him. Elias had but just acquired the horse by way of a chop and change, and consequently knew little or nothing for or against the animal. Time was to me as money, and being really in want of an extra horse, I did not care much to haggle over the "deal," therefore soon struck a bargain, and paid over the money and had the horse delivered then and there, and was off on the road in the early afternoon.

It is proverbial that there is no friendship to be had or expected in the matter of horse-dealing. Everybody must use his own judgment, or the want of it, as best he can. But in this particular bit of horse-dealing I had—and that quite unexpected on my part, and equally so on the part of Elias Eldred—decidedly the best of it. The horse turned out to be so good that I kept it for four or five years, and then sold it for above six times the amount I had originally given for it. It was about a fortnight or three weeks after I had had this horse that its good qualities began—through kindness and good living—to develop themselves; and as a matter of course there was a good bit of talk over the matter, so that the circumstance soon reached the ears of Elias Eldred, who tried many

little dodges to obtain back the animal, but I was not to be had, and for years and years afterwards it was a standing joke with me to ask if Elias had got "a horse or two in my way to-day."

I remember my old dad, although never at any time very communicative, telling me when a boy "never to have anything to do with anybody with a queer name." I did not take much notice of it at the time, but this Elias Eldred is, I have now no doubt, the sort of person he intended me to avoid. I certainly never met with such a compound man in the whole course of my travels, but there are many more about like him if you only knew where to find them. Elias was a Jonas Chuzzlewit, a Pecksniff, a Uriah Heep, a Silver Jack, a mean Sir Giles Overreach, a horse-coper, pig-jobber, cow-dealer, Saturday butcher-whining humbug, and what you will. I remember Judge Earle some twelve years ago sentencing several of this man's companions to different terms of imprisonment, for conspiring by fraud to cheat a country grocer out of a horse and cart, together with goods and money.

Elias Eldred saved his country some trouble and expense by getting himself killed, through being pitched out of his cart one dark night, when jour-

neying between Maidstone and Rochester, so in this way—

Be it understood,
He left his country for his country's good.

The yarn which follows was written or concocted for my especial use by the late Lord Chief Baron Nicholson, of Judge and Jury notoriety, whose acquaintance and true friendship I enjoyed for many years, and than whom a better-hearted man never lived to break bread in this vale of tears.

The yarn in question did not suit for all times and companies, and I only introduced it on sort of heydays and holilays, or when I had a very select audience. It was at times very effective in what is known as bazaar-work, and herewith I present it to the reader :

“Well, my old friends and ready-money customers, here we are again. Why, I have not seen any of your sweet faces since the last time but one, and then I was asleep. Yes, my friends, I’ve had a good deal to worry and perplex me since that time. I have been engaged in a lawsuit on account of my poor old father-which-is-in-law, aged one hundred and seventy-two! Beg your pardon, I mean seventy-two. Yes, seventy-two.

“You must understand, that old Sir John Colly-

wobbles, of Collywobbles Hall, in Collywobbles Dale, just by the river of Collywobble, in Bellycheershire, Barrow-Knight, made his last Will and Testament, in which, among other bequests, requests, desires, and poke your fires, was this, *viz.*, that is to say, namely — ‘That out of the love and respect that I bear unto my much-honoured and good friend, Mr. Matthew Plumpudding, Esquire, thief and liar — that’s my father-which-is-in-law — I do bequeath unto the said Matthew Plumpudding, Esq., *et ceteras*, aforesaid, All my black and white horses.’

“Now, you must all understand that the testator, old Sir John Collywobbles, had six black horses, six white horses, and six pied horses. So I recommended my father-which-is-in-law to collar the lot, for, said I, says I, a black horse is a black horse, and a white horse is a white horse, and a pied horse is a black and white horse too, so stick to the lot, father-which-is-in-law, said I, and so he did. But would you believe it, some of the family got hold of a lawyer, or rather a lawyer got hold of them, and persuaded them to go to law, and so to law they went! They had what they call a case drawn up, and submitted it for counsel’s opinion. So they sent the case up to Serjeants Blunderbuss, Lush and Drink-water.

"But, however, me and my father-which-is-in-law were not going to be done in that manner. So we submitted our case, fiddle, and all, for the opinion of Chief Baron Nicholson, and a jolly old chap he is, who, after having called for a glass of brandy-and-water and a cigar, wrote out his opinion of the case thus :—

" 'And first, of all it seemeth expedient to consider what is the Nature of Horses, and also what is the Nature of Colours, and so the Argument will consequently divide itself into a twofold way, that is to say, the Formal Part and the Substantial Part. Horses are the Substantial Part, or thing Bequeathed: Black and White the Formal and descriptive part.

" 'Horse, in a physical sense, doth import a certain Quadruped or four-footed animal which, by the apt and regular Disposition of certain proper and convenient Parts, is adapted, fitted, and constituted for the use of Man. Yea, so necessary and conducive was this animal conceived to be to the Behoof of the Common Weal, that sundry and divers Acts of Parliament have from time to time been made in favour of Horses, *vide* 1 Edward VI., 2 and 3 Edward VI., etc. etc.

" 'But as the great difference seemeth not to be

so much touching the Substantial Part, *i.e.* Horses, let us proceed to the formal or descriptive Part, *viz.*, What Horses they are that come within this Bequest.

“Colours are commonly of various Kinds and different Sorts: of which White and Black are the two extremes, and consequently comprehend within them all other Colours whatsoever.

“By a Bequest, therefore, of Black and White Horses, grey or pied Horses may well pass; so when two Extremes or remotest end of anything are devised, the Law by Common Intendment will intend whatsoever is contained between them to be devised too.

“But the present Case is still stronger, coming not only within the Intendment, but also to the very Letter of the Words.

“By the Word Black, All the Horses that are Black are devised; by the Word White, are devised those that are White; and by the same Word, with the Conjunction Copulative, And between them the Horses that are Black and White, that is to say Pied, are devised also.

“Whatever is Black and White is Pied, and whatever is Pied is Black and White; *ergo* Black and White is Pied, and *vice versâ* Pied is Black and White.

“If, therefore, Black and White Horses are devised, Pied Horses shall pass by such Devise; *ergo* the Plaintiff shall have the Pied Horses.

(Signed) “‘RENTON NICHOLSON.’

“So my friends and ready-money customers, Old Baron Nicholson decided in my father—which-is-in-law’s favour, so last week we were going to take possession of the lot,—that is, the black horses, the white horses, and the pied horses,—and then set up as gentlefolks, when, lo and behold you, it was discovered that all the Horses were Mares, so we’ve got to begin all over again afresh, or what the lawyers call *de novo*—fol the riddle hi do.”

Some fifteen or sixteen years ago, a man was exhibiting round the country a “Spotted Child.” His plan was to hire for a short period closed shops. He always gave himself out as a bird-fancier, or dealer in foreign birds; he would secure the shop for a week, or two or three months according to the size and importance of the place, by paying down the rent for the whole of the time he engaged it, taking care to get a good and sufficient receipt from the landlord or his agent; then the moment he got possession, would plaster the place all over from top to bottom with large posters, with a portraiture of the celebrated and

world-known "Spotted Child," together with tattered and worn-out flags of all nations; while, by the doorway, he would exhibit some poor old green and other descriptions of parrots, and a monkey, for the amusement of the ragged boys and girls of the place. An old Italian, and an equally old organ, which was kept playing from morning till night, much to the annoyance of the respectable shopkeepers in the immediate neighbourhood, who, as a rule, would lay their complaints before the landlord, with an idea of getting rid at once of the nuisance. But that was much easier to talk about than accomplish, for the exhibitor had got possession, and had paid his rent till the duration of the tenancy; so that it frequently happened that the shopkeepers were obliged, in self-defence, to pay the man out, to induce him to quit before his legal time had expired. This was just what he wanted, and just what he had catered for; and to which end he made himself and his exhibition as disagreeable as he possibly could. The large posting bills containing the portrait of the "Spotted Child" were made to look positively disgusting, by the aid of red and yellow paint; while the noise and din from the organ, the screeching parrots, the boys and girls playing with the monkey, &c., made the proprietor anything but a

pleasant neighbour ; so that he generally succeeded in getting a good sum to leave the place.

He had another little dodge, and one of the few I had never heard of before, and which was brought particularly before my notice by reason of my being called in as a sort of arbitrator in the matter. The dodge in question was this :

Having secured his place of business to perform in, he would go to a printer, and take as "copy" one of his usual handbills, being very careful that there was no printer's name attached to it ; and it was always made manifest that the name of the printer had been cut off. The only alteration required in the handbill was that of the town and streets, which was always very carefully written in, for the guidance of the printer. The exhibitor would then enter into terms for the printing eight, ten, or twelve thousand, to be "just like this one, Mr. Printer ; mind you, no alterations in it whatever ;" and perhaps, Mr. Printer, you will draw out a bit of an agreement, to say that you undertakes to print these bills that you have got to do, and that they are to be just like this here one which I gives you the copy of. Put that down in writing, and sign it while I wait ; and when you have printed the bills and brings 'em home, and the wooden block thing of my "Spotted Child,"

then there's your money. I know, as you say, the price is low ; but then, you see, it's a good long number—ten thousand ; but when you have done your work—if you don't make no mistakes, why, as I said before, there's your money all right and proper. But be sure you bring back the wood-block thing at the same time ; don't forget that, whatever you do."

Now the man's dodge was this. First he screwed the printer down to a starvation price on the strength of the long number and the ready money. The printer, in setting up the handbill, although very careful to keep strictly to his "copy" in all other respects, would, as a matter of custom, append his own name and address at the bottom. But when he took home his work, with the man's woodcut he had left such strict injunctions about, together with his invoice of charges, then came the following scene :

"So, Mr. Printer, you have brought home the bills, and I hope you have got the wood-block thing with you, or you'll have to go back and fetch it before you gets your money—that was the bargain."

"Yes, sir, here's the handbills—ten thousand ; here's the woodcut ; and here's my little account."

"Oh ! then that's all right, governor ; and if the

bills is printed right and proper, then you have your money. But as I'm not much of a 'scolard' myself, my old 'oman as wrote out the bill first, before ever it was printed at all, will just read it over, before we pays you the money—but just hand us over the wood-block thing."

Then the "artful dodger" of an exhibitor would take the lot to the back part of the place, and, with his wife, would look at the bills, when, as a rule, they would find that the printer had attached his name and address, by way of "imprint." This was exactly as they wished to find things; so the man and his wife would hurriedly approach the printer with—

"Here, I say, governor, what's this all about—this bottom line here?—What's this?"

To which the printer would naturally reply:
"Oh, that—oh, that's my imprint."

"Your imprint? Why, what's that?—there ain't anything of that in the copy I gave you to print from, is there?"

"No, 'air; there is no imprint on the one you gave me for copy. But then it is usual for every printer to append his name and address."

"What! at the bottom of other people's bills! I never heard of such a thing. Do you think, then, that I am going to open my grand exhibition,

pay rent and expenses to advertise you as a what you calls yourself here, a 'Cheap and expeditious printer, and cards, and reward bills printed on the shortest notice,' and all that sort of thing! —It ain't very likely! Why, when I goes to a newspaper office, and wants to advertise my grand exhibition in one of their newspaper things, they charges me so much for every line I 'as. Besides, it ain't down in your written contract, what you signed. You never said you wanted me to advertise you all over the country as 'a cheap printer of posters, bills, and cards,' and all that sort of thing. Now, a bargain's a bargain, and an agreement's an agreement, so I shan't have these here bills at any price, so you can take them all back again. Here they are; take 'em all back; I shan't have 'em, and so I tells you. Will we, missus?—There, the missus says we can't, and won't have 'em; leastways, unless you takes about half price for them. Yes; I shall give you so much for them, and that's merely because I wants the bills very bad; but if you don't take that price for them, why, I shall go with my wood-block thing to another printer this afternoon; so you must make up your mind at once. Because, you see, if you hinders me in showing my grand exhibition, the lawyer I knows of will be letting

you know about summoning you for compensation for loss of business and all that sort of thing. Just you look at the awful expense I'm at for rent, and all my people all standing still doing nothing, all through your printing these here bills different to what I told you. My lawyer will let you know something."

The upshot would be, that the printer seeing what an artful and designing fellow he had to deal with, and one not worth "powder and shot," would be compelled to comply with the extortion; the bills not being worth to him the paper they were printed on.

My attention was first drawn to this dodge through the man having obtained the use of a shop to exhibit a "Spotted Child" in at the corner of the Western Road, Brighton. And as it happened that the little master printer was occupying some premises which I had a beneficial interest in for his office, I was called in to make the best terms I could for him under the circumstances; but, in spite of my recognising the man as an old showman at fairs and other places, I could do but little for my tenant the printer. The man had so long and successfully carried on the dodge, as I afterwards found out, that he was loth to abate an inch of his scheme for getting his printing done at his

own price ; but, as a bit of a set-off, I had sufficient influence with the neighbouring tradespeople to induce them not to part with any money for the purpose of getting rid of the intolerable nuisance, but rather to go to the sitting magistrates and state their grievance, by which means they were enabled, by the ready assistance of the police, to make the place unprofitable to him, as they would not allow any person to stay for one minute, but were peremptorily ordered to "move on." There were two policemen stationed immediately opposite the spot, from morning till night, on special duty, *viz.*, to keep the pavement clear. The consequence was that the man actually left the place before his time had expired, going on to Lewes, where he performed the same dodge. But I may add, that as he took the key of the Western Road premises with him, he gave some trouble and some cost to recover possession of the property.

Being at Hailsham, a small market town in Sussex, about the year 1846, I attended the club feast, which was held on the common. At that time we used to buy men's waistcoats of Michael Riley, of Manchester, at 5*l.* per gross, and sell them at 1*s.* 6*d.*, 1*s.* 3*d.*, and the lowest price at a shilling each. I had a bale containing twelve

dozen arrive that morning, they were red ones; and in offering these "Bens," the plan was to put them on to show how well they fitted, and, in doing so, used to turn them wrong side out, or crosswise, or put both sides on one shoulder, by putting one arm through both arm-holes and pretending to be feeling for the other; at other times putting our legs into the arm-holes, and any other fantastic tricks we could think of to promote their sale.

The landlady of the house where we put up at was standing watching me sell these waistcoats, and counting how many I sold; and in the evening she declared, by all that was good, that I had sold above 500. I certainly sold the whole of them; but as the bale only contained 144, I think the good woman must have been imbibing something stronger than barley-water, or else she was troubled with a strong squint that made her see treble; or perhaps she counted the times I said "Sold again," which would be generally three or four times over each one.

Now that I come to think of it those waistcoats were wonderful goods at the price. I have sold many thousands of them in common with all others in the line. How they were produced I cannot imagine; they could not be bought now for anything

like the money—5*l.* for a gross of waistcoats! a fraction over 8½*d.* each. The “whids” we used to crack over them were—“Observe, there is enough stuff in the fore part of this waistcoat to make a bull a bedgown; it is double milled, double twilled, and double stuck in the weaving. It formed a portion of the bankrupt’s stock not a hundred miles from yesterday, nor a week from to-morrow; but of course you all know that as well as I do, because you must have seen the shutters up and his name in the *Gazette* next month. Now the price of this article you’ll find, if you can, marked under the collar, is 17*s.* 6*d.*; then there’s A says O, meaning that it cost 15*s.* first hand, O being the fifteenth letter in the alphabet. Yes, 17*s.* 6*d.* was the shop price; the man that made it wove the fore part over a five-barred gate, and had the steeple of an old parish church for a shuttle, and you can have it for half-a-guinea; you won’t stand half-a-guinea? Then I’ll take 10*s.* 6*d.* just to accommodate you; say 5*s.*, 4*s.*, 3*s.*, 2*s.* 1*s.* 6*d.*; there, one shilling buys a good Sunday waistcoat, and some time next week I’ll send you a coat and a pair of trousers to match. Sold again, to Jeremiah Stitchem.”

Customer: “I beg your pardon, I am not a tailor.”

"I didn't say you was, I said Snitchem, not Stitchem, because you have just a long nose.

"Nose, nose, nose, nose,
And who gave thee that jolly red nose?
Cinnamon and ginger, nutmegs and cloves,
And that gave you that jolly red nose."

Being at Plymouth Fair and doing a good business, there stood among the crowd a youth who bought a great many lots of me, and kept smiling as if he would make friends, so that when I had done my "pitch" and got down from the stage, he sidled up and said to me, "Master Cheap John, do you know anything of Cornish Latin?" I said, "No, my lad, I do not, nor ever heard of any Cornish phrases." "Then," said he, "I'll tell you. When I went to school my parents determined, among other things, that I should learn Latin, and for that accomplishment used to pay something extra by the quarter. I went to school at Truro, and when holidays came I used to go home and spend the time; and when I started again for school my mother gave me the money to pay my quarter. Now I did not like the trouble of learning Latin, so I spent the extra-money and said nothing about Latin lessons to the master; but when the time came round for me to go home again, I was completely bewildered as to how I should do

for my Latin, as I well knew that my parents would invite several neighbours to hear me recite some of my Latin phrases. So, while walking up the hill out of Truro, thinking what I should say, my foot struck against a rusty horseshoe—I picked it up and called it ‘rusty-dusty.’ Sauntering on a mile or two further I found a bird’s egg; what shall I call this in Latin to father? said I to myself; so it struck me to call it egg-a-musty. Travelling on I found some people burning a tar-barrel in commemoration of something, and I called that tarby-tindy. I said, ‘Damn it, that will do.’ So passing on, the moon rose, and I called her mooney-shiney; when only three fields off from father’s house I crossed a stile and tore my breeches, which I called stilem-rantem; when I got into a second meadow I saw a ram that had the squirts, so I called that boarem-squirtum; and seeing a magpie on a pig’s back, just before I entered the house, I called it pigum-grufum by my father’s gaterum. When I got in-doors they were all desirous to hear what progress I had made in my Latin lessons; I tried to put it off till the morning, but I was obliged to begin, which I did with :—

Rusty-dusty
Egg-a-musty

Tarby-tindy
Moony-shiney
Stileum-rantum
Boarum-squirtum
Figum-grufum
By my father's gateum.

"Now all this stuff and nonsense of mine so amused the old people, that the neighbours were all called in, and I was pronounced the cleverest boy that ever went to school from that village." With this the lad and I became sworn friends, and I correspond with him to this day ; he is the most original character I ever met with in my life.

Ben Broone was selling at a fair in Kent, and while doing a good, brisk, and ready-money trade, disposing of his goods just as fast as his wife could hand them out to him, a yokel in the crowd blared out, "I say, Master Cheap Jack, how much do ye want for that article inside, eh?" thereby meaning Ben's wife, who was inside the carriage. "Do you mean that *article*?" said Ben, pointing his right-hand thumb significantly over his left shoulder towards his wife. "Yaes," replied the chawbacon. "Yaes, she—shud like to buy her. If you'd ony put a bit of a price on she, I'd buy."—"Well, my friend," said Ben, "the price of that article, as you call her, is two punches of the head;" and Ben, who was ever very good, ready, and quick with his "fives,"

was off the stage in a minute, and letting go his left mawley, it alighted on

The Bridge of Sighs
Between nose and eyes,

which made the fellow blink, squint, and look nine ways for next Sunday. It was a "noser," and no mistake about it, and the "ruby" spurted in all directions. "That's ONE," said Ben. "Will you have the other now?"

"No, thankee," spluttered out the countryman as he slunk away from Ben's formidable left, which was up and ready to have popped in No. 2, just a leetle hotter and a leetle stronger; but the cove was off, and Ben mounted the stage and went on with his business, to the amusement of the crowd, creating a great roar by asking if any other party felt inclined to buy that little choice *article* of his. Ben did a lot more business, and the common verdict of the crowd, with respect to the yokel, was—

SARVE HIM RIGHT!

Tom Wilmot, a horsedealer, being at a West-country fair, was showing a farmer a horse that was "snitched," that is, glandered. It was a fine-looking animal, and made up for sale. It was "jigged, digged, and figged," and as the horse was being run up and down by a jockey cove, Tom kept

saying to the farmer, "You won't buy him, he's got a nasty nose; see what a nasty goer he is; he ain't worth a bunch of dog's-meat. I don't think I shall sell him to you; he's the worst horse I ever had in my life. Don't buy him—he won't suit you. I don't want to take you in with him—better let me sell him to somebody else that ain't such a judge of a horse as you are. I tell you you won't like him when you've got him. Don't buy him, because I know you'll grumble afterwards." Tom said all this and a lot more in disparagement of the horse but said it in such a flash and knowing manner that the farmer did not take it to be in earnest, and Tom eventually sold him the horse. When the farmer got him home and found out the "screw" he was, and, remembering what Tom had said of it, he held that he was fairly done with both his eyes open—"An two men ride a horse, one must ride behind."

I was once at Nottingham October Goose Fair. Wombwell's collection of wild beasts arrived in the early part of the morning, and while the men were engaged in putting the waggons in their proper position they had the assistance of an elephant, which was harnessed and hooked on any waggon that required to be placed in the row. The elephant having drawn one of the carriages a few inches too

far, the keeper spoke to the animal, who immediately turned round, and, putting its head against the body of the carriage, pushed it back to the required place; when one of two Nottingham "lambs," *i.e.* roughs, who were looking on, observed to the other, "See yu, who's goin' to shuv it abaak wi' 'es snoot!" which he did, to their surprise and satisfaction.

Stroud Fair was one that lasted three days, and when Sunday intervened there was generally a local preacher giving the people the benefit of his exhortations.

On one occasion a Jew was selling cocoa-nut when the "autem cackler," *i.e.* dissenting minister, came and wanted to impart to the Israelite the sin he committed in carrying on his vocation on such a day. The Jew half listened to what the other said, but kept on calling out, "Cocoa-nut, a halfpenny a slice, and very nice. Cocoa-nut—cocoa-nut!" The preacher mounted a chair and began to "hammer forth," and the Jew, not wishing to annoy him, was for a time silent; but the preacher holding forth longer than the other thought he was entitled to, began again to call out, "Cocoa-nut, halfpenny a slice, and very nice. Cocoa-nut—cocoa-nut!" which after a time so bothered the preacher, who was one of those who—

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Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to,

that he got down, and, putting his hand on the Jew's shoulder, said, " Friend, the time will perhaps come when you may repent this." The Jew was all business, and having kept his own "shob'osh" the day before after his own form, retorted with his sally, "Oh, you go and hang yourself, you So-and-so. I should not like to be a nice young woman in your way," which so amused the crowd that they roared with laughter, and the preacher, seeing no chance of any converts, quietly sloped off. A fair ground on a Sunday is a very improper place to hold forth in.

In my young days there used to travel about in gangs, like men of business, a lot of people called "Nobblers," who used to work the "thimble and pea rig" and go "buzzing," that is, picking pockets, assisted by some small boys. These men travelled to markets, fairs, and races, and dressed for the most part like country farmers, in brown top-boots, kerseymere breeches, &c. When in luck they travelled in vehicles of various descriptions. There was a lot of these people assembled at Woodbury Hill, in Dorsetshire, on a Sunday, the fair commencing on the Monday, when, to amuse themselves, they began playing a game of cricket,

which at once showed the persons in authority—apart from the unusual circumstance of playing such a game on the Sabbath day—what they in reality were. There were gentlemen (?) in black, mock farmers, swells in light clothes, all mixed together with cadgers and “shallow coveys,” *i.e.*, very poorly dressed fellows. The bailiff of the gentleman who owned the ground armed about one hundred countrymen with cudgels, pitchforks, &c., and coming on the hill, addressing the “school” of nobblers, said, “We are aware what you men are here for, and unless you instantly leave this place force will be used to compel you to go away, and any harm you may come to, you will bring on yourselves. Will you go off quietly?” To which the ringleader of the “nobbling crew,” one dressed in the style of the most evangelical of ministers, said, “No! we will see you and all your yokels d—— first!” The bailiff then ordered the countrymen to drive the party off, when a desperate fight ensued, the “nobblers” arming themselves with “cockshy” sticks belonging to the gipsies, who took part in the fray, which lasted for nearly an hour, and ended in the total rout of the “nobblers,” who, although the most expert and active, were outnumbered by the countrymen amid a number of broken heads, arms, and legs, and, it was reported,

some deaths. At all events some of the men of both sides were frightful to look at, being covered with blood, dreadful wounds on the face or head, others with broken limbs, &c.

The race of "nobblerers" are now nearly extinct, as the old ones have died out, and the younger hands have either turned betting men or burglars.

A similar scene to the above once occurred on the Brighton racecourse between some soldiers and a gang of "nobblerers," but was not such a desperate affair as that at Woodbury Hill. At Goodwood, too, there used to be continual fights with the "nobblerers" and the people they had robbed or cheated, and it was not safe to be there after the races were over. But now things are changed for the better, as at all these places persons using ordinary care are as safe there as in their own parlours.

Isaac Hart, *alias* Shicer, was a good-natured and happy-go-lucky German Jew, whom we all knew and tolerated while travelling, although he was not in the business, but followed to sell goods in any town we might stay in. He had this strange phenomenon — he used to laugh most when he was vexed.

"Shicer" used to work with a foot-hawker's licence, in those days charged for at the rate of

4*l.* for a year or any portion thereof. 'At one time, when his licence had run out, and he had not the ready-money or perhaps disposition to get it renewed, he was challenged to produce it while hawking in the neighbourhood of Barnet, in Hertfordshire. The local constable was imperative; "Shicer" must produce his licence or go before the magistrates, but the only reply the constable could obtain was "D' Lib-ber-pulls! D' Lib-ber-pulls!" "I'll Liberpools ye," replied the constable; "so unless you produce your hawker's licence—your 'slang' as you 'chaps call it—I'll ike you off to the Beak: do you compré, you foreign vagrant, you?" The constable was as good as his word, and poor "Shicer" was in due time and form ushered into the presence of the sitting magistrates, and after the constable's evidence had been recorded, the magistrate's clerk, finding no name placed opposite to that of the defendant in the charge-sheet, said to the prisoner, "What's your name?"

"D' Lib-ber-pulls! D' Lib-ber-pulls!" replied Isaac.

, "That's the name of a town. I want your name."

"D' Lib-ber-pulls! D' Lib-ber-pulls!" was the reply.

Then the magistrates and their clerk held a short consultation, and the chairman said, "Now listen, my man. You are charged with hawking goods in this town without having previously obtained a licence to enable you to do so in a legal manner. What have you to say to the charge, and what is your name?"

"D' Lib-ber-pulls! D' Lib-ber-pulls! D' Lib——"

"Yes! yes! yes! we all know about Liverpool," replied the magistrate. "But you must tell your name, and explain how it is you are found hawking without a licence. How long have you been in England?"

"D' Lib-ber-pulls, D' Lib-ber-pulls," was all the English "Shicer" *would* speak or understand; and having acted his part so well, that neither the bench nor their clerk could detect him in his "double-cunning," he was discharged.

The last time I saw Hart was soon after I commenced business at Brighton, when I let him have a gold watch to show to a customer of his, as he alleged. He went away, and forgot to return. The temptation was too great for him.

'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.

When at Manchester, many years ago, we used

to stop at an hostelry called the Rising¹ Sun, in Swan Street, at the top of Shude Hill, where the Irish pig-market was then held. And I remember that on the wall of the house there was written in very large letters, "Ceid Mille Falte," and underneath, in English, "Paddy's House." I don't know whether I have spelt the Irish perfect, but as far as I can remember, it was to the effect of "Ten thousand welcomes." The house in question was used a great deal by the Irish on market-days. The pig-dealers were in the habit of using an iron rod, somewhat like a fire-poker, about two feet six inches long, to put into the pig's mouth and twist his jaw on one side, and look into his mouth to see whether he had the measles. Now this I have seen a hundred times. But on the first visit to the town of a party I was once with, he knew so little about pigs having such a disease as measles, that he speculated in a couple from an Irish dealer, who had brought over a lot, of which he had only these two left. My governor thought he had them cheap at about 3*d.* per lb., but they turned out to be frightfully diseased, so that Master Cheap John was done; but there is generally a remedy if a person gets done at anything, and that is to do somebody else, and so get out of it. But in this case my employer only got out of it at a loss, which

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makes me always remember measly pork ever since. At the time I refer to, there was a good deal of it about, and freely sold in Manchester and its immediate neighbourhood. Some of the low Irish had the measles so bad themselves, that they did not mind the pork being so, especially as it was cheap. It was to be easily detected by persons who regularly dealt in the article of pig-meat, whether the animal was dead or alive, so that there was no excuse for such persons offering it for sale; "but," says Paddy, "I don't mind pork sausages wid the mazles, as it makes 'em richer and more delicate in flavour." It was a common saying in Manchester, and may be now for aught I know, "You are as Irish as the pigs on Shude Hill."

I was once done myself with some pigs—aye, and done brown too, and at a time when I ought to have known better. I was at Rye market, when a man came there with four pigs, and as it was early, and before the market had hardly begun, I was sauntering about, and on looking at the man's pigs and asking a few questions, the man said very familiarly, "Good-morning, Master Cheap John; how are you? Will you have a glass of ale?" To this I readily assented, and the farmer-lookin' man and I went into the

nearest public-house for that purpose, when in conversation the man said, "I wanted to see you for I bought a gun of you a year ago, and it turned out a very good one—so good, that I sold it for a sovereign profit." I replied, "Then why don't you buy another of me, for that must be as good, and a little better, than pig-dealing?" He said, "Perhaps I shall when I have sold my pigs off." I told him that I had a capital double-barrelled gun I wanted 3*l.* 10*s.* for, and for which I felt sure he could get a five-pound-note among the sporting farmers of his neighbourhood. To which he replied, "Well, if I like the look of the gun, and you choose to give me the difference, you shall have my pigs. I want only 7*l.* for the four." I could see they were nice little porkers and of a saleable size, so we bargained by my giving 3*l.* and the gun. He took the gun and the money, and going away, said, "I shall be back again shortly, when we will wet the deal, and I can help you to sell the pigs if you want any assistance in that way; besides," he added, with great *naïveté*, or knavery, "perhaps I shall be able to get a customer for the gun, and then I shall want another." But I never saw him again, from that day to this. Not long after, a farmer came up, and seeing me showing and handling the pigs

to one or two people, asked me if I would buy them. I said: "I want to sell them, for I had just had a deal with a man for them." "What man?" said the farmer. "Oh, the owner of the pigs," I replied. "I don't know his name, but he said he would be back again presently." "Did he?" said the farmer. "I hope he will; but it's my opinion you won't see him any more, for if you have bought those pigs you have been done, that is, if you have paid for them. I told the farmer the whole of the circumstance, and he burst out laughing and said: "Why, I only employed the fellow to unload them out of my cart yonder, while I went to another part of the market on some other business. I don't know the man from Adam, and you have been done, I tell you; there are plenty of people here know me." The inspector came and inquired the particulars of the case, and sent out a constable or two to look after the man with the gun and money. But they did not find him, and Cheap John was done—and brown too—by a country yokel, in the broad daylight of early morn, with both his eyes wide open, and without even having had the satisfaction of giving the fellow a good hiding, or giving him a nose-ender with my left mawley, which at that time would have made such an impression that he would never have forgotten

it. I have the evidence of my friend, Job Phelps, the ex-pugilist, a native of Brighton, and brother to the once celebrated "Brighton Bill," who was defeated and killed by Owen Swift, at Royston, March, 1838, who says that my left, when straight from the shoulder, is a "caution," even with the gloves on.

It generally happens with most booth-shows that have a living-waggon and two or three stages, that there is a follower, or help: frequently some half-witted, or hobble-de-hoy, that hangs about and travels from place to place with them—a sort of fellow everybody in the concern sends on errands, and that waits upon the family in the carriage in the way of fetching water, coke, coals, wood, or anything else that is wanted. Such a poor fellow was one Peter, the subject of this story. Peter was for several years with Mrs. Marlay's show; he used to sleep under one of the carriages, or wherever he could, wrapped up in baizes, or any sort of article of like kind not in actual use at night. He had to do all the odd jobs of the establishment; and all day, or even night, it was Peter here, Peter there, Peter everywhere. He was generally seen at meal-times, having the scraps that fell from the proprietress's table, and drinking his tea made from the last washing of the leaves on the steps of the

living-carriage, when everybody else was satisfied. He never changed his clothes from one year's end to the other, and never saw a fire, only when they had a large coke one in the booth in winter-time to make it as comfortable as possible for the audience at night-time; but, even then, although there was a good fire, he never had time to sit by it for a minute. "There's no peace for Peter," he used to say.

At the time I write about, Peter was cleaning a large copper kettle belonging to the mistress of the concern, on the steps of the carriage. The fair was over, and everything packed up ready to start; but by some means, in the hurry of putting to the horses to go away, Peter put the family copper kettle off the steps on to the ground, and there it was left.

On the arrival of the party and the concern at Maidstone, the first thing that was required was the kettle, to put on the fire to make hot water for tea. Now, as an invariable rule, all showfolks having their own living-carriage, pride themselves on their brass stoves, brass fire-irons, brass candlesticks, brass door-plate, and though last, not least, the bright copper tea-kettle; and this identical one had been given to its present owner—the mistress of the show—by her mother, some seven-

teen years before the time I now write about. Now, as soon as it was missed, Peter went up to the door of the carriage, pulling a face as long as from here to next week, and blubbered out, "Oh, Missus! I left the copper tea-kettle behind at Chatham. Oh! oh! I didn't mean to do it, but I did it—oh! oh!—oh!" The good woman of the establishment was thunderstruck, and screamed out, "Oh! you did, did you?" Then, after calling him some of her most polite names, beginning with idiot, and then rapidly running up the whole gamut of her vulgar vocabulary, declared she would "copper his kettle" if he did not instantly return to Chatham and bring it, "dead or alive," to her, as she observed it was given her by her poor old dead-and-gone mother, and wouldn't lose it for a million of other kettles, even if they were all made of silver and gold. She should never know a day's luck if without her poor old mother's kettle. It was given her at her mother's death, and on her deathbed, and the kettle must be got, or Peter must starve.

So off went poor Peter quite penniless to Chatham, from which place he had just walked, without taking any rest or refreshment of any kind; and he was never to return until he had produced the old family copper tea-kettle. When the

poor fellow reached Chatham, he got on better than he could possibly have anticipated, for a good old neighbourly woman seeing the kettle left behind, took care of it; and when Peter arrived with a woful countenance, and a long tale upon his mistress's copper tea-kettle, the good woman at once put him out of his misery by producing the desired article—none the worse for wear. Nay, the kind old soul did more; for seeing what a plight poor Peter was in, she took compassion on him, and gave him a good meal, and allowed him to rest awhile in her house. It was perhaps the first time Peter had had any kindness shown him for years; and he was so affected by it, that he trembled violently and burst into tears. He might be excused for doing so, for the old woman's words were kindly spoken, and strange sounds frighten one. However, Peter took the kettle, and trudged back again through the wet and mire to Maidstone, lighter in heart than when he first started on his journey.

Now it happened that the great outcry that the "Missus" had made about her tea-kettle was heard by several of the Fair people, so some of the show boys, always ready for mischief, thought to have a lark when Peter returned; and for that purpose they produced an old black kettle, and wrapped

it up in a large piece of paper, and lay in wait for him. When he came in sight, they gathered round him, and pretended to hear his story with great concern, and walking along and talking to him, contrived to get the copper kettle away from him under the pretence of wrapping it up in paper to carry through the streets, one of them saying, "Why, Peter, if the police should see you carrying such a fine copper tea-kettle through the streets, they will think that you have stolen it, and so lock you up all night in the black hole; after that, try you and send you to Maidstone gaol for six or seven months." By these means they so worked on his fears, that they managed to ring the changes with the kettles; and when Peter arrived at the living-carriage of his mistress, he called out at the top of his voice, "Here you are, all right, Missus; it's all right—I've got him safe and sound. Poor old Mrs. Smith, that you borrowed the rolling-pin of twice, seeing him left out, took him in and kept him till I went and fetched him away. Here he is, Missus, your old original kettle, all copper." Whereupon Peter handed the paper containing the old iron kettle over the half door of the carriage, at which the old fat show-woman was very pleased, and smiling, said, "Ah, I thought it would be all right, Peter." But no sooner had she taken off the paper wrapper than she uttered a scream,

and sent the old kettle flying at poor Peter's head, at the same time exclaiming, "Oh, you wretch, you villain! Is this what you have brought me for my beautiful copper tea-kettle that my poor old mother gave me on her dying bed? Is this the return I get for feeding you, clothing you, and keeping you out of the workhouse, you black ungrateful swine you? You shall go into the workhouse this time—as sure as the devil's in London to the workhouse you goes!" The poor fellow would have been much better off in a workhouse. But, however, Peter was dumbfounded, and could not speak; he had no idea how it had all been done. The fat show-woman then rushed down the steps, caught up the iron kettle, and walloped the poor idiot with it until the bystanders interfered, and while the woman was fit to burst with passion, and declaring that Peter the thief had sold her beautiful copper tea-kettle, spent the money, and wanted to palm off a nasty dirty old second-hand black iron pot on her instead—the black ingrate; the swine, &c., &c., *forte!*—very *forte!*

In the meanwhile the boys had gathered round, and in the *mêlée* had got possession of the old iron kettle again, and packed the copper one in the same piece of paper. When the leader of the

mischievous said, "Look here, Mrs. Marlay, what's all this about? I know Peter is an honest chap, and would do nothing wrong; and I'll tell you what we will do. We will all club round, and give Peter the money to buy you another copper kettle, the same size as your old one;" and with that the hat was passed round, and six or seven shillings were gathered. "Now then, Missus," said one of the party, "let's have your bob as well as the rest, to buy your new kettle." The show-woman did as she was bid, and put her shilling in, but with a very ill grace. Then the chief of the boys said, "Here, Peter, take the money; and here, Missus, take the kettle," at the same time handing her the paper parcel; but she declared she would not be swindled again; "for," said she, "you have got my shilling as well as the other money to buy me a new kettle, and a new kettle I'll have; and if I don't have one, I'll go to the police office;" and, in her excitement, off she went, taking the paper parcel with her to show Mr. Fancet, the chief constable; but when she got there, judge her surprise, when telling her story she took off the paper, and found, instead of the old iron thing, her own beautiful copper one. The show-woman dropped down on the floor, and it was some time before she recovered and came to herself. She afterwards told her acquaintances that

she should never get over the shock to her nerves ; and it is generally believed that it hastened her death, for she did not live many years afterwards ; and, from being a fat, hearty, strong masculine woman, she dwindled to a mere shadow by comparison.

Poor Peter continued his drudging in the show, and was known ever afterwards by the name of "Copper Kettle;" but he always replied to their chaff, "I never stoled nuffin', and I never sold nuffin', so hold your jaw!" Peter was about five feet four inches in height, with very long arms and short crooked legs, and bent in at the knees ; very large nose, mouth, lips, and hands, with ears as big as a muffin plate. He had nearly as much foot behind as in front—that is to say, a marvellously long heel ; and in moving he seemed to drag his legs rather than walk ; his toes turned out very much, therefore it saved him the trouble of bending his foot. Such was Peter, a poor miserable half-witted fellow, but still very useful to show people as a "fetch and carry."

At the above-mentioned Maidstone Fair I remember that I did a good amount of business. I introduced an article that was new to the place. It was a snuff-box, made in the shape and bearing the appearance of a watch, and just pleased the people attending the fair.

Coventry Fair years ago was celebrated every three or seven years by a grand procession, and was called, as I believe it still is, Coventry Show Fair. A lady (?) in a state of semi-nudity used to ride through the principal streets of the town on horseback, followed by various trades, unions, or societies; the procession was attended by javelin-men and coaches, and waggons dressed out with evergreens, flowers, flags, with music, &c., the children in white, with lambs and all kinds of devices—it was said to keep up the charter. The female equestrian for the “nonce,” I need not say, was generally selected for her handsome face and person from among the *demi-monde*, and the reward for her services was “a fiver.” Peeping Tom was dressed in his best clothes, and looked very quaint from the corner of a house in the principal street. At this fair Charley Marsh, considered by good judges to be the best talking clown of his day, used to attend with Mr. John Holloway’s show. Charley was the first clown I ever heard make a mock election speech, and nobody in my day ever approached him. Coventry Fair was very large at this time; and when at its height, drums and cymbals playing, showmen bawling and full up to their work, Charley Marsh had only to put on the “motley” when the people would scream for every one to cease making a

noise, which was always complied with, or the people would have pulled the shows to pieces. In such respect did they hold him that no one ever ventured to quarrel with the mob. Charley was essentially an outside talking clown; he had a good voice and looked well when made up, but he was too tall for anything but parade; at that he worked well with the proprietor, Mr. John Holloway, who dressed in a hunting suit, scarlet coat, white breeches, brown top-boots, in which he looked very smart. His principal business was to whip Charley for joking him and calling out, "The players are here, the players are here, the players and pantomime performers are here, and it's only threepence to the gallery," when Charley would bawl out, "Bravo! bravo! old Holloway!" which would be sure to cause a general roar.

Charley had no high-sounding prefix to his name, nor was he called "Queen's Jester or Shakspearian Clown," as some more recent performers have been, but his wit was as a giant to a dwarf in comparison, and this short notice of him is merely a tribute to the memory of a "good fellow" and famous jester—"I knew him well, Horatio."

George Parish and Jem Thorpe, the rope-vaulters, were at Stroud Fair on rival concerns

doing the rope business outside to attract the mob. It had rained hard the night before, and the black mud was scraped up on either side of the shows. They both came to the rope simultaneously, and each one on his first bound fell into one of the big lumps of slush, when, after looking bewildered and shaking themselves, each rushed up the steps of his own concern with the mob after them; whether this was done by accident or design I never knew, for they were both half-witted fellows, and would do almost anything at the risk of their necks only to cause a sensation.

About the year 1842 a celebrated old London showman, named Tanner, instead of keeping the same fairs he always had done, thought he would try his luck in the shires, and arrived at Blackburn for the Easter fair; his was not a large concern, but very neat and clean, and he mustered some eight or nine people on the parade, all well-seasoned and useful in their various lines. But when they began business they were almost looked upon as intruders by the usual showmen, more especially by a large mumming concern carried on by a family of the name of Wild. I may here observe that the showmen in the shires depend more upon dress and the number of people on the parade to attract than the clown, pantaloon, or Silly Billy. Wild's establishment at this time

numbered not less than thirty people, all gorgeously dressed, kings and queens in any number. In fact the whole thing looked much more like tragedy than comedy; and when they did a set of quadrilles it was more like a lot of Madame Tussaud's figures moving about than anything else. This applies to mumming booths generally in the shires, as they stick to one locality within a radius of fifty miles. Not so the waggon shows that travel through England and Scotland, and sometimes Ireland and Wales.

Wild's lot looked with supreme contempt upon the little Cockney show just arrived. But the old showman soon made them laugh on the other side of their mouths, and completely turned the tables on them; for no sooner had he began than the people were delighted with the fun shown by the new-comers, for their blood was up, and they soon showed the big concern what they could do; for after a vigorous morris-dance, and then the basket-horse, and the dragon with blue fire issuing from his mouth "business," the old London showman knocked all the men on the parade about with a board about four feet six inches long, that made the people shout and scream with laughter; it was something new to them, so they rushed up to the new show by hundreds, scarcely condescending to look at the big one.

Tom Wild was clowning on the large concern, and tried to compete with the Cockney show, as he contemptuously called old Tanner's concern, so he got a board about the proper size, but too thick, and with it so belaboured the people on his concern that he laid some of them up, they not knowing how to "knap the slap" nor he to use the board, so he was fain to come in and make friends with old Tanner, and on the morning after to ask him to have a drink, when Tom observed, "I never saw such 'business before; how do you do it with that board thing, for I can't manage it? I have knocked and bruised some of my people about so that they swear they would sooner leave than have such another day." "Oh," said the old Londoner, "I'll show you how it's done to-day when we begin." Tom thanked him, and they were friends; and when both shows turned out the second day of the fair, old Tanner, after a little "business" outside, called out to Tom Wild—"Here, look here, this is how it's done, and gave Ted Walters, the Silly Billy, who was ready, such a crack as seemed to smash him, who, popping his tongue in his cheek to make the appearance of a large swelling, turned round, when he received another crack on his nether end, at which the people roared, whereupon Tom Wild tried the same on his pantaloons, and hurt him worse than he did

the day before; and at length, finding that he could not manage the board trick, gave it up in despair.

The board trick, if done well, causes much mirth; but the blows will certainly hurt very much unless the parties concerned in it are clever at it—the one to give the blow, the other to receive it on the end of a stick or bat held in the hand close up to the fist at one end. Nothing but long practice can attain it.

Old Tanner, being at Worcester Races in the year 1844, in the evening one of the class of people known as “roughs” insisted on seeing the show for nothing, and would not go off the parade, but swore he would see the show although he had no money; whereupon Tanner, who was a tough and wiry old man, took hold of him to remove him, when the rough seized the master by the throat and nearly strangled him, and dragged him down the steps as they struggled together. The proprietor’s wife, who was an enormously fat woman, came to his rescue, and in her haste to help her good man, instead of walking down the steps jumped off the parade and alighted on the rough, at the same time exclaiming, “There, see what a woman can do; as soon as I came he let go my husband in a minute.” “I should have wondered if he hadn’t,” said a bystander, “with your weight

coming down upon him." However, it served him right, said the people; if it had killed the man, he deserved it, the rough fellow. I afterwards heard that it was some time before he recovered the "rib-bender" he got from the fat show-woman.

Somewhere about 1840, and at the close of the Easter Greenwich Fair, I engaged a young fellow named George, otherwise "Toby," Wright, who had been brought up to the printing business, but took to "mumming" and comic singing, and had a notion that he could do the Cheap John business. He proposed to sing comic songs by way of introduction to get the people to assemble round the cart, and to act as a general "help" to enable him to tide over the time until Whitsun week, when Greenwich Fair would again take place, to be followed by other fairs in the Middlesex, Kent, and Surrey districts.

I made the engagement more to serve an old friend of mine, who took some interest in "Toby," they being old schoolfellows, and as the idea was somewhat novel I readily agreed to it; but soon found out that it did not answer very well, for although "Toby" could sing comic songs first-rate, he was very slow in learning to tip off glibly the usual platform patter of a Cheap John.

I only introduce the subject to rescue from ob-

lition a comic song that was very popular at the time I write of, and to give a hint to the great Vance, or any other music-hall *premier comique*, for its revival. The character dress was that of a costermonger, with the hat decorated with green cabbage leaves, as emblematic of the weeping willow! The title of the song is "All Round my Hat," &c., and subjoined are the words, with a *P.S.* to music-hall comics—no, *comiques*; yes, that's the term of the time—who will please to copy, and be thankful for the hint, and I may add, in the words of the racing prophets, "Don't forget to send five per cent. of your winnings to the author, with a stamped and directed envelope, as I have another good thing now at long odds."

But for the song—and if any of the great guns in these days of music-halls can only manage to sing it half so well as the young fellow Toby Wright did, they may make a little fortune out of it. In this golden age for comic singers I may state that the proper thing is to have a real Jerusalem pony, *i.e.* donkey, and a coster's shallow vegetable drag:—

ALL ROUND MY HAT I VEARS A GREEN
VILLOW.

ALL round my hat I vears a green villow,
All round my hat, for a twelvemonth and a day;
If any one should ax the reason vy I vears it,
Tell 'em that my true love is far, far away.

'Twas a going of my rounds, in the streets I first did meet her,
Oh, I thought she vos a hangel just come down from the
sky ;

Spoken—She'd a nice wegitable countenance ; turnup nose,
redish cheeks, and carrotty hair.

And I never knew a voice more louder or more sweeter,
When she cried, Buy my primroses, my primroses come buy.

Spoken—Here's your fine Colliflowers !

All round, &c.

Oh, my love she was fair, my love she was kind too,
And cruel vos the cruel judge vot had my love to try :

Spoken—Here's your precious turnups !

For thieving was a thing she never was inclined to,

But he sent my love across the seas, far, far away.

Spoken—Here's your hard-hearted cabbages !

All round, &c.

For seven long years my love and I parted,

For seven long years my love is bound to stay.

Spoken—It's a precious long time 'fore I does any trade to-
day !

Bad luck to that chap vot'd ever be false-hearted,

Oh, I'll love my love for ever, tho' she's far, far away.

Spoken—Here's your nice heads of salary !

All round, &c.

There is some young men so preciousy deceitful,

A coaxing of the young gals they vish to lead astray.

Spoken—Here's your valnuts ! crack 'em and try 'em, a
shilling a hundred !

As soon as they deceive 'em, so cruelly they leave 'em,

And they never sighs nor sorrows when they're far, far

Spoken—Do you vant any hingons to-day, marm ?

All round, &c.

Oh, I bought my love a ring on the werry day she started,

Which I gave her as a token all to remember me.

Spoken—Bless her heyes !

And when she does come back, oh, ve'll never more be parted,

But ve'll marry and be happy—oh, for ever and a day.

Spoken—Here's your fine spring redishes !

All round, &c.

There's there's the song, which I recommend to the notice of the great Vance, Mr. George Leybourne, "England's great comic" (by jingo! that's tall), Jolly Nash, Fred Coyne, Harry Clifton, Critchfield, and though last, not least—in love, Harry Fox, *cumis mult aliis*.

While journeying towards Greenwich for the Whitsuntide Fair, we met with an old and well-known mummer named George Atkins, who

At show or fair, the play-house bold,
Drama legitimate ;
"The Mirror up to Nature" hold !
The rest is—idle prate.

Few men in the travelling theatrical show line were better known in his day than George Atkins. At this time he was with Wooldridge's concern ; but meeting with Toby Wright, he informed him that old Tanner, the showman, was in search of him to do the leading business, and that he was to be sure to meet him at Greenwich. I was as glad to hear this as Toby himself, and he joined Tanner's concern, and remained with him some time doing "leading" and "utility" business, although his usual line and forte was low comedy, but in that line Tanner had a host of talent at the time in the persons of Watty Todd and Teddy Walters—two rare boys of mirth and jollity.

Speaking of Wooldridge's reminds me that I

repeatedly see the name of Mrs. Wooldridge in the Melbourne papers, at which place she has been engaged for some years past as leading Old Woman.

Mrs. Wooldridge was a very superior person to what one generally sees or can expect to find in a travelling theatrical show, as she was very lady-like, had received a sound education, and was a capital actress in either tragedy or comedy. But Fate had matrimonially linked her to a gallant, gay Lothario, whose real name was Watson, who, for reasons best known to himself, adopted that of "Wooldridge." But "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet," and I am sure no one ever left a sweeter name in the travelling theatrical world than Mr. and Mrs. Wooldridge. Their concern was always pointed at as a model one. Cleanliness, order, talent, and morality were their stock-in-trade, by which they gained respect and esteem wherever they went; and this was a great point to be gained by the proprietor of a travelling theatrical show, and for this reason—it happens between one fair and another there is some spare time, which has to be filled up with what is called "private business," that is, making a pitch on some vacant piece of ground in the heart of, or contiguous to, some town or village, or, in the absence

of vacant ground, a space attached to an inn. In doing private business it is the custom to perform an entire play, with a farce to follow, which mostly occupied the whole of the evening; but to be able to do this it was often necessary to obtain the tacit permission of the chief constable, the clergyman, or churchwardens of the place. And it was on such occasions that Wooldridge's good name did him good stead, and frequently enabled him to get permission where others who had left a bad name behind them were refused. Among other things tending toward doing him good and useful service was that the whole of the company, headed by Mr. and Mrs. Wooldridge and their children, always made it a point to go to church on each Sunday that they remained in a town, and they made it a rule to set a night apart to admit the school children and their teachers gratuitously, which often led to a "bespeak night" under the immediate patronage of the mayor, or one or more of the leading tradesmen of the place.

There is an old poet—I don't know the party's name—who has said, "*Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia*;" that is to say, "No protecting power is wanting, if prudence be but employed;" or, to construe it another way, "No protection is wanting,

provided you are under the guidance of prudence." I have just copied that little bit out of a book, and, 'pon my word, it looks quite "larned," as old Lord Duberly, in *The Heir at Law*, would say. Anyhow, it exactly suits the character of the Wooldridges. Prudence was certainly their guiding star, and they realized the old and familiar "free and easy" toast of "May our endeavours to please be crowned with success."

By-the-bye, to run away from my subject for a moment or two—for I believe that's a thing generally allowed to authors—what a decided and marked improvement there is in the personal appearance of not only strolling players—"mummers"—but provincial actors, of late years. Now-a-days you no longer see the buttoned-up coat to hide my want-of-shirt-business. All is now opened to view, even when the shirt is all "dicky;" then the lay down collar and opera tie on are quite the "tippy." Yes, cheap tailoring establishments, superior education, better salaries, and Time have indeed worked wonders in that way. But to get on.

The Wooldridges continued on the road until about 1850, when they partly settled down at Brighton, and accepted an engagement at the Theatre Royal, then under the management of Mr. Charles Poole, and in the meanwhile opened a

small victualling house, which they called the Bloomer Tavern, Mrs. Wooldridge and her daughter appearing at the bar dressed in the Bloomer fashion. On the breaking out of the "gold fever," Mr. Wooldridge, with a large party of Brighton tradesmen, sailed to Australia in the good ship *Statesman*, and within a year from that date sent over sufficient money for Mrs. Wooldridge and the family to join him; but before starting she had to dispose of the theatre as best she could, which had to share the fate of similar concerns, that is, had to be disposed of piecemeal, no one being found that had sufficient funds to take the lot in its entirety.

In connexion with the Wooldridges I here append a copy of one of their playbills while at Brighton. I have been looking for a very funnily-worded handbill they got out when they opened the Bloomer Tavern, in Boycer's Street, but have not been able to lay my hand upon it, which I very much regret, for I remember that it was exceedingly comic, and was penned by that rare son of mirth and prince of commercial travellers, my old friend Jacob Hunter Kirkness—than whom, "within the limits of becoming mirth, I never spent an hour's talk withal." But to the bill:—

WOOLDRIDGE'S THEATRE.

WANTED 700 MEN,

To Man that splendid first-class Frigate, "**THE THEATRE**," commanded by A. J. WOOLDRIDGE, now lying at her Moorings, in Cheapside.

Avast-heaving, Shipmates—Overhaul the Log Book—A Cargo of Novelties for

WOOLDRIDGE'S BENEFIT,

The Best that was ever Unshipped in Brighton.

Mr. WOOLDRIDGE, with all due respects to his brother Tars, hopes they will lend a hand to man his Vessel, that he may pour out such a BROADSIDE OF NOVELTIES—Grape and Canister—that it will astonish the upper works of those friends who witness the Performance. He cannot offer them a barrel of ALE, but he will make them a promise of his unfeigned thanks and gratitude for this and past favors, with his hearty good wishes for the prosperity of the Town and Trade of Brighton; that his Shipmates, wherever bound, may set sail with fair wind and good passage; that they may never have short allowance—banyan days; or a southerly wind in the Broad Basket; never to be hard-a-weather on a LEE SHORE; but be always able to splice the MAIN BRACE with planks lined.—Victualling Office well stored, PLUMPT OF GROC IN THE LOCKER, & their weather eye up; then return to Port with pockets well lined with shiners to throw into the laps of SWEETHEARTS and WIVES, and when grappled in their dear arms, may they cast anchor in those blessed moorings for life; and then Hurrah for the JACKETS OF BLUE, and THREE HEARTY CHEERS for ENGLAND'S NAVY.

On Tuesday Evening, Feb. 10th,

Will be performed Shakspeare's Play (compressed) entitled the

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Shylock Mr. J. WILLIAMS.

Other Characters by the Company.

A COMIC SONG BY SOME MAN IN THE GALLERY.

SAILOR'S HORNPIPE (IN CHARACTER),

By a Gentleman of the Railway Station.

A Song by Mr. BISHOP, of the Brighton Concerts.

The whole to conclude with the screaming Farce of
BOOTS AT THE SWAN.

The character of "Jacob Earwig" by . Mr. WOOLDRIDGE.

Prices—Boxes 6d. Pit 4d. Gallery 2d.

First Performance to commence at 6 o'clock. Second, at Half-past 8.

VICTORIA THE FIRST,

Of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen,
 Defender of the Faith, &c.

To the People of Brighton and its Vicinity, &c., Greeting :—

WHEREAS, we lately issued certain Bills enacting all manner of people who could be found, so that we might have their bodies before us at Wooldridge's Theatre, Cheapside, Brighton,

On Tuesday, February 10th, 1852,

For WOOLDRIDGE'S BENEFIT,

to witness a Splendid Night's Entertainment, consisting of

Shakspeare's Play of *The Merchant of Venice*, compressed—
 A Comic Song by some Man in the Gallery—A Sailor's
 Hornpipe in character, by a Gentleman of the Railway
 —A Song by a Gentleman of Brighton—and the Screaming
 Farce of *Boots at the Swan*;

and it being sufficiently attested unto us, that many more are running up and down, and secreting themselves in these Places, We therefore command you, and every of you, to secure as many natives as may be found, so that they may be present.

You are served with this process to the intent, that you may appear by yourself, or by your Attorney, or with as many more as you can prevail upon to become To the Theatre and to attend with lawful coin of this Realm in their pockets, or with Tickets previously obtained, and to be placed in such Boxes, Pit, or Gallery, as may suit their convenience or pleasure, stationary till all things be said, danced, sung, fiddled, or otherwise performed, fully finished, and completed, and hereof fail not at the peril of being sent for one month to the island of Banyan.

DOLDRUM FOLDRUM, A.M.A. 6.8.4.

The Wizard Jacobs being at Canterbury Races in the year 1844, thought that as it was his native city, he would do the grand, so ordered a carriage and pair to take him up to the course. It happened, from the mob and bustle usually to be found on such occasions, that the coachman very nearly ran over a man. Jacobs looked out from the carriage, and said in a somewhat haughty manner :

"Hi ! hi ! why the deuce don't you get out of the way when you see a gentleman's carriage coming, fellow, eh ?"

The man, who was very wroth at being so near run over, and then addressed in such "tip-top" manner, turned to speak to the "gentleman," when, looking him hard in the face, he exclaimed : "Why, it's nothing but a d—— old conjuror ! Why, I have given you a penny many a time."

"Of course, I know you have," replied the Wizard, "and for that reason I don't wish to kill you, my de-e-a-r b-o-a-y. But I hope you will live long and give me lots more pennies. Therefore be pleased, my d-e-a-r fellah, to call in at the Crown and Anchor booth, and order what you like."

"Yes !" said the man ; "but who's to pay for it ?"

"That, my d-e-a-r fellah of the pennies! is a landlord's question, in which I am not versed, as I have never been anything but a tenant—and what the dimned lawyers call—at will. Good-bye. Good-bye."

The man was about to open up a volley of abuse, but Jacobs stopped him thus :

"Now, my d-e-a-r fellah, you should never interrupt a gentleman when he is addressing a pleb! Here, take this half-crown and drink my health, and don't forget the next benefit night of 'Jacobs the Wizard.'"

Going out one day for a long country drive with my friend Hyams, a worthy old Israelite, and it being early in the morning when we stopped to give the horse some hay and water, neither of us required anything to drink, so we called for a pint of ale, and told the old ostler to drink it. He could not understand why we should call for the beer and then not drink it. But my old friend said: "Drink it up, man, it will do you good." "Ah, that I am sure it will, master. I be seventy years old, and I went to plough yesterday." "Did you, indeed," said Hyams. "Well, you have been ploughing all these years, and in the meanwhile I have been reaping,—so here's half-a-crown for you, for I do not think I have done quite so much work as you.

But now we are square." The old man was amazed at the gift; and as we drove off, Hyams said: "Remember, that's 'The Jew's offering,'—and don't forget that the Devil's not so black as he's painted."

When we had got about twenty miles on the road I found I had taken a wrong turning, which had led us considerably out of our way. I was soundly rating myself for doing so, particularly as I knew the road so well—or ought to have done—that I ejaculated: "'Oh, that he were here, to write me down an ass'—Jack-ass." "Well," said Hyams, looking me full in the face, "when I go out with a friend for a day's pleasure, I never fall out with him; therefore, if you say you are a Jack-ass, I won't contradict you."

Being at Mitcham September Fair, there was a Frenchman who had just set up a very excellent waxwork show, contained in four carriages. The figures were of a very superior make, and well-dressed, and as it was the first time of showing them they looked very well indeed. The man was an artist, and of course better adapted for a waxwork showman than the lumpy-dumpy ignorant boors that generally get into the line by purchasing some collection that has, from various causes, come into the market for sale.

The Frenchman did an exceedingly good business during the three days of the fair, and was highly delighted with his success. "Ah, Mr. Green," he said to me. "Sir, I shall make my fortune d'Angleterre; I shall return to la France vary vary rich, ah, Monsieur Green. I hear you talkee, talkee; you must be vary funny man, you make de peoples laugh so. I try to hear vot you say, but you talkee talkee so fast, I no comprendre half vot you do say: you use such funny vords I do not know de pronounciation—vite-vite-vite you go. I cannot catch you up. You sell de vot you call de comb, de brush, de vip, de couteau, de seci, de fusil, de votch, de portefeuille, and vary much tings I know not vot you call, and de next foire vot I do go to I get next your établissement—your boutique—for dat you do call all de peoples in one great big lump, dat is de masse, de bloc en gross, and you say de next foire I must go to is de Stratfords; ah, ah, I shall go as you do go, and you shall take un, deux, trois, quatre, gros, grand verre eau-de-vie vid me, and your femme, épouse vot you call de vife, she shall have de demi-bouteille de vin extraordinaire très bon."

It so happened that I had taken a great deal of notice of the Frenchman, seeing that he was

new to the business ; and I was much struck when I first saw what a very superior collection of wax figures he had got, compared to the rubbishy things that were usually exhibited at English fairs and races. Hence the Frenchman's fraternization.

Early on the morning of "the day after the fair," all parties whose destination lay that way were off to Stratford-by-Bow, near London. Now, although my friend the Frenchman's figures were well-modelled and well-dressed, and his carriages very superior—in fact, his "turn-out" was all new, clean, and as fresh as paint, yet one thing he, or the person who had manufactured his carriages, had forgotten : certainly a very essential one, and that was—ventilation. The consequence was that while we were all journeying from Mitcham, a parish in Surrey, on the river Wandle, and about eight miles from London, to Stratford, the sun being very hot, and the Frenchman having taken no precaution against the heat in travelling, but allowed the princes, kings, dukes, duchesses, esquires, murderers, and pirates to have the full benefit of it, the scorching sun so affected the wax figures that when he opened the carriages to begin to show at Stratford, he was horror-struck to find half the figures had been troubled with consumption and had wasted away. There was

the whole of the fraternity sympathizing with each other, and appeared in all sorts of ludicrous positions, some with their noses melted into their mouths, others with an eye sunk and wasted cheek, some with their heads leaning on their next neighbour's shoulder, or otherwise lopping down in the most undignified positions it is possible to conceive.

When the poor Frenchman called in some of the travelling folks to see the "sight," instead of sympathizing with him they could not refrain from laughing, for "sure such a sight as this was never seen—so uproarious—Nature seemed to wear a universal grin." But what was mirth to the fair folks was ruin to the Frenchman.

What became of the Frenchman and his waxworks I never heard, for I did not meet with him again, as this happened in the year 1846, and just at the time I was about settling at Brighton.

Speaking of waxworks reminds me that a few years ago I let a large warehouse I had in the rear of some premises in North Street, Brighton, to an Italian exhibitor. As the place in question was occasionally used as a private theatre for a class of amateur theatricals, there had been a gallery erected; so while talking to the Italian exhibitor of waxworks, I incidentally mentioned that

the gallery aforesaid would make a capital place for his "Chamber of Horrors," apart from his other figures, to which suggestion he replied, "Oh, mine all 'horror!' De peoples now don't care for fine tings, dey like murder, teeves, birates. Some time I hab de Prince and de Queen, but now I hab got all de Flowery Land birates mid de guns, de swords, and de bistols, and ven I vant to make anyting I can do zo soon by taking off the clothes off de birates and den make the princes ob dis land or any odder land; my figures is von day a brince, and de odder day a birate, as de fashion of de day is. Now it is all de go, dis birate ting ob de ship Flowery Land. De English now like de birates, and de blood, and de murders. Von ob my best figure vos veek two ago Muller vot murder de gentleman in de railway carriage; so ve go. I can but de peard on or take de peard off as suit. It make no difference; no berson know de same figure, coz no zee it two times. I am here, vos Bortsmouth, den Chichester, den Bognor, den Vorthing, now Brighton, next Lewes, den Hastings, and so on I go, and vot come next I hab next, and so de vorld go round on de vheels. I find de vheels, and de peoples de grease, dat is, de moneys vich make de mare to go—ha, ha, ha! De man I call on for dis house, de varehouse,

calls you Green, but I no tink you green, you charge zo much for de room. Never mine! de peoples vil pay de piper, den I dance—ha, ha, ha!”

Once at Sheffield Fair there was a waxwork show exhibiting, which some roughs got into and did just as they chose, in defiance of the proprietor or any one else. They pulled some of the figures about, and others they knocked down and trampled on. There was also exhibited a den of stuffed lions, the largest of which had some mechanism placed in its inside, and, with the aid of a large pair of bellows placed at the back, it was made to apparently roar. The party of roughs seeing the den of lions, one of them said, “Here’s a den of lions, but they have got no Daniel. Who ever saw a den of lions without a Daniel?” “Here, Jack,” said one of the party, “here’s a cove that looks like a Daniel, so let’s put him in the den,” whereupon he seized a wax figure and, by the help of his mates, thrust it into the den, at the same time exclaiming, amid the laughter and delight of the spectators, “Now the thing is complete. We have not only got the lions and the den, but a real Daniel into the bargain.”

Proprietors of waxwork shows, that travel to races and fairs, are frequently annoyed in this way

by drunken or spreeish parties ; nor can it be wondered at, for at times many of the exhibitions are such shabby old second-hand affairs, that the people are disgusted with the old figures, and consider themselves "sold," and if any one of the party is at all bold and beery, and once begins to pull the figures about, others soon follow the example.

In Lancashire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire, the approaches to some of the large works are either up or down some steep, short hill, usually termed "bonk," and the drivers of heavily laden carts with two horses, have the breeching on the leading chain-horse, as well as the horse in the shafts, so that when they are going down one of these steep "bonks" the horse is as useful as a help in drawing up, as the man in charge unhooks the horse from the front and hooks him on behind, by the aid of a long chain, to the breeching, and, although without shafts, the animal adapts himself to it by sitting well back in the breeching, and by this means the horses can steady any sized load on two wheels, up or down the steepest incline.

Travellers having large and heavily laden carts take this method of going down steep hills. They have a log of wood about fifteen inches square and

three inches thick, shod on the bottom with old horseshoes; attached to this is a long chain made fast to some part of the cart, and on descending a hill one or more of the helps stand upon this drag, which, beside having the effect of stopping the cart, eases the horse by shifting the weight from his back.

Somewhere about five-and-thirty years ago I used to meet in and about Manchester a smart young Irishman named John Fairne, whom Fred Jolly and I christened "The Swell Bark." He was a good fellow to work, but had a bad voice, and was continually hoarse. At that time the greatest amount of stock he ever possessed was to the tune of about 19s. 10d., at all events it never reached 1l. He dressed in black, with teeth to match, and wore a very high stock, which he generally fastened very tight, and having a fat face, he was compelled to strain hard for the people to hear him. He looked as if he was about to explode or burst up every minute. This young Irish Don Juan was continually in love with some girl or another, until at last Mary MacDonald hooked him at Blackburn, and as it was at a time when there was a lot of Cheap Johns, Parvies, and others there, the whole were invited, and everybody drank health and happiness to the young married couple, and one

of the company sang a song in which there was :

Paddy, says ahe, you bother me,
Paddy, says ahe, you teaze me,
Paddy, says ahe, you smother me,
And, bad luck to you, can't you be aisy—now ?

which, being suitable to the occasion, went down gloriously, and a very jolly evening was spent, which reached into the small hours of the next morning before the whole of the party broke up.

Paddy Fairne had very many ups and downs—and once he was so well up that he actually hired a special train at the cost of fourteen guineas to take him to some place near to Cambridge, so that he could ride alone, as he expressed it, “by his noble self.” In common with many other travellers, excitement is the order of the day with Paddy Fairne, who never understood pursuing the noiseless tenor of his way. Up to-day, down to-morrow, is the leading star that governs most persons who move about from fair to fair, or market to market; but whether up or down, Paddy has always had the credit of being an honest straightforward man, and no one's enemy but his own.

But a short time since I was at Birmingham, when speaking to a travelling auctioneer with whom

I had a previous acquaintance, when a man came down a side-street carrying a small stand in his hand. "Hullo, John," said my auctioneer friend to the stranger, "how do you get on?" "Oh!" said the man addressed, "I'm on the rocks, but never mind, come and have a bucket (*i.e.* glass) of rum. "Who's your friend?" said he in continuation. "Why, don't you know him?" said the auctioneer. "He's Mr. Green, from Brighton, an old han'seller. You must remember him, surely." "Remember Bill Green. Yes, by the Powers, before you was born or thought of. By the Powers, and sure we were boys together." "Get out," said I, "how can that be? Why, you are seventy if you are a day." His hair was pure white. "Bad manners to you," said he, "I'm not five years older than yourself." On an explanation, sure enough it was the veritable "Irish swell" I had met five and-thirty years ago, and who, although I had often heard of him in the meantime, I had not seen for many years—more than I even seem to think of now.

John Fairne has certainly aged wonderfully. On the occasion of our meeting he had an auctioneer's ticket pinned to his hat, and he told me that his trade had for years been selling "duck," *i.e.* metal-cased, watches. He now worked, as

he told me, thus. When he saw there ^{was} a chance he would pop down his stool and pop on it, and offer his watches. He had sold one that morning for nine shillings and ninepence, out of the half-dozen he had brought out with him. While we were having a friendly glass together, a stranger intruded, and said he had just come to Birmingham Fair to buy something cheap. So after a little chaffering, Paddy Fairne sold him the remaining five "duck" watches he had for 3*l*. 15*s*. The joke being that where the sale took place was the very next door to where the watches were sold wholesale. So my old friend made a good day's work, easy and unexpectedly, and "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" being his motto, no more work was done or attempted. It is said that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and that "it never rains but it pours," for there came in at the time an Israelite under the middle size and of spare demeanour, who, hearing my name, made inquiries after my father, how he was, &c., &c. I not knowing the man, asked him how he knew my father, and he said that my late brother John had brought him away from London over twenty years before and taught him how to get a living, and that he had often been in my father's company with my brother. "When

I heard," he added, "of your brother John's death, I cried for a whole day, and I don't remember ever crying before in all the hardships I have suffered. Ah," he continued, "when we used to go to London your father always befriended me, took me to his house, and gave me something I really wanted here," at the same time pointing to his stomach. He finished by saying, "Please when you see your father again, tell him that the little 'Sheney,' *i.e.* Jew, don't forget his kindness to him when he was a friendless boy." I may add that my father is still [1875] living, *ætat* 84.

Persons who have travelled in the Cheap John line for a few years, on entering a town with a view of settling down in life, should be very chary and particular with whom they form acquaintance, for it has a great deal to do with their success in trade and respectability, as they might and often do associate, without knowing it, with bad characters—that are well-known to be so, yet have the appearance of respectability. This applies to both men and women, and any such chance acquaintance will be sure to act prejudicially against them.

There is a kind of freemasonry, and an amount of carelessness too, with travellers, that should be

avoided. Many a man will by accident get hold of one's nickname, and blurt it out with as much freedom as if he had known the party all his life, and had gone to school with him. This is a great misfortune, as sometimes by a fellow's mouth a man may lose his friends; for if he have decent acquaintance in the town he is trying to establish himself in, and they hear you spoken of in familiar terms by some low blackguard or needy mizzler, your new friends would be very likely to cut you or treat you coolly, and not from any fault of your own.

The saying "Know a man by his friends," in such a case would tell much against a person that had once been a traveller, and more than in any other line that I know of. Of course this does not apply to commercial travellers who represent respectable wholesale houses, but I mean to persons who, like myself, have travelled on the road to fairs and races in their own business as a Cheap John.

Many a man who has travelled the road, although he may have had a respectable concern and studiously kept himself aloof from disreputable characters, will always find it very difficult to settle down in any town that he has ever visited, as any scamp will take the liberty of calling him

by his^o familiar name, as Bill this or Jack that, because he had settled down in the town; whereas if he were still on the road, the same party would not dare to take such a liberty—that's a great fact!

When a person is known to have travelled as a Cheap John, the cognomen never leaves him, even if he becomes a millionaire or a diamond merchant. People speaking of him will always say, "Do you know that gentleman?" "Yes, he was once a Cheap Jack. I know him very well." Or, if he is walking along the streets, one man will say to another, "Do you see that person over the other side of the way? Well, once he was a Cheap Jack."

Soon after I had settled down to shopkeeping two young women came to me one day. They were sisters. The eldest was married, the younger one wanted a situation as a maid-of-all-work, and as we were in want of one at the time, I asked where they came from. They said, "Northiam." I incautiously said, "Northiam? Do you know me?" When the eldest of the two, looking me hard in the face, said, "Oh! yes, I know you. You used to come there as a Cheap Jack-man. Come along, Mary, the place won't suit you. He's nothing but a Cheap Jack—so come along." I

had frequently attended the fair there in the capacity of a Cheap John. "We live in deeds, not years."

I will give another case to show how the term of Cheap Jack or John will stick to a man who has once followed the calling. I have had plenty of experience in the matter, and well know that it will never be forgotten, and—I might add—forgotten! as by many people the term is used against the party who has travelled in the business as one of reproach. I used, when shopkeeping, to buy occasionally some looking-glasses of a very respectable and fair-dealing old Italian, named Cometti. One day he called upon me at Brighton, and on soliciting an order from me, I answered by way of joke, "No, Cometti, I have left off buying goods of poor people." "Poor people," said he, "look what you was once yourself. You used to call out 'Buy! buy! buy! Sell or never sell, I take no more, I take no less. You used to be at de cart's-tail. Sheep Zack! Sheep Zack! Dat's all you vos. Poor people, indeed! Vere did you get rich, and open de large shop?—only by Sheep Zack." I carried on the joke by saying, "Me! Cometti. What do you mean?" He answered, "Yes, you! You vos Sheep Zack, and I can probe it. I can probe it." When the old Italian had expended

his wrath, I explained what I meant by the joke, and did some business with him as usual, for he was a very worthy man, as I always found after doing business with him for many years; and only mention the circumstance to show how the term will stick to a man all through the remaining portion of his life. That fact I well know.

People who have never seen a man in the capacity of a Cheap John, but who having heard others report the fact who had seen him in the business, have no hesitation in calling him "Cheap Jack," and saying, "I have seen you many a time on the cart;" and when taxed with, "When and where, sir?" will say at Findon or any other fair. I once said to an inquisitive party, "Oh yes, I was at Findon Fair; but how old are you?" "Twenty-five last birthday," was the reply. "Oh!" I said, "it is just twenty-six years since I was there, so you could not have seen me;" but instead of admitting his error, "cheeked" it out by saying "But *you* *was* there, wasn't you?" So it goes from one to the other, and everybody that hears it repeats the same tale, and would even swear they knew you and saw you at such and such a place and time in the business, though they were not born at the time. Country people as a rule

have more opportunities of seeing Cheap Jacks than townfolks.

Another difficulty besets a man who is known to have been a Cheap John when he commences business as a shopkeeper. Some people who are knowing—very knowing in their own estimation—can never be brought to believe that an ex-Cheap John can sell either good or cheap. Yet as a class, whether in the cart or in a shop, no men are keener buyers; not only have they their experience to guide them, but they have their ready money, which at all times represents a good discount. I can state, as a positive fact, that I have sold thousands upon thousands of pounds sterling of goods to shopkeepers in Brighton and its immediate neighbourhood cheaper than they could buy the same class of goods, and of the same manufacturer, my experience and ready money, or short-date payments, being the talisman. And I have known hundreds of cases where parties have refused to buy goods of me, after looking at them and pricing them, to go to a shopkeeper in the more fashionable and more frequented parts of Brighton, and give from ten to twenty-eight per centum more for my own goods, than I have supplied to the shopkeeper, than they were asked for them at my own establishment. Commercial

travellers well know how they must put the price when doing business with Cheap John now that he is keeping a shop. It's no use for them to "pop it on" to him; both parties know better.

Others who have travelled themselves, before they became wholesale men and know you, will often do you good by selling you their goods cheap, knowing that you bought so generally, and sold largely. Barnaschina, a fine young Italian, travelled at the same time that I did, and afterwards settled in London in the looking-glass trade. When he saw me at my shop one day at Brighton, he was delighted, and told me he had brought down a lot of superior goods to sell. To his solicitation to buy, I said, "Well, Barney, I will look at them, and if you put the price right I am a buyer." I accompanied him to the hotel where he had the goods deposited in one of the commercial "show-rooms." Barney kept talking and jabbering away about the quality and the price, &c., with great vehemence, and that he would sell me the lot cheaper than any one else, declaring that it was no use his selling "tree" to one shop, four to another, and so on; make me a price for de lot, I sell to you cheaper." I said, "Nonsense, Barney, you would let any one else have them as cheap as me." Barney was

hurt, as if it were a slur upon our old acquaintanceship for me even to suspect that he would not sell the goods cheaper to me than to strangers. So he turned to me and said, "Look here, Mister Green, I know you many, many, many year, and before I would sell looking-glasses so cheap to any one else I would cut my trote off!" The result of the interview was that I bought the lot; and in the evening over a chat, a chop, and a friendly glass of grog at the Clarence Commercial Hotel, North Street, both buyer and seller acknowledged themselves to be satisfied with the business transaction of the morning. "A dinner lubricates business."

I have recently left the—to me and to the million—good and fashionable town of Brighton—the queen of watering-places, and London-super-Mare, where I have carried on, during the last twenty-five years, the business of a wholesale and retail Birmingham, Sheffield, and London ware-houseman, for which town I have many, very many fond recollections, and a host of friends and acquaintances. Nothing but the most urgent family affairs could ever have induced me to have left the town of my adoption. Years ago, when getting tired of travelling in the Cheap John line—particularly as I could foresee that by

the railways then springing up in all directions towns would be brought by the aid of steam closer together; thus wholesale houses in the manufacturing districts would be enabled to despatch their representatives to all the principal towns for the purpose of supplying the shops with the very description of goods that Cheap Johns had almost a monopoly in—I determined to fix upon Brighton as my halting-place, apart from its always having been a favourite town of mine, and as my old friend and contemporary George Dearing had previously settled down there, and was doing a good trade in the very description of goods and the style of business I had always “chalked” out to enter in myself, but eventually he was compelled to leave the place from failing health, his doctor, the celebrated young “Jack” Lawrence, having told him “straight” that the air of Brighton was too keen for him, and that he *must* remove into a more inland place, and recommended Tunbridge Wells, to which poor George at length, at a great sacrifice, felt himself bound to remove, where he opened a shop in the market-place. But although the air of the place was perhaps better adapted to his hereditary consumptive constitution, it did not suit his active business habits; so that after I had partly settled down in business—I say

partly, for I could not do it all at once (there were still some old favourite markets and fairs in Sussex that I felt myself bound to attend even *con amore*)—poor George Dearing returned to Brighton, and after but a brief space, to die.—*Deo volente*.

I have, as before observed, for family reasons removed from my favourite town, Brighton, and am at the present time located in one of the Midland Counties; and from a desire to see how business is *now* carried on, I recently paid a visit to Nottingham town market, where I find things are very nearly the same as they were forty years ago; for instance, I see many of the old dodges as heretofore. There is a man with a broad-cloth stall who has the same phrases, the same kind of goods, and the same manner of showing them he had thirty years ago. He is a big fellow, who moves one side of himself at a time, and weighs about seventeen stone, with a large round head and a hat to match; a very fat face, with eyes that "look on vacancy," he being more studious of what he is saying than looking at the people around him. He seems to divide his time into three parts, first eating, having a pitch, *i.e.* talking to the people, and, thirdly, smoking his meerschaum pipe. His wife, a woman rather under the

middle size, brings him at short intervals a basin of broth or soup, and he eats and drinks with much satisfaction and as if he really required it. He talks to the people in this fashion, and he very much believes in himself while he's doing so :—

“ I never wor'd a better bit o' cloth, and I never solded a better bit o' cloth. It s'll woul an'll wear as long as there's a thread in it. I attends Bolton market on Monday, Wakefield a Friday, and York a Saturday. I wor at Bradford, where cloth are made, on Tuesday, and Halifax on Wednesday, Settle a Friday, and Blackburn a Thursday ; but now I mean to cum here every Wednesday, an' I don't mean to let the tailors of this here toun ride a hunting in their red coats this ere winter if I can help it ; but I mean to show the working men o' this here toun what they get out on ye,” &c. &c. But things seemed “ flat, stale, and unprofitable ” with him.

The next person is an old black nigger man, about sixty-five years old ; he must have been a very fine man in his younger days. He is selling what he calls “ American cough candy,” made from herbs. He is an exceedingly well-spoken man, wears a large fur cap, and commands attention. He has a little box with the “ stuff ” in

it, placed upon a pair of "spreaders," or tressels; and if he is lucky enough to sell out by night would realize about ten shillings. He informs the people that the candy will cure any one of a cold, old or young, and offers small nibs to the bystanders, at the same time taking a piece himself. He has no cough, but looks as if the continually eating bits of candy had the effect of eating his lungs away.

Next to him stood a little weazened Israelite, with perhaps seven or eight pounds of lumps of rhubarb on a stall, with a small pair of scales, and an ounce and half-ounce weight. He describes himself as a "Marchan from Durkey, selling whulsal and detail." It would be difficult to say what country he came from, his appearance is something between an Aztec and an Irishman, an Esquimaux and a Bosjesman. He tells the people, who listened to him very attentively, "that to a shild four year uld give em zo mouch as vud gover a vourpenny biece; for de shild twelve year uld give im zo mouch as lay on de chilin; but vor de grown up person give im zo much as you do like. I zell for de ceespence de von ounce, and if zu du go to de gemist for zo mouch, he give you vot you hardly can zee. I cum from Durkey mineself and know vot is good for you all, and I do azzure

you dar® is no bedder med-cines in de world dan dis."

Really the town of Banbury, in Oxfordshire, deserves to be immortalized, as there is more "Turkey rhubarb" grown in and about Banbury than the whole of Europe, and Asia to boot.

A short time since I met another of these "Durkey merchants" selling rhubarb in a market-place, who called out, "No den, Durkey rhubarbs 6*d.* by the ounce." "Ah! how you do, John?"

"Oh, I'm not very well to-day, Moses."

"Sarve you right; if you take rhubarbs you always well. Durkey rhubarbs 6*d.* by de ounce, 6*d.* by de ounce. Ah, Tom, how you do? and how's your wife, eh, Tom, how's your wife?"

"Oh, don't bother me about my wife; she's dead."

"Sarve her right, if she take rhubarb she no die. Last veek I sell at de next market-place almost von hundred ounces of de rhubarbs, and all dat take it make dem vell, except von old vomans vot was obstinates in de headstrongs; she no take hers after she buy, so she die."

There are six auctioneers every Wednesday in Nottingham market, all of a row. They sell everything and anything in different goods that bears a name. But they are a dull set; there is

not a modicum of wit passes their lips off in a moon. Nothing to "laugh and grow fat" at, and the longer you look at them the duller you get. There is by far more fun over a costermonger's barrow in five minutes, in a big city, than there is among these auctioneers of the midland counties in a whole year.

To make my journey complete, and as a reminiscence of bygone days, I have paid a visit this year to the great English Carnival—the Nottingham Goose Fair—and I say that it's a sight worth the travelling one hundred miles to see. Of course, to me it gave rise to many and particularly pleasing recollections. I think of the tale of the monkey that had seen the world, and I feel that Jack's a gentleman. And my thoughts are thrown back to my first visit to the spot in the year 1836; then of my old friends that have "gone before to that unknown and silent shore." "All, all are gone, the old familiar faces," the possessors of many of which were "freelivers on a small scale: who were prodigal within the compass of a guinea." But a truce to moralizing—Here's the Fair. How everything is altered to what it was years ago! The people that stand up on places sell by auction proper, the han'sellers or Cheap Johns have their goods

on the ground, and with the exception of praising the commodities they are offering and running the prices down from half-a-crown to sixpence, there is nothing in it to put one in mind of old times; and beside pocket and table cutlery, they do not carry the same description of goods as formerly; but it is very much easier at the present time to get a company together than formerly, as the population in some places has quite trebled itself since I was first a Cheap John's boy, therefore there are plenty of people about; and for my own part, I never saw such a fair in all my travels and experiences as the present Goose Fair—myriads of people, and all with money to spend in seeing the sights, buying clothes, &c. Everybody is earning so much money that, if it was not for the short-hours' movement, they certainly would not have time to spend it; then the people are so orderly; you don't hear a lot of bad language and blasphemy as you did in the days of old, and particularly at the fairs in and near London. The people come to the fair from all parts within fifty, and, in some cases, over a hundred miles, for the purpose of enjoying themselves, which means, firstly, eating and stuffing; for Nottingham is a rare place for good eating; here you may buy anything to eat of the commonest person, or in the commonest place

with confidence that it is good, clean, and wholesome, very different to dirty Birmingham and the Brums.

There are two wild-beast shows, three theatrical, or mumming booths, two waxwork exhibitions, at one of which there are four nude figures representing goddesses, on each of the pillars of the front; their *tout ensemble* conveys an impression of very high art, or Holywell Street, from the different points of view taken by the spectators. And there are innumerable other descriptions of shows, exhibitions, and wonders that go to make up the necessary ingredients of an English fair.

There are no less than three individuals at this fair selling sealed envelopes said to contain recipes for making cheap, and for home consumption, spirituous liquors. Their mode of business is to stand up on a barrel, or a stool of good height, and commence by telling the people a rigmarole to the effect, that by purchasing these papers they can make a glass of grog, or any spirits they choose, for one halfpenny; and to carry out their assertion they proceed to mix a glass, first filling the tumbler half full of hot or cold water, to which is added two pieces of lump sugar, which they crush and stir with a great deal of ceremony and nicety to hold together their audiences;

they then add a dash of spirits of wine, then ask the company what they would like to take; if rum or brandy is suggested, they put in a little highly burnt sugar and flour; if whisky, a little saffron and flour; if gin, there is no colouring matter required; they then hand the glass or glasses round to people to drink, who invariably declare the stuff to be fine, and as good as can be got at any public-house, &c. The party then commences selling the catalogue of the receipts. The most amusing part of the affair was, that one man, having a better gift of talking than the others, charged sixpence for his packets, which he declared to be the real thing, and no sham, gammon, or take-in; another charged twopence, while the third party could command but little trade for the same articles at two for one penny. On the last day of the fair an elderly woman came up in a terrible fright and passion to the sixpenny vendor, and she declared that her husband had bought a list of his d—— stuff, and that he had well-nigh poisoned himself with it; the man answered her, “that that was her husband’s own fault, for if he had followed the printed instruction and mixed it up properly as he did, her husband, or any other man, might have drunk six glasses with no more hurt than just making

him a little 'fuzzy;' for," said he, "I 'always taste before I hand the grog of my mixing round to my customers." "Yes," replied the woman, "I have seen you; but you always spit it out again when folks arn't looking at you." The man had just made a glass of what he called whisky, which, the woman observing, said, "If the stuff is so good as you say, you just drink up that glassful yourself and I'm satisfied." The people around declared that that was fair enough, and that he would have to do it. "Yes, yes, drink it all up," shouted many voices, "drink it up." Here the quack's countenance fell; however, he rallied a bit, and tried hard to chaff the proposition away; but it would not do, for the old woman declared to the bystanders "that her poor old man was ill and half doubled up during the whole of the night, and that she was obliged to go to the dispensary to get a doctor, besides having to spend a lot of money in ginger brandy and other things to get him well, and that now he was more dead than alive." Things were getting what is generally called "warm," or "hot," with the man, who, after taking a mouthful of the stuff, spat it out again, and then accidentally—for the purpose—spilt the remaining portion on to the ground, which was a signal for the Nottingham "lambs"

to knock him off his perch ; they tore his clothes to ribbons, and threw his decoctions and papers about, and the fellow was compelled to make good his escape as best he could. It is remarkable how the people of this place could stand to be so done every day.

The theatrical show people are prating away at the great cost they are at in producing the entertainment they are so anxious that the people shall witness within ; but, like everything else, the people that are bred showmen know the dodges so well, that in getting up a concern they make 1*l*. go further than a novice would 3*l*. Then they gag the thing up, and send their bills out about the immense cost of scenery and dresses, and other expenses they are at in consequence of the general rise in the price of all articles in connection with a travelling Thespian establishment of the magnitude of the one they possess. But, *entre nous*, just try to sell them anything, and you will find all just the reverse. But I suppose they take it from their superiors, the proprietors and managers of the regular theatres.

One of these travelling mummers is just telling the people, free, gratis, and for nothing, that the scenery and dresses of the entertainment that can be witnessed within, cost the management 450*l*.!

Well done, "old rags and sticks." I expect you have only multiplied the cost by two hundred, and then that you meant shillings. But the British public would not like it if there was not a little gag to the doll trick.

In the thick of the fair I met a man I had not seen for a number of years. The first time I saw him was when I was a boy, and before I started travelling; he was then selling Hanoverian sovereigns, to decide a wager between Mr. Osbaldeston and Captain Barclay—that he did not sell one hundred sovereigns in the space of one hour at one shilling each. He is at a similar game at the present time; but it's a real gold wedding-ring and a thimble for a penny, but still to "decide a wager between two sporting gentlemen well known in this neighbourhood, whose names he is bound down not to reveal, or to sell more than one lot to one person; he is being watched, and if caught selling more than one he will lose the wager and his own reward in the bargain." The man must be upwards of seventy years of age, judging from his appearance and the data of my first seeing him at his dodge; he has still a good voice and plenty of rags, so that his way of life has not been very profitable, for he is trading on his upper leather to save the soles of his shoes; but still he looks cheerful.

On the Sunday which intervened between the fair-days the parade of Messrs. Patch and Bennett's large theatrical show was engaged by the local preachers and their friends, and a large, orderly mob assembled to hear the bleating and groanings of these miserales. When I arrived there they were doing a psalm, or hymn, with full chorus, to a tune something like that of "Here's a health to all good lasses!" but I'm not much of a judge of music. And one man in particular seemed to urge on the mob to join in the chorus by waving his hat to and fro to the tune of the melody. After which a doctor of the town, who appears to be popular with the "rank-scented many," introduced a somebody from London whom he called the Bishop of Cow Cross, and told the people at the same time to take care of their pockets and their watches. The appellation of "bishop" did not seem to please the London preacher, nor did the remark about taking care of their property. I don't know whether the Doctor meant to be funny, but the people certainly laughed heartily. However, the man thus introduced looked like a respectable costermonger not given to lush. He was a spare man, about the middle height. He told the people that when he was a boy he was as bad as any of them, and that he could swear better than any old man, and had

been backed for many a pot of beer to swear better and bigger oaths than anybody else ; but now, by the help, &c., &c., he was reformed, and that he had been in all the prisons in London. Here the people murmured "Oh! oh!" "Not as a thief, mind you," said he, "but as a preacher and comforter of those who needed it." Then he told a story of a sailor, a crimp, and of the good Baron Martin, and in telling the story acted likewise ; at first he was on one knee, with his hands raised, then in the act of stabbing with a knife ; then came the despair ; then the judge trying the prisoner. He was like a favourite actor who takes the whole of the stage, and I venture to affirm that he did more acting in an hour than had been done by the mummers during the whole fair—the great Saturday included. He had a suit of well-worn black ; but if he had dressed the part the effect would have been Robsonian. A great poet says : "There's nought the conscience calms like rum and true religion." For my part, I think gin has the same effect, especially with the fair, fat, and forties, to judge by the effect it had on them while listening to this preacher's tale of woe. At the conclusion, the preacher said he didn't know why he had been introduced to them as a bishop ; he could assure them, on his honour, that such was not the case. I don't think

it was necessary for him to have made the remark, for no one in the assembly thought so.

I am now fast coming to the end of my first, or maiden literary work, in which I have endeavoured to give, to the best of my ability, "a round unvarnished tale of my whole course of life" as a Cheap John; the tales, anecdotes, jokes, and biographical notices of those persons whom I have met and have been connected with in business are strictly true, and in relating them I "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice."

My object has been to give a faithful description of the life, manners, customs, sayings, and doings of a class of industrious and hard-working men, and who have in their day "done the state some service," by helping those who had not the opportunity of helping themselves, to such goods as were usually carried from one part of the country to another, by Cheap Johns.

Railways during the last quarter of a century have of course effected great changes, and there are now shops in most large cities and towns where the same description of goods can be obtained by the working and lower middle classes, that even in my time could only be had at the annual fair of a small town or village, and on market-days in cities and boroughs. All this I could foresee must inevitably

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