# CHARLES GRAVES

## MR. PUNCH'S HISTORY OF MODERN ENGLAND. VOLUME 2 OF 4.—1857-1874

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# Charles L. Graves
# Mr. Punch's History of Modern England, Vol. 2 (of 4).—1857-1874

## PART I
## THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK

### THE AGE OF NON-INTERVENTION

> "Whether splendidly isolated or dangerously isolated, I will not now debate; but for my part I think splendidly isolated, because this isolation of England comes from her superiority."

These words were used by Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1896, but they were prompted by a retrospect of the Victorian age, and may serve as a motto for the policy which governed England in her relations with foreign countries in the period surveyed in this volume.

There was serious friction with France in the early days of the Empire owing to the distrust of the Emperor's warlike preparations and his manipulation of the opportunities presented by his assistance of Italy in 1859. In the war of North and South in America, England as a whole "backed the wrong horse," and English diplomacy mishandled the obligations of our neutrality. We were on the verge of war over the *Trent* case, and the slackness of the Government in failing to detain the *Alabama* burdened the country with a costly legacy of moral and intellectual damage – to say nothing of pecuniary loss.

Popular sentiment was strongly anti-Prussian in the war on Denmark in 1864; misgivings of Prussian aggression were heightened by the crushing defeat of Austria in 1866 and the French *débâcle* in 1870. Yet the old diplomacy, whatever its shortcomings, kept us out of European wars. The Court as well as the Government strove hard for peace in 1859; the Queen's influence was successfully exerted to prevent interference on behalf of Denmark in 1864, which had been foreshadowed in a menacing message to Austria from Lord Palmerston. After the defeat of the Austrians at Sadowa in 1866, Disraeli justified abstention from unnecessary interference in European politics, on the ground that England had outgrown the European Continent, and was really more of an Asiatic than a European power. With Gladstone the restraining motive was economic rather than anti-imperialist, though his distrust of a "spirited foreign policy" became more pronounced in later years. But under Liberals and Conservatives alike, non-intervention in European wars remained the unbroken rule, and the only serious military operations undertaken between 1857 and 1874 were those involved in the suppression of a great revolt within our own dominions. The Chinese quarrel was the only cloud on the horizon in the beginning of 1857. Parliament was dissolved as the result of the vote of censure passed in the Commons, but Palmerston was returned with a strong majority, and the pacificists under Cobden lost their seats, *Punch* expressing the hope that Cobden might be "master of himself though China fall."

The war with China was not a glorious page in our annals: it remained in abeyance during the Mutiny and was not concluded till 1860. Indirectly it was one of the means of saving India by the diversion of the troops intended for the Far East, and already at Singapore, to the relief of Bengal at the urgent summons of Lord Canning, the Governor-General of India. The first mention of the outbreak

in *Punch* followed close on the tragedy of Meerut early in May. In his "Essence of Parliament" we read: —

> Lord Ellenborough delivered an alarmist speech about the mutinies in our Indian Army. Among other terrors, he was hideously afraid that Lord Canning, the Governor-General, had been taking some step which showed that he thought Christianity a true religion, but this damaging accusation was happily explained away. Lord Lansdowne was almost sure that Lord Canning could not so far have misconducted himself.

The charge was capable of complete disproof, but unluckily, as with the greasing of the cartridges, the Sepoys were unconvinced. A fortnight later *Punch* realized that the time for levity was passed: —

> An Indian debate followed, but it is no subject for light treatment, for while members were droning about cotton, and Mangles [the Chairman of the East India Company] was puffing the Company as having done miracles for India, news was hurrying over the sea that native regiments were in mutiny, had seized Delhi, and murdered all the Europeans there, without distinction of age or sex. It is a good time to be erecting a Shropshire memorial to Clive, if only to remind England that she once had a man who knew not only how to gain, but how to keep Oriental conquests.
>
> *Heroes of the Mutiny*

The issue of July 25 is full of the bustle of preparation, the hurried dispatch of Sir Colin Campbell to take command, and the embodying of the militia. It should be noted that one of the very first of the Mutiny cartoons revealed a disposition on the part of *Punch* to recognize that the mischief was deep-seated and had its origin largely in the arbitrary methods of the East India Company. On August 15 there appeared the picture of "The Execution of 'John Company,'" with *Punch* blowing up the offices in Leadenhall Street, and fragments labelled "avarice," "blundering," "nepotism," "supineness," "misgovernment," etc., flying from the mouth of a gun. But there was no hesitation in *Punch's* support of the most drastic measures for stamping out the mutiny. The word of the moment was "Cry Havelock! and let slip the dogs of war." On August 22 appeared the cartoon "The British Lion's Vengeance" – on the Bengal Tiger seen crouching over the bodies of an English woman and child. On September 12 Britannia is shown smiting down the mutineers; in the same number, however, in the lines "A word to the Avenger," reprisals are deprecated: "Spare the Indian mother and her child." On October 10, under the title "O God of Battles, steel my soldiers' hearts," the Queen is shown kneeling with widows and orphans in mourning garb, while a week later Sir Colin Campbell is drawn in fetters of red tape – his greatest difficulty in India.

At home, while *Punch* welcomed the recruiting from drapers' shops, and the filling of their places by women, he noted the snobbery of certain tradesmen who thought they would lose caste by enlisting. He also recognized that the appeal for recruits was seriously prejudiced by the callous treatment of ex-service men in the past.

Throughout the Mutiny *Punch* was hostile to Canning, and his "Clemency," representing him as unduly tender to the mutineers and invariably interfering on their behalf. This criticism reaches its height of injustice to the statesman who uttered and acted on the noble maxim "I will not govern in anger," in the mock proclamation which appears in the issue of October 24. There was probably better ground for the imaginary conversation between the Duke of Cambridge, as Commander-in-Chief, and Lords Lucan and Cardigan, in which the two latter noblemen sneer at the services of Havelock. This disparagement, be it noted, was not confined to the Crimean cavalry commanders; Mr. Gladstone declined to vote for the grant of a pension, and was in consequence associated by *Punch* with the Manchester School, whose pacificist organ, the *Star*, had been savagely burlesqued in the issue of October 31. Meanwhile the tide had turned in the war by the capture of Delhi and the

first relief of Lucknow. The toll of heroic lives among our leaders had been heavy – Henry Lawrence, Nicholson and Havelock at the end of the year – but *Punch* was true to his old democratic instincts in recording the exploits of all ranks. He was eloquent in his appeal for the assistance of Miss Salkeld, sister of Lieutenant Salkeld, who lost his life in the blowing in of the Kashmir gate at Delhi. But he does not forget Salkeld's humbler associates, who with him "rushed upon death to make way for the bayonets of England when the great stronghold of treason was stormed": —

> Let it not be forgotten, when Salkeld's noble deed is told, and thought is taken for those whom he loved, that other gallant men met death in the same proud exploit. Sergeant Burgess sprang forward, took the match from Salkeld when he was struck, and firing the train, fell mortally wounded. Sergeant Carmichael had already perished in an attempt to fire the fuse. Surely England has a heart warm enough, and a purse deep enough, to do all that money can do in memory of such men as those whose names are thus set before her.

In the first month of 1858 we read the fine tribute to Havelock: —

> He is gone. Heaven's will is best:
> Indian turf o'erlies his breast.
> Ghoul in black, nor fool in gold
> Laid him in yon hallowed mould.
> Guarded to a soldier's grave
> By the bravest of the brave.
>
> Strew not on the hero's hearse
> Garlands of a herald's verse:
> Let us hear no words of Fame
> Sounding loud a deathless name:
> Tell us of no vauntful Glory
> Shouting forth her haughty story.
> All life long his homage rose
> To far other shrine than those.
> "*In Hoc Signo*," pale nor dim,
> Lit the battle-field for him,
> And the prize he sought and won,
> Was the Crown for Duty done.

Lucknow was recaptured in March, 1858, but the pacification of Oudh by Sir Colin Campbell, now Lord Clyde, and the clearance of Central India by Sir Hugh Rose, afterwards Lord Strathnairn, occupied the whole of the remainder of the year: indeed, order was not completely restored till the close of 1859, or more than a year after the rule of "John Company" had been abolished and its executive powers transferred to the Crown.

### John Bull's Foreign Policy

The process begun under Palmerston was completed by the Derby-Disraeli administration after long and acrimonious debates and recriminations, cabals and intrigues, in the course of which *Punch* vehemently assailed the East India Company, disgraced but impenitent, for its misdeeds, Bright for his impracticable independence and pro-Indian sympathies; Ellenborough and Canning; Palmerston and Disraeli. Palmerston in particular had fallen from favour because of the Conspiracy Bill introduced after the Orsini attempt to assassinate the French Emperor. The plot had been hatched in London, but *Punch* bitterly resented the notion of making this a ground for depriving England of her position

as the "sanctuary of Europe," and held that Palmerston had brought defeat on himself by knuckling down to Louis Napoleon. The fury of the *Moniteur* against England's alleged harbouring of criminals only excited *Punch's* derision. Relieved from the Indian tragedy, he was now free to revert to his old inveterate distrust of Louis Napoleon, and to preach for years to come the need of a strong navy. The lines on "John Bull's Foreign Policy" in the autumn of 1858, addressed to the Peoples of Europe, frankly admit that self-interest mingles with his love of Liberty: —

To hold you down, your despots arm,
And keep me always in alarm.
Confound them! – they mean me no good;
Abolish, well I know they would,
My Constitution, if they could.

I, too, must arm in self-defence;
And armaments involve expense:
Expense taxation means – my curse;
Despotic power alone is worse:
Your masters thus myself amerce.

Oh, how I wish I could retrench!
But I must keep pace with the French,
And for the Russians stand prepared,
The cost whereof I should be spared,
To shake your yokes off if you dared.

Rise, therefore, and your rights assert,
Ye Peoples, trodden in the dirt.
Strike for your freedom, nations brave,
Whom monarchs absolute enslave:
And so enable me to save.

So along with appeals to Lord Derby to make up his mind like a man to Reform, we find repeated and even more urgent appeals to England to keep up the Channel Fleet. The imposing display of force at Cherbourg by Louis Napoleon in the autumn of 1858 only enhanced *Punch's* misgivings and prompted the suggestion of an alliance with the United States. *Punch* greeted Sir Francis Head's renewed scare-mongering about a French invasion with ridicule, but he was more seriously impressed by French pamphleteers and novelists who spoke of war with England as inevitable.

The defeat of the Derby-Disraeli Government over their Reform Bill in the spring of 1859 brought back Palmerston and Russell at a critical time in the history of the struggle for Italian unity. Of that cause both these statesmen were true friends, but the sympathy of England was impaired by distrust of Louis Napoleon, and this nervousness and anxiety as to his intentions is repeatedly illustrated in the pages of *Punch*. Victor Emmanuel is shown as the Piedmontese farmer between the two Eagles, Austria and France. Again the French Emperor's phrase "*L'Empire c'est la paix*" is satirized in a cartoon showing him as a porcupine bristling with bayonets. England's line should be one of extreme watchfulness: "We'll keep our powder dry." On the eve of the outbreak of the war between France and Austria *Punch* gives his "Neutral Advice" in the following lines: —

Let France delight to go and fight
If 'tis her folly to:

Let Austria cry for "territory!"
With that we've naught to do.

Our shout must be "Neutrality!"
To England peace is sweet;
But, friends, that she may neutral be,
Let's man our Forts and Fleet.

He may be an inoffensive animal, but he don't look like it.

Napoleon III and Cavour

After Magenta the share in the fighting between Italy and France is symbolized in the fable of the Giant and the Dwarf: Victor Emmanuel was to do all the fighting while France, forsooth, claimed half the honours of war. No opportunity was lost of putting the worst construction on Louis Napoleon's patronage of Savoy. His pacific statements are constantly contrasted with his policy of aggrandisement. In the autumn *Punch* quoted the *New York Herald's* tribute: "We are seriously of opinion that if Louis Napoleon were not Emperor of the French, he would have made a first-rate newspaper editor. His style is like that of the American papers." The report that Cavour had retired in disgust inspired a bitter attack on the two Emperors in July: —

Count O'Cavourneen, the bubble is breaking,
You've had the last scene, Solferino's red hill,
The cannons no longer the echoes are waking,
Count O'Cavourneen, what, Minister still?
O hast thou forgot the diplomacy clever
In which thou didst bear so distinguished a part,
Thy vow to clear out all the Hapsbugs for ever?
The vermin still linger, Cavour of my heart.

Cavourneen, Cavourneen, the dead lie in numbers
Beneath the torn turf where the living made fight;
In the bed of My Uncle the Emperor slumbers,
But Italy's Hapsbugs continue to bite.
Well done, my Cavour, they have cut short the struggle
They fired all the pulses of Italy's heart;
And in turning thy back on the humbug and juggle,
Cavour, thou hast played a proud gentleman's part.

Militia Officer: "Ah, this is Smithers! Why, you're getting very fat, Smithers. Let's see – this is your fifth training, isn't it?"

Stout Private: "Yes, sir. After we was disembodied, sir, the Adj'tant he took an' *reintestined* me, sir!!!"

(*Note.*– Militiamen, after serving four trainings, can be "*Re-attested*" for another five years.)

Italy and her friends were alike profoundly dissatisfied with the terms of the Peace of Villafranca, by which Savoy and Nice were handed over to the French Emperor, whose further "intentions" kept England in a simmer of indignant anxiety for years to come. The scare of a French invasion revived, the volunteer movement took on increased activity, and the anxiety of financiers was revealed in the grotesque incident of the four Liverpool brokers who wrote to Louis Napoleon asking

him what his "intentions" were. They were faithfully dealt with by *Punch* in his burlesque verses on "The Four Fishers" – who caught nothing, and in an imaginary parallel letter to Queen Victoria.

Captain of Rural Corps (calling over the Roll): "George Hodge!" (No answer.) "George Hodge! – Where on earth's George Hodge?"

Voice from the Ranks: "Please, sir, he's turned Dissenter, and says fighting's wicked."

### The Invasion Scare

As for the invasion scare, *Punch* treated it contemptuously in the cartoons representing the French Emperor with a poodle at Calais facing the British Lion at Dover, and the French Eagle drowning in mid-Channel. These cartoons, by the way, and *Punch's* support of the volunteer movement in general, led the pacificist *Star* to declare that "*Punch* is a disgrace to the country in which it is tolerated." But *Punch* was not a panic-monger. While he vigorously upheld Lord Lyndhurst's plea for a strong Navy, which John Bright vigorously opposed, he welcomed the evidence of goodwill shown by a French publicist, M. Chevalier, who vindicated England against the charge of Chauvinism, and maintained that her attitude was merely defensive. As for the volunteers, *Punch* commended their patriotism, resented the patronizing contempt of the Regulars, and while ridiculing fancy costumes, was all in favour of a rational uniform: —

Some talk of Alexander,
And some of Hercules,
But John Bull's rising dander
Needs no such aids as these.
He shoulders his long Enfield,
And at his drill appears,
Till "ping-wing-wing," the bullets sing,
Of the Rifle Volunteers.

And when he is commanded
To find himself in clothes,
Like a trump unto his tailor
For a uniform he goes.
With his easy knickerbockers,
And no stock his neck that queers,
For a run, jump, stand, they're the boys to command,
Are the Rifle Volunteers!

Let the Horse Guards trust to pipe-clay,
And General Routine,
Till the Linesman's shakoed, belted,
And pack'd to a machine;
With winds and waists unfettered,
And the use of eyes and ears,
In wide-awake tile come the rank and file
Of the Rifle Volunteers!

Colonel Punch (Inspector of Volunteers): "Look here, George, I want those brave fellows to learn their duty."

H.R.H. Commander-in-Chief: "Of course you do, old boy, and so do I; and I'll see that they *do* learn it, too!"

Aide-de-Camp: "Good gracious, sir! Why don't you order your men to lie down under this hill? Can't you see that Battery playing right on them?"

Colonel of Volunteers: "So I did, sir. But they won't lie down. They say they want to see the Review!"

Punch and the Volunteers

In later years, when the menace of Napoleonic "intentions" ceased to preoccupy the public, the attitude of *Punch* towards the volunteers became more critical and less sympathetic, but throughout 1860 – allowing for a little amiable chaff of the contrast between their physique and their bellicose spirit – he lent the movement cordial support, applauding the institution of cadet corps in schools, and the provision of facilities to enable footmen and tradesmen to attend drills and be instructed in rifle-shooting. The review in Hyde Park was duly chronicled in a cartoon representing the Queen resting a rifle on *Punch's* head, and the poem in honour of the London Volunteers may be set against the genial satire of Keene's zealous little captain leading his men "through fire and water," or the references to the street boys' catch-word "Who shot the dog?"

The year 1860 found England with the Chinese war still on hand; it was not ended till the autumn, with the capture, destruction and looting of the Chinese Emperor's Summer Palace at Peking as an act of vengeance for the barbarous treatment of the British envoys. But India was completely pacified, and Lord Clyde returned home to receive the laurel. The Prince of Wales's visit to Canada was already decided on; Lord Lyndhurst was still clamouring for a strong fleet; the Queen's speech promised the introduction of another measure of Reform, nominally redeemed by Lord John Russell's "nice little Bill" satirized by *Punch* in March and overwhelmed with ridicule on its withdrawal in June: —

Amendments sore long time I bore;
Parental love was vain;
Till by degrees the House did please
To put me out of pain.

Abroad the outlook was still concentrated on Italy and the progress of her unification. In October, 1859, *Punch* had hailed the coming of freedom; but it was

"no rosy dawn,
No true Aurora; but a lamp
Which in a moment may be gone,
Extinguished by a tyrant's stamp."

He deplored the exigencies which confined England's aid to the mere expression of goodwill to the brave men who were fighting for liberty. But by the summer of 1860 events were moving apace. It was the time of the famous Sicilian Expedition of Garibaldi, whom *Punch* acclaimed as the great champion of United Italy: —

Honour to Garibaldi! Win or lose,
A Hero to all time that Chief goes down,
Whatever issue his emprise ensues,
He, certain of unquenchable renown,
Fights for a victor's or a martyr's crown.

Garibaldi and Lincoln

The flight of "Bombalino" – Francis IV, son of "Bomba," King of Naples – is celebrated in a pæan on Garibaldi, the Irish Papal Volunteers are ironically praised for their valour in "The Wake of the Irish Brigade," and a cartoon "The Right Leg in the Boot at Last" shows Garibaldi helping Victor Emmanuel to put his leg into the boot of Italy, with the comment, "If it won't go on, Sire, try a little more powder." *Punch*, we may add, condoled with Garibaldi on the report that Dumas was to write his life, and recorded the description of him given by a young English lady as "a dear old weather-beaten angel."

Savoy and Nice had been annexed to France, and Louis Napoleon's letter to the Comte de Persigny, the French Ambassador in London, disclaiming any aggressive intentions, revived *Punch's* distrust. The cartoon of August 11, 1860, represents the Emperor as a wolf in sheep's clothing – with the heads of two little dead lambs, labelled Savoy and Nice, peeping out – in the act of posting a letter to Mme. Britannia, "care of M. le Comte de Persigny." But already the eyes of Europe were beginning to be drawn across the Atlantic. The protest of South Carolina is dealt with mainly in a light-hearted spirit, but with an ominous anticipation of the sequel. The verses on "The Beginning of Slavery's End" are wholly serious and entirely on the side of the North: —

> This is America's decision.
> Awakening, she begins to see
> How justly she incurs derision
> Of tyrants, while she shames us free;
> Republican, yet more slaves owning
> Than any under Empire groaning,
> Or ground beneath the Papacy.

Lincoln had been elected President, and apart from references to his achievements as a rail-splitter, and the facetious suggestion that the White House should be renamed "Lincoln's Inn," he is welcomed as an honest man and with a respect which, all too soon, was replaced by the spiteful calumny which did not cease until the tragedy of his untimely end. The outbreak of civil war in the United States was immediately followed by the proclamation of Britain's neutrality. *Punch's* misinterpretation of the issues involved and his misreading of the attitude of the cotton spinners of Lancashire is dealt with in another section. The comments on Bull's Run and the burlesque correspondence from Charleston are lamentably lacking in good feeling, and the report that the Duc de Chartres and the Comte de Paris had joined the army of the North only furnished *Punch* with materials for disparaging the French Princes and the cause they had espoused. The famous affair of the *Trent*, involving the seizure of two Southern envoys on a British ship, which brought England to the verge of war, is treated seriously, but with a profound conviction of the justice of our claim. In the cartoon, "Waiting for an Answer," Britannia is shown standing at the breech of a great gun: —

> She waits in arms; and in her cause is safe
> Not fearing war, yet hoping peace the end,
> Nor heeding those her mood who'd check or chafe,
> The Right she seeks; the Right God will defend!

At home Reform had been indefinitely postponed; Lord John Russell had gone to the Lords with an earldom, and *Punch*, lamenting the cooling of his reforming zeal, recalls the analogies of Chatham, Pulteney, and Holland, who, "to put on earl's ermine laid down their earlier fames." Reorganization of the Navy and a large increase in the number of ships were promised and taken in hand, and *Punch* records his inspection of a training ship at "Sherrysmouth" and the favourable impression created by the discipline and spirit of all on board. Germany's desire for a fleet is noted and treated with

consistent ridicule. As an instance of her activity "it is reported on the very best authority (not less than that of Messrs. Searle, the great boat-builders of Lambeth) that a four-oared cutter will be launched in a very few days." That was in September, 1861, and three weeks later *Punch* appears in a cartoon as an old salt, handing a toy yacht to a small but plethoric German with the remark: "There's a ship for you, my little man; now cut away, and don't get in a mess." This is followed up with a set of verses ending: —

> The moral, my dears, we all understand,
> All fat little Germans will stick upon land.

### The Suez Canal

Nor was *Punch* happier in his comments on the Suez Canal. In the "Essence of Parliament" for May 6, 1861, he writes: —

> The Lords had a discussion about the Canal of the Future, that is to say, the impossible trench which M. Lesseps pretends to think he can cut through the Isthmus of Suez. The Government opinion upon the subject is, that if the Canal could be made, we ought not, for political reasons, to allow it, but that inasmuch as the Canal cannot be cut, the subject may, and the wise course is to let the speculators ruin themselves and diddle the Pacha. This seems straightforward and benevolent enough.

In Italy Victor Emmanuel had been declared King by the new Parliament, but *Punch* was not at all certain of the stability of his throne. Cavour died on June 6, but the death of the greatest of Italian statesmen is passed over with a brief though sympathetic reference. In August we find *Punch* uttering a serious warning to Victor Emmanuel, on the ground that he had sold the cradle of his race, and expressing the fear that Sardinia would be ceded to France as well as Savoy. This was the year in which the crown of Greece was offered to Prince Alfred (the late Duke of Edinburgh). *Punch* declined it both for him and his next brother, Prince Arthur (the Duke of Connaught). "Let the present King (Otho) mind his own business better," *Punch* advises. The Greek Crown, it is derisively added, was not worth five bob. The offer, however, was not definitely and officially refused until the following year.

The *Trent* affair was settled, but throughout 1862 *Punch* exchanged his impartial unfriendliness to both antagonists for a distinct bias against the North and Lincoln. For the moment his distrust of Louis Napoleon was merged in disapproval of the Empress Eugénie for her alleged interference in politics and support of the Papal pretensions. The visit of the Japanese ambassadors in the summer inspired imaginary dispatches, in which allusion is made to their interest in English arsenals and factories. *Punch*, by this time, had at any rate learned not to depict them as negroes, as he had done only a few years earlier. The police-ridden condition of Poland excites his indignation; but he is careful to disclaim sympathy with sentimental "National" movements, maintaining much the same view as that expressed in his lines on "The Nonsense of the Nationalities" three years before: —

> No more talk of national races,
> Panslavic, Hellenic, all stuff!
> Of rant, gestures wild, and grimaces
> On that point, we've had quite enough.
> John Bull you will vainly appeal to,
> That in his own person contains
> Both Saxon and Norman; a deal, too,
> Of Danish blood runs in his veins.

'Coon: "Air you in arnest, Colonel?"
Colonel Bull: "I am."
'Coon: "Don't fire – I'll come down."

The cultivation of the Welsh vernacular provoked *Punch's* outspoken hostility, as we notice elsewhere. And it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that *Punch's* strong sympathy with Poland in 1863 was in part due to the fact that Russia, her oppressor, was the only Continental nation friendly to the North in the American war. The exploits of the *Alabama* only tended to enhance English sympathy with the South, and Mrs. Beecher Stowe's letter, in which she complained that England was throwing her weight into the scale on the slave-owners' side, was not favourably received; while *Punch* considered it "bad form" for Americans in London to celebrate Independence Day. It is almost needless to say that Louis Napoleon's suggestion for a Congress at Paris was treated with scant courtesy: any suggestion from that quarter was sure to be regarded as suspect.

But the eyes of England and of Europe were diverted from the great struggle in America, already at its height, by events nearer home. The Fenian trouble had already begun in Ireland in 1863; the Schleswig-Holstein controversy was working steadily up to the arbitrament of war. It was of this "question" that Palmerston said that only three men in Europe ever understood it, of whom one (the Prince Consort) was dead; another (a Danish statesman) was mad, and the third (he himself) had forgotten it. Palmerston was inclined to be "interventionist," but was restrained by his colleagues and the influence of the Queen. *Punch* somewhat reluctantly acquiesced in the view that non-intervention in foreign disputes was the best policy, but his comments with pen and pencil reflect the extreme unpopularity of Prussia. In May appeared the cartoon in which *Punch* is shown presenting Prussia with the Order of "St. Gibbet." In the same month he bitterly protested against the bestowal of the Order of the Black Eagle on Prince Alfred by the King of Prussia: —

Black Eagle, murder's proper meed!
Well doth its colour match the stain
Of guilt, that dyes that coward's deed
Who female slew and infant Dane,
Black Eagles are for blackguards right,
White feather who with black combine.
No English Prince shall be a Knight
Of such black Chivalry as thine.

The proclamation of General Falkenstein, commander-in-chief of the Prussian troops in Jutland, regulating the scale of contributions to be levied on Danish landlords, is quoted in the issue of June 4 as a villainous edict, worthy of cut-throats and felons. Earlier in the year *Punch* had fallen heavily on Professor Max-Müller for his letter, "A German Plea for Germans," in *The Times*. The Prussians and Austrians were depicted, accurately enough in view of the sequel, as bandits quarrelling over their spoil, and this free criticism was bitterly resented throughout Germany. When Müller was tried and executed for the murder of Mr. Briggs in the autumn of this year, the judge was accused of anti-Prussian bias. Meanwhile *Punch* found little worthy of comment in the American war beyond the allegations of malingering among Federal troops, and the report that Irishmen were induced to emigrate, with promises of help, in order to furnish recruits for the Northern army.

The end of the American war came in 1865. Of its magnitude and of the deeper issues involved; of the achievements of the heroes on either side – Sherman and Grant and Farragut, Stonewall Jackson and Lee —*Punch* showed himself strangely deficient in appreciation. The *amende* to Lincoln was handsome and complete, but it was not made until after the assassination of the greatest of Americans: —

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen —
To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born King of men.

It is truly said that Lincoln lived through four long-suffering years – years of ill-fate, ill-feeling, and ill-report – and lived to hear "the hisses change to cheers, the taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise," and took both with the same unwavering mood. Unhappily, as we have seen, by the change in *Punch's* view not being expressed until Lincoln was dead, the tribute lost its grace.

The toll of great or eminent men taken by 1865 was heavy, and memorial verses abound. Cobden, successively eulogized as a Free-Trader and attacked and even execrated as a Pacificist, died in the spring, and Lord Palmerston, the greatest of the Elder Statesmen, in the autumn. As we have often had occasion to notice in this chronicle, *Punch* had alternated between admiration of Palmerston's nerve and dislike of his Parliamentary opportunism. But no jarring note is struck in his eulogy; there is nothing elegiac in the cheerful dactyls – after the model of Tom Moore – in which he pays homage to Palmerston's wisdom, his courage, and his humour, and skates over the thin ice of his masterly inactivity in the cause of Reform: —

We trusted his wisdom, but love drew us nearer
Than homage we owed to his statesmanly art,
For never was statesman to Englishmen dearer
Than he who had faith in the great English heart.

The frank merry laugh, and the honest eye filling
With mirth, and the jests that so rapidly fell,
Told out the State-secret that made us right willing
To follow his leading – he loved us all well.

Our brave English Chief! – lay him down for the sleeping
That nought may disturb till the trumpet of doom:
Honour claims the proud vigil – but Love will come weeping,
And hang many garlands on Palmerston's tomb!

### General Eyre

Relations with France were improved in 1865, the year of the fiftieth anniversary of peace with England, by the interchange of fraternal visits between the Fleets, duly celebrated by *Punch*. The death of the King of the Belgians, Leopold I, deprived Queen Victoria of one of her greatest and most trusted friends. As for Germany, the acquisition of Kiel laid the foundation of the naval policy formulated in the boast of Wilhelm II: "Our future lies on the water."

At home the Fenian outbreak in Ireland was spreading, but *Punch* refused to treat it as a serious menace, to judge from the burlesque list of its supporters published in the autumn. Much more space is devoted to the negro outbreak in Jamaica and the campaign against General Eyre, which affords a curious parallel to the Amritsar riots and the action of General Dyer. Eyre was much censured for his severity in suppressing the rising; the agitation to bring him to trial was kept up for three years by the Jamaica committee, of which J. S. Mill was a prominent member; but *Punch* defended Eyre throughout and heaped scorn on the "fanatics" and "noisy quacks" who thought so much of the blacks that they could not think of the whites. He admitted that the vengeance had been terrible; that a great slaughter had been made; but held that it had been justified by the needs of "a small white

population, eight times outnumbered by the negroes, and suddenly confronted by the foulest horrors of savage warfare." The Grand Jury of Middlesex threw out the Bill in 1867, confirming the view already expressed by the Shropshire magistrates, but nevertheless Eyre was committed for trial a year later under the Colonial Governors' Act. *Punch* reprinted Eyre's speech in Court, and never swerved from the firm conviction that he had saved Jamaican society, white and black, by his promptness and resolution. He compared his long martyrdom with that of Warren Hastings, and predicted that Englishmen, who listen too much to noisy and gushing men, would in time make amends. The result was inconclusive, for while Eyre's career was ended by his recall, his legal expenses were paid by Government in 1872. He had undoubtedly saved the situation, but could not be acquitted of excessive severity.

The second of the three wars which consummated the aggrandisement of Prussia was brought to a speedy end in the summer of 1866 by the "twelve days" campaign which culminated in the defeat of Austria at Königgrätz (Sadowa). England, with Lord Russell as Premier, once more stood aloof, but English hostility to Prussia, and, above all, Bismarck – already recognized as the most formidable power in Continental politics – made itself widely felt. *Punch* expressed this general resentment in his comments on the rumour that the Queen was to visit Germany in the autumn. As a friend of Italy he could not disapprove of the arrangement by which Venetia was annexed to her dominions; as the unrelenting critic of Louis Napoleon he could not refrain from disparaging his attitude of neutrality tempered by a hope of "picking up the pieces." But England, though not embroiled in Continental disputes, was not without her own troubles. The Russell Cabinet had fallen over Reform, there had been riots in Hyde Park (of which we speak elsewhere), and before the Derby-Disraeli administration came in, the Liberals had been forced to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland in order to deal effectually with what Mr. Gladstone did not hesitate to describe as the wicked conspiracy of Fenianism. *Punch's* summary of the proceedings in Parliament on Saturday, February 18, and the historic session on Sunday, 19, when the Suspension Bill became law, is not without interest. J. S. Mill supported the Government; Bright's speech in the character of the candid friend was described by Gladstone as "containing what was in part untrue, in part open to question, and generally out of place," a strange inversion of their *rôles* in 1886. It is noteworthy that the demand for land legislation and the disestablishment of the Irish Church was heard in the debate, and that the trouble in Ireland was largely ascribed by the Government to the presence of Irish-Americans, released by the cessation of the American war, who had come to Ireland to promote Fenianism and were "regularly paid by somebody." They were "wanted," but to make a general capture of these miscreants it was necessary to dispense with the law which forbade arrest without warrant and imprisonment without appeal to the judges. There is a distressingly familiar ring about these arguments, and the reference to the fact that the Fenians had already begun to murder.

### Nascent Imperialism

To turn from the centre to the circumference, one may note a pleasant hint of nascent Imperialism in the little geography lesson, doubtless well needed, which *Punch* gives his readers on December 1, 1866: —

> *Mr. Punch* is pleased to see that a decoration has been given by the Queen to the Finance Minister of Victoria. Victoria is one of the Australian colonies, it is at the southern extremity of the continent, Melbourne is the capital, and the inhabitants are far in advance of England in regard to civilization – for instance, they have compulsory education. The Hon. George Vernon came over on a mission to our Government. Victoria wants an armour-plated ship, for which she will partly pay, and a training ship, and Sir John Pakington has assented. The Minister, for his various services to the colony, has received the Bath Cross. Should it not have been the Victoria Cross? This little goak is the bit of sugar with which *Mr. Punch*

rewards his readers for learning more than most English people know about one of our noblest colonies. If his readers are good, they shall have another colonial lesson some day. For we have other colonies besides Victoria.

Another lesson in geography had been suggested earlier in the year by the final success of the *Great Eastern* in laying the cable, a success due as much to the enterprise of Cyrus Field, the American capitalist, as to the genius of Brunel.

In 1867 there was a further recrudescence of Fenianism, and the "physical force" men extended their operations to England. For this was the year of the sinister attempt to blow up Clerkenwell prison, and the rescue of Fenians from the prison van in Manchester, in which a police-sergeant was shot, with, as a consequence, the execution of the "Manchester Martyrs," funeral processions and celebrations, the echoes of which have reverberated down to these days.

The Reform League expressed sympathy with the Fenians, and an English lady of rank associated herself with their cause; but *Punch* regarded such support with unqualified contempt and even abhorrence. Real military operations on a modest scale were conducted by England in one of her small wars – that against the recalcitrant King of Abyssinia – and an autumn session was held to vote supplies. It was suggested that Sir Robert Napier, who commanded the expedition, was not at first adequately rewarded, but he was raised to the peerage in the following year as Lord Napier of Magdala. There seems to have been less divergence of opinion over the protest that the cost of the war was entirely borne by income-tax payers. Disraeli having succeeded Lord Derby as Premier, and Mr. Ward Hunt having gone to the Exchequer, *Punch* contented himself with observing, *à propos* of the new Budget, that the money for the deficit of upwards of a million and a half "is, of course, to be taken from the Middle Class, which never defends itself," and returned to the charge on May 9 in his lines on "The Great Untaxed in their Glory": —

Napier came, saw, and conquered; the battle was o'er;
There's an end of the war and of King Theodore.
The prestige is recovered that England had lost,
And the popular voice cries "A fig for the cost!"

Lo, the tyrant's abolished, the captives are free!
And there isn't a fraction to pay on our tea,
Or our sugar: how sweet so cheap glory to win!
No additional tax on tobacco or gin!

Let us drink, then, success to Disraeli and Hunt,
Who exempted the many from finding the blunt;
And laid all the expense of the War on the few —
For the Income-Tax payer will pay all that's due.

Ah, tremble, ye tyrants, whom England can crush,
At a price which her millions won't care for one rush;
In the scale as a feather the money will weigh,
For a national war when a part has to pay.

## French and German Ambitions

Meanwhile the upper classes had been spending their money freely at the great French Exhibition of 1867, that crowning manifestation of the art and opulence, the magnificence and cynicism of the Second Empire, with Schneider as high priestess of the revels, and all the rank and

fashion of Europe paying homage at her shrine. *Punch*, however, took a friendly personal interest in the exhibition, for Leech's drawings were exhibited there. The Federation of Canada, an event of first-rank importance to the British Empire, with a Constitution framed mainly on the lines of Lord Durham's Report in 1840, was overshadowed by the more spectacular and dramatic events of the year 1867. Disraeli succeeded Lord Derby on his resignation in February, 1868, and *Punch* handsomely acknowledged "the genius and perseverance" which, after thirty years of strife, had thus been rewarded; but the new Premier only held office till December, when the Liberals were returned with a majority of 112. The peerage which he declined for himself, but accepted for his wife, who was created Viscountess Beaconsfield, inspired a graceful tribute from his old critic *Punch*. Parliament, before the prorogation in July, had been mainly occupied with the battle over Gladstone's Irish Church resolutions, which brought about the Government's downfall. It is worthy of note that in 1868 it was the Militarism of France, not of Germany, that excited *Punch's* misgivings and animosities, to the extent of his describing the Emperor's proposed Army Loan of 440 million francs as a measure to establish a reign of "terror and preponderance." A map, which was said to have been published by order of the Emperor, illustrating French ambitions, gravely exercised *Punch* later in a year which witnessed the Revolution in Spain and the flight of the notorious Queen Isabella, events which awakened little sympathy or interest in England. Yet the eviction of Isabella opened the door to the Hohenzollern candidature for the throne of Spain, the proximate cause of the war of 1870. But the seeds of conflict lay deeper – in the relentless diplomacy of Bismarck, bound sooner or later to manœuvre Napoleon III into a position from which he could not escape without resort to the arbitrament of war. In 1869 the celebration of the centenary of Napoleon I and the proposed inauguration of a Constitutional *régime* furnished *Punch* with material for some plain-spoken advice to Napoleon's successor and namesake. Distrust of Louis Napoleon still dominated *Punch's* outlook on foreign politics and clouded his vision. Strange to say the growth of the Prussian fleet is not only praised, but welcomed: —

## BRAVO, BISMARCK!

> John Bull used to laugh to scorn the idea of a Prussian Navy, and chuckled hugely when *Punch* christened it for him "The Fleet of the Future." But lo, "the wheel of Time has brought about his revenges," and the Fleet of the Future is the Fleet of the Present! Prussia *has* a fleet – and no chaff! A respectable force of steam ironclads, backed by a serviceable knot of unarmoured sailing-frigates and corvettes, with a first-class naval arsenal and dockyard, on the Jahde, is a very different thing from the solitary "gunboat on the Spree," which we used to poke our fun at twenty years ago.
>
> Britannia, through her *Punch*, rejoices to weave among her naval azures a new shade – Prussian blue; and will be glad, in all fair quarrels, to hail it alongside the true blue of the British man-o'-war's-man.

But the mood of welcome was tempered with misgiving, and the possibility of an eventual naval war with Germany filled *Punch* with gloomy forebodings, which, in view of subsequent developments, approach to something like prophetic strain: —

## LINE OF BATTLE IN SMOKE

We trust we shall ever preserve our friendship with the countrymen of Hans Breitmann. We allowed Denmark to be robbed of Schleswig-Holstein, and tolerated the total theft of Hanover; so that there seems to be no conceivable offence that can hook us into a war with Prussia and Germany. That

view is a pleasant one to contemplate for thinking people, who, but for it, would be rendered very uneasy by the following statement in a *Times'* leader on "The Cruise of the Lords of the Admiralty": —

> "It has been imagined that the introduction of steam-power would render naval tactics of extreme importance in any future engagements, but when on one occasion the ships were ordered to go into action, it was found that a few minutes sufficed to envelope the whole fleet in so dense a cloud of smoke that signals were no longer visible, and all that any vessel could do was to fire as rapidly as possible into the darkness around her."
>
> Now, those Deutschers are confoundedly clever fellows; particularly at chemistry. Gun-cotton, which was discovered by one of them, is a substance they are at work on perfecting. No doubt they will soon make it available, so as to supersede powder, for naval gunnery. Gun-cotton goes off without smoke. In the happily almost impossible event of a war with them, our ships, enveloped in smoke of our own clumsy making, would blaze away at theirs in the dark, at random, with useless guns of precision, whilst they would fire with unerring aim at the flashes of our guns, and the end of our first sea-fight with them would be, that the British would be sent to the bottom by the German Fleet.

*Death of Lord Derby*

The same month witnessed the passing away of Lord Derby, "the Rupert of Debate," a statesman somewhat out of his element in a period of non-intervention; a great country-gentleman, sportsman, and scholar. *Punch*, whose memorial verses in these years did not err as a rule on the side of brevity, compressed his tribute within the compass of a sonnet, in which there is a happy reference to Lord Derby's love of Homer and of children, for he was the patron of Edward Lear, the laureate of the best, because the most unalloyed, nonsense: —

## LORD DERBY

### Born, 1799. Died, 1869

Withdrawing slow from those he loved so well,
Autumn's pale morning saw him pass away:
Leave them beside their sacred dead to pray,
Unmarked of strangers. Calmer memories tell
How nobly Stanley lived. No braver name
Glows in the golden roll of all his sires,
Or all their peers. His was the heart that fires
The eloquent tongue, and his the eye whose aim
Alone half quelled his foe. He struck for Power,
(And power in England is a hero's prize)
Yet he could throw it from him. Those whose eyes
See not for tears, remember in this hour
That he was oft from Homer's page beguiled
To frame some "wonder for a happy child."

The resignation by Lord Malmesbury, formerly Foreign Secretary, of the Conservative leadership of the House of Lords about the same time met with no such consideration. Lord

Malmesbury had never been a favourite of *Punch*, who insinuated that the Tory leader had gone because he was obliged to, and quoted Artemus Ward's saying: "He told me to get out of the office – I pitied him and went."

The fateful year of 1870 opened with the attempt to establish a "Liberal" Empire in France with Ollivier as Prime Minister, a concession which *Punch* hailed as a "Magna Charta for France"; almost simultaneously Lord Clarendon, our Foreign Minister, with Gladstone's cordial approval, launched his suggestion of a partial simultaneous disarmament, a proposal rendered futile by the attitude of Bismarck. Lord Clarendon died on June 27, and his successor, Lord Granville, was informed by the Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office that he "had never during his long experience known so great a lull in foreign affairs." Yet war had already been declared by France when *Punch*, on July 23, issued his somewhat cynical manifesto of neutrality under the heading: "Prussian Pot and French Kettle": —

> In this unhappy event of a war between France and Prussia, we shall of course do all we can to preserve the most perfect neutrality. We certainly feel it. Our sympathies with the one side and the other are, strong as they are, exactly equal.
>
> As regards the Prussians we take a warmly admiring interest in the course of aggrandisement which their King and his Bismarck have been pursuing of late years, but most chiefly do we applaud its first step – the attack on Denmark, and the forcible annexation therefrom of the two Duchies. The immense number of Danes slain by the Prussian needle-guns commands our approbation only less than our wonder; but what crowns the sentiments with which we regard the spoliation and destruction of the Danes is the piety wherewith the author of those achievements solemnly expressed his thankfulness for having been permitted to accomplish them. One brother once knelt with Mrs. Fry in Newgate. The other might have knelt with Mrs. Cole.
>
> On the other hand, with respect to France, we cannot but feel how much we owe to the French Imperial Government for the improvement which, by the menacing armaments it has kept up now for so many years, it has occasioned us to make in our national defences. But we have higher reasons for sympathy with France than considerations which are merely insular and selfish. The great principles of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality have been professed by France more enthusiastically and more loudly than by any other European nation; and we behold their standing reduction to practice in the occupation of Rome, and the declaration that the chief of Italian cities shall never belong to Italy.
>
> The foregoing reasons should satisfy any Prussian and any Frenchman of the perfect impartiality with which Englishmen must contemplate hostilities between their respective nations.

As a matter of fact, public opinion in England at the outbreak of the war was in the main inclined to favour Germany; the publication of the Draft Secret Treaty submitted to Bismarck by Louis Napoleon in 1867, providing in certain contingencies for the occupation of Belgium by France, and now communicated by Bismarck to *The Times* went a long way to sterilize sympathy with France; and it was not until after Sedan that compassion for France overwhelmed and obliterated the old distrust of the Emperor's intriguing ambitions. When the cry, "nous sommes trahis" was raised, *Punch* blamed the French nation more than the Emperor, whom he had portrayed in a famous cartoon with the ghost of Napoleon appearing to him as he set out for the front. As the wheels of war drove more heavily on French soil and Paris was threatened with famine, one notices the growing desire that Germany should grant generous terms, mingled with a sense of impotence. This mood is well shown in the verses, "Between the Hosts," printed in the number of December 17: —

Like him of old, when the plague's arrows sped,
And life sank blighted by that scathing rain,
We stand between the living and the dead,
Lifting our hands and prayers to Heaven in vain.
While those that faint upbraid us from dim eyes,
And those that fight arraign us as they fall,
And French and German curses 'gainst us rise,
And, hating none, we rest unloved of all.

And so we stand with a divided soul,
Our sympathies for both at war within,
Now eager for the strong, to reach his goal,
More often wishing that the weak could win.
Only one feeling will not leave our minds,
Hate of this hate, and anguish of this woe;
And still war's scythe-set car rolls on and grinds
Guilty and guiltless, blent in overthrow.

And first we interpose a useless hand,
And then we lift an unavailing voice,
While still Death holds his way with sword and brand,
Still the Valkyrier make their fatal choice.
Still stormed on by ill-will from either side,
Be we content to do the best we can —
Give all that wealth, peace, goodwill can provide,
For war's poor victims who their helpers ban.

We have no right to wait for men's good word,
No right to pause before men's unearned hate:
No right to turn the ear, when threats are heard
Of what will, some day, be the neutral's fate.
"Do right and fear not" must be England's stay,
As it has been, let wrath say what it will.
So with love's unthanked labour let us pray,
And do our best to ease war's weight of ill!

### 1871 – and its Sequel

In the autumn the consideration shown by some German troops in Champagne is welcomed; by the end of the year the reply of Göttingen University to an appeal protesting against the threatened destruction of the scientific and art treasures of Paris – a document breathing the familiar spirit of unctuous rectitude – roused *Punch* to indignant satire in "A Deutscher Dove-Coo," the name of the principal signatory being Dove. So a month later the pseudo-Walpolian letters issued as "Strawberry Leaves" reflect the popular disgust with which German brutality was viewed, but at the same time the popular dislike of England's participating in the war. When the siege of Paris ended at the close of the month, *Punch* congratulated Thiers on his statesmanship, but rebuked the Parisians for their fickleness in heaping insult on their fallen Emperor. The Germans entered Paris, but in the cartoon of

March 11, and the accompanying verses "Vae Victis" a warning was addressed to Germany which has turned out to be a true prophecy. The triumph is admitted, but the sequel is clearly foreshadowed: —

Yet listen, conqueror, while the shade,
That should sit near thee in thy car,
Whispers how quickly laurels fade,
How swiftly shift the sands of war;
How, sixty-five years since, there came
A mightier Emperor than thou,
Upon Berlin to put the shame
Which thy hand puts on Paris now.

Even as thy heel is on their head,
That on thy folks' head set their heel,
So, ere threescore more years have sped,
The woe thou work'st thy sons may feel.
"Who smite with sword by sword shall fall,"
Holds for kings as for subjects true;
God's mills grind slow, but they grind small,
And he that grinds gives all their due.

The courtesy of Germany in coming to an amicable settlement over the loss of some British colliers sunk in the Thames is acknowledged; but anxiety as to her further aggressions was not allayed by her desire to possess Heligoland, and was undoubtedly enhanced by the publication of that brilliant realistic romance, *The Battle of Dorking*, while the fratricidal tragedy of the Commune, and the ruthless measures of suppression employed, augured ill for the recovery of France from the abasement of defeat. These events and the lessons they conveyed to England were not overlooked by *Punch*; they served to temper his light-heartedness with moods of misgiving. Yet the wonderful elasticity – due, as even official Republican historians admit, to the industrial prosperity created under the Second Empire – which enabled France to pay off what in those days seemed a crushing war indemnity long before the time fixed, emboldened *Punch* in the spring of 1873 to indulge once more in a prophecy of the reversal of the verdict of 1870. When the German occupation ended, France is shown undauntedly confronting Germany with the words: "Ha! We shall meet again."

Germany: "Farewell, Madame, and if – "

France: "Ha! We shall meet again!"

Germany was not the only foreign power that caused anxiety during the Gladstone administration of 1868-1874. Russia availed herself of the troubles of 1870 to revive the Near Eastern question by refusing to recognize her treaty obligations in the Black Sea; but the friction thus created was allayed by the compromise effected by the Black Sea Conference. And Russia's expedition to, and occupation of, Khiva in 1873 gave rise to further uneasiness. But non-intervention remained the order of the day throughout. The Ashanti expedition of 1873, whether in respect of its aim or its scale could not be regarded as forming an exception. But it furnished *Punch* with occasion for much plain-spoken criticism of War Office red tape and mismanagement. He saw in Sir Garnet Wolseley "the right man in the wrong place": —

In our deep penny wisdom, and horror of waste,
We shipped off the General minus his men,
So that if in a fix he should find himself placed,
He might merely lose time writing home back again.

### Gladstonian Legislation

Happily these misgivings were falsified in the sequel, and early in 1874 *Punch* was able to record, amongst other evidences of the satisfactory conclusion of the campaign, the arrival in England of King Coffee's State umbrella. The Gladstone administration may not have been efficient in the conduct of military operations, but in the sphere of Army Reform it deserved well of the country for the abolition of purchase, in the teeth of strong opposition from the Horse Guards' element, and the reorganization of the service on lines which substantially endured for a generation or more. For these improvements we have to thank a civilian, Cardwell, whose name is indissolubly associated with the changes brought about in 1870. The second instalment of Gladstone's scheme for the pacification of Ireland – the Land Act of 1870 – was supported by *Punch*, but did not achieve its purpose, since it left the vexed question of dual ownership unsettled; and it was another Irish measure – the University Bill – that brought the Government down. The legislative achievements of the Gladstone Administration had been immense and salutary in many directions, but the universality of its activities undoubtedly contributed to its growing unpopularity and lent force to Disraeli's famous electioneering cry of "plundering and blundering." *Punch*, who had in the main supported Gladstone, advised the Cabinet to resign after their defeat, but the Prime Minister resumed office temporarily and did not dissolve till January 1874.

Dr. Punch: "My dear young friends, you have done next to nothing this half. Therefore, a little task during the vacation will be good for you. You, Master Benjamin, must get up a 'definite policy.' You, Lowe, will write a paper on the 'Application of the *Screw*.' Ayrton, you will have to get by heart the whole 'Book of Etiquette.' Miall, you must attend Church regularly. Whalley, you're going to America – stay there! Plimsoll, you must learn to – ahem – moderate your *transports*. And as for you, William Ewart, the *idler* you are the better!"

### England 2,000 Years Hence

Much had been done in this, the central mid-Victorian age, to abate the evils and abuses which kept the "Two Nations" apart in earlier days. Yet at the opening of the new Disraelian *régime*, with its imperial aspirations, it may not be amiss to reproduce the verses, somewhat in the vein of Thackeray's musings on *Vanitas Vanitatum*, in which Punch bade farewell to the Comet of 1858: —

## ADIEU TO THE COMET

Dare a bold atom ask, with brain half dizzy,
What you will see two thousand years to come,
This planet still an ant's nest, black and busy,
Or an extinct volcano, white and dumb?

Will you behold, if keeping that appointment,
(Made for you, Sir, by Airy and by Hind)
Men still anointing Kings with holy ointment,
And Priests still leading, as the blind the blind.

Earth's choicest youth fierce rushing to the slaughter
That two crowned Fools may wreak their idiot pet;
Or wiser Christians' blood poured out like water,
That Jews may gamble with a nation's debt.

Will that day's Patriot be a mouthing truckler,
Setting proud Freedom's hymn to Freedom's dirge;
Will Law be still the rich man's shield and buckler,
The good man's terror, and the poor man's scourge?

Will you find Life a hot and blindfold scrimmage,
Men straining, struggling, scrambling, for red gold;
And Faith still worshipping the Golden Image
Reared by King Beelzebub in days of old?

Will all that world, with coronet and plaudit,
Reward Success, while Merit's scorned and passed;
Will man ignore that great and dreadful Audit,
When Lies shall fail – the first time, and the last?

Who knows? Off, glorious Star-horse, clothed with thunder —
Thou hast no right to make a light strain sad;
Yet he wrote well, who wrote in awe and wonder —
"An undevout Astronomer is mad."

# THE ROAD TO REFORM

Turning from England's international outlook to home affairs, we are confronted in the earlier stages of the period under review by the powerful negative influence of Lord Palmerston. A great Foreign Minister, a capable and humane administrator when he was at the Home Office, he had little belief in legislative remedies, and his refusal to grapple with Reform became progressively distasteful to his Liberal supporters. The old party system had been confused and shattered by the secession of the Peelites, as the result of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and Palmerston was maintained in power in fact, if not in name, by a coalition. His death ended the *régime* of masterly inactivity and cleared the way for the reconstruction of parties and the prolonged duel between the two great protagonists – Disraeli and Gladstone.

The Reform Bill of 1867, the chief constructive achievement of Disraeli's first Premiership, was a great advance on that of 1832, but the boon was robbed of much of its grace by the party strategy which was summed up in Lord Derby's famous phrase about "dishing the Whigs." Meanwhile Ireland had been forced into prominence by the outbreak of Fenianism, the Liberals had been reunited under Gladstone by his Irish Church policy and on his accession to power in 1868, we enter on the golden age of Gladstonian finance, with a low income tax – it dropped to 3d. in the year 1873 – high wages and industrial prosperity.

## Labour and Intervention

It was also, as we have seen, the age of non-intervention in foreign politics. Strange to say the strongest appeal to the Government to interfere by force of arms in a foreign quarrel was made by a deputation of working men, introduced by Professor Beesly, in May, 1863, with a view to expounding to the Prime Minister the resolutions in favour of Poland voted by a Trade Union Meeting in St. James's Hall: —

> One of the deputation, Mr. Cremer, a joiner, after Pam had given the deputation the requisite sympathetic and evasive answer, jovially observed, in plain English: —
>
> "We are men of action, my Lord, and have come to the conclusion that the only way to aid the Poles is to call on Russia to desist from her present conduct, and if she will not attend to that call, thrash her into compliance."

We append *Punch's* comments because they are typical of his gradual adoption of a more critical attitude towards the working man. It should be remembered that there was no Labour Party in the House of Commons until 1884. Before that time working men like Mr. Burt and Mr. MacDonald, the two miners returned in 1874, were returned by an arrangement with the Liberals and sat on the Liberal benches: —

> If the honest working men were so thoroughly well represented as to command a majority in the House of Commons, they would not, of course, want to thrash foreign powers into compliance with their demands, and tax others to pay the expense of their own war. Would they subject their wages, one and all, to Schedule D, then, in order to thrash Russia into liberating Poland? If so, they are fine fellows. If not, the parts performed by the handicraftsmen who joined in the deputation to Lord Palmerston are about on a par with those of Quince, the carpenter; Snug, the joiner; Bottom, the weaver; Flute, the bellows mender; Snout, the tinker; and Starveling, the tailor, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; our British carpenters, joiners, and other working men partake in a very delusive dream in the expectation that England is

> going to fight for the Poles. The income-tax makes cowards of us all, except the working men who do not pay it.

Many of the abuses and evils at which *Punch* had tilted so vigorously had been removed and remedied. The Corn Laws had been repealed; the Factory Acts had improved the conditions of labour. Obsolete and barbarous laws had been removed from the Statute Book. The Game Laws had been modified, and the administration of justice was marked by a humaner spirit. The principle that property had its duties as well as its rights was being steadily enforced, and, at the close of the period under review, class privilege was curtailed by the institution of open competition in the Civil Service and the abolition of purchase in the Army.

This brief and imperfect list may help to explain the conversion of *Punch*, the strenuous and impassioned advocate of the masses during the 'forties and 'fifties into the champion of the middle classes, and the very candid friend of the working man and Trade Unions as revealed in the later 'sixties and early 'seventies.

### The Gang System

Life on the land showed little signs of progress in the opening years of this period as illustrated by *Punch's* legal pillory. But the vagaries of clerical and aristocratic magistrates, culled with chapter and verse from provincial newspapers, which excited his wrath in 1858, almost disappear in the 'sixties, no doubt in consequence of a more humane interpretation of the Sunday Observance Act. In 1869, the debate on "The Recreation of the People" at the Church Congress revealed a growth of clerical tolerance and common sense which extorted the high approval of *Punch*. Still, the "Sunday Question" was far from being solved when it impelled the convivial *Punch* to print in the same year the companion cartoons contrasting his vision of what might be with the squalid reality of what was.

The incubus of Sabbatarianism, so far as it affected farmers and labourers, was at any rate much lightened in these years. But a far more serious evil was the gang system, under which a gang, chiefly of children, some as young as five, but mostly boys and girls under fourteen, were hired by a gang-master, who made as much as he could by taking them about the country and letting out their labour to farmers. It was not until 1867 that the good Lord Shaftesbury carried the Agricultural Gangs Act by the provisions of which no child under eight might be employed in an agricultural gang, and girls were placed under the protection of a licensed female gang-master. It was a modest instalment of reform, long since extended by our Elementary Education Acts; it is to the credit of *Punch* that he hailed it as placing a check on "a system so abominable that nothing but the intensest hypocrisy can call this a Christian nation while it exists." Against those who deliberately perpetuated ignorance by enslaving the young he carried on a truceless war. He was slower to condemn the ignorance of rural superstition when it could be paralleled by the credulity of the educated, and his observations on the sentence passed on a Devonshire shoemaker may be taken to heart fifty years later: —

> A paragraph in a contemporary, headed "Superstition in Devonshire," contains the following defence, addressed by an old shoemaker named Burch to the Barnstaple magistrates, before whom he was charged with assaulting an old woman by scratching her on the arm: – "Gentlemen, I have suffered five years' affliction from her. I have been under her power, and more than a hundred people advised me to fetch blood of that woman to destroy the spell. I have lost fourteen canaries, and from forty to fifty goldfinches; as fast as I got them they died, and I have had five complaints brought upon me at once."
>
> On hearing this declaration: —
>
> "The Mayor said that it was most extraordinary that such ignorance and superstition should prevail in the present enlightened age."
>
> In the present enlightened age persons of position in society and of education believe that they shake hands with spirits at dark *séances*. His Worship the Mayor

> of Barnstaple cannot have known that, or he would not have called the belief in witchcraft ignorance and superstition. If spiritualism is true, sorcery is possible, and, as there is no legal remedy against it, old Burch may be considered to have been justified in taking the law into his own hands for self-protection. Accordingly, since he was fined 2s. 6d. and costs, and, as he couldn't pay the money, sent to prison, perhaps a subscription to get him out of gaol, and make him amends for the trouble he has got into, will be raised among affluent and superior "spirit circles." For if one medium can float about a room, why may not another ride upon a broomstick?

Suffolk Farmer: "Two shill'ns a week more? Never! That'll never do! Out of the question!"

Suffolk Ploughman: "You're right there, Mas'r Wuzzles, sart'n sure! It 'on't dew. Our Sal sahy there'll be eight shillin' and threepence for bread, three and sixpence for rent and coal, and half-a-crown for club, clothes, boots and shoes for the owd 'oman, five kids, and me. No, that 'on't dew – that, that 'on't, b'um by. But it'll be enow to begin with!"

### The Old Man and the New Rich

Though no friend of feudalism, it is curious to note that in the vehement protest against enclosures, the closing of rights of way, etc., which he published in 1869, *Punch* is careful to distinguish between the old and the new rich. The closing of Nightingale Wood, between Southampton and Romsey, which "from time immemorial had been open by gracious permission to rural ramblers," was the occasion for an outburst culminating in the statement that "the brutes now fast closing the sylvan scenery of England to Englishmen, are, with the exception of an ignoble duke or two, rich rogues of speculators and financiers, who have ousted the old territorial aristocrats and squires, having bought fields and forests with the reward of their rascality."

In the selfishness of the "profiteer," as we now call him, *Punch* sees a sure provocative of Communism. He would clearly have applauded the distinguished but eccentric judge who in a later day erected on his country estate boards with the notice "Trespassers will *not* be prosecuted."

It remains to be added that the grievances of tenants and farm labourers, though far less frequently mentioned than in earlier years, did not altogether escape the vigilance of *Punch*. In 1861 he printed an ironic petition from a tenant to his landlord asking to be as comfortably housed as his horses. In 1868 he alludes to the scandalous housing conditions on the estate of a noble landlord in Essex – an estate which of recent years has been noted for its humane and liberal management.

### Prison v. Workhouse

Far more space, however, is devoted to the administration of the Poor Law, the economics and evils of Industrialism in the manufacturing centres, and the efforts of practical philanthropy. Throughout the 'sixties and right on into the early 'seventies *Punch* never wearies of insisting on the folly of making life in prison more comfortable than that in the workhouse. His campaign begins with an onslaught on the guardians of the Durham Union, who appeared to think that there "ought to be a correspondence between the spiritual nutriment of paupers and their material diet": —

> Under this impression it evidently was that they advertised the other day for a chaplain, offering the salary of £20 a year. Their advertisement was answered by a tender from one John Smart, who turned out to have been a clergyman's footman, and conceived that he had learned to exercise the functions of a parson from his master. He had, he said, "had a good deal of private practice, but not public."
>
> It is painful to find a respectable man-servant reduced to apply for employment in the capacity of a Workhouse chaplain. Cannot an inferior class of clergyman be ordained on purpose to administer to paupers a coarser kind of spiritual food? Deep indeed must be the humiliation experienced by a footman in

exchanging plush and gold lace for the canonicals of a chaplain whose salary is £20 a year.

It was the time of the garrotting scare. Hence the point of *Punch's* comment: —

The frying pan as compared with the fire is much less comfortable than the Model Prison in proportion to the Union-Workhouse.

The former of those two establishments relatively to the latter is considerably milder than Purgatory may be imagined to be, in contrast with the other place which the prisoners mentioned. Quod, in comparison with the Abode of Want, is quite a tolerable sort of Limbo. What is the moral of this arrangement, in the apprehension of the classes who have to live by their own exertions? Whatever you do, keep out of the Workhouse. Garrotte anybody rather than apply to the Union.

*Punch* still disapproved of the gallows; the strongest argument in its favour was the manifest truth that the cheapest thing you could do with a worthless rascal was to hang him. But he saw a better way in rendering penal servitude exemplary: —

At any rate, for the prevention of garrotte robberies and all other crimes, one step might be taken somewhat analogous to the treatment proverbially recommended for that other complaint, the influenza, which is just now likewise so prevalent. "Stuff a cold," says the popular adage, "and starve a cough." At present the moral reverse of this rule is observed in penal economy. You stuff a convict and starve a pauper. Wouldn't it probably answer better to allow paupers sufficient food and put criminals on low diet? Thus you may be enabled to get on without the gallows.

It was stated, and accepted by *Punch* in 1860, that since 1856 there had been a decrease in crime of 25 per cent. owing to the establishment of Reformatories. But the series of papers in the *Morning Post* in 1863 on the Middlesex Industrial School at Feltham – where the boys were subjected to a devotional drill, made to lift and lower their hands in prayer and sing grace "to the sharp order of a master," and mercilessly caned and birched by a tall, muscular drill master for acts of insubordination – gave *Punch* furiously to think: —

The Middlesex Model School at Feltham is an institution for the reformation of young thieves, but its arrangements for developing the religious sentiment in the youthful mind appear to be such as may be conceived to have been devised for mutual edification by the inmates of an asylum for idiots.

Flogging is a fine thing; but how strange that its application is limited to boys and soldiers and sailors: to children of tender age and members of an honourable profession! Wouldn't it be at least as suitable to garrotters, and even to cruel swindlers, whose exemplary torture, in comparison with the misery caused by their crimes, would be the lesser evil of the two?

The painful disclosures resulting from inquiries into workhouse conditions are repeatedly referred to and make strange reading in a comic journal. At a meeting held in Willis's Rooms by the Earl of Carnarvon and the Archbishop of York early in 1866, the brutalities to which the sick poor were subject in the infirmaries of most of the London workhouses were illustrated in such hideous detail, that *Punch* declared "it would be cheaper to put paupers out of their misery than it was to let them die in misery, and it would at least be just as moral."

The parsimony, the self-indulgence and the barbarous procrastination of the guardians of St. Pancras are castigated a few months later, when a motion to postpone the consideration of the appointment of an extra paid nurse for three months was carried by six votes to five. There were forty guardians; but most of them were absent at the quarterly dinner of the Burial Board. *Punch*, therefore,

had good excuse for saying that "these nine-and-twenty parochial humbugs, instead of minding their business, were engaged in stuffing their most ungodly digestive organs with funeral baked meats."

### Ignorant Guardians

The Derby-Disraeli administration had come into power in the previous month. So when Mr. Gathorne Hardy had succeeded Mr. C. P. Villiers as President of the Poor Law Board, the alteration in the methods of procedure in regard to investigating workhouse abuses provoked a well-timed and damaging attack on the attempt to whitewash Bumbledom. It is a dreary subject, but the principles which ought to govern a Departmental inquiry could not be better expressed. And *Punch* was happily able to fortify his humanitarian zeal with ridicule when, in quoting from the description of the horrors of Walsall Workhouse given by the *Lancet*, he gives two stories showing that workhouse mismanagement in those days, at any rate, was largely the result of crass ignorance: —

> It was suggested in one workhouse board-room that a bath ought unquestionably to be supplied, when a guardian got up and stated "he were agin it." He never had one in his house in his life, and he didn't see why a pauper should enjoy what he didn't want. On another occasion the absence of a proper light at the entrance door was dwelt upon, and a gas-lamp was proposed. This was seconded by another worthy, who, approving of the gas-lamp, said, "and I'd have it lighted with ile."
>
> Now the first of these gentlemen may be a regular saint. He never bathed, and he regarded his neighbour as himself. To be sure, if he was a saint he was also a pig; but swinishness has not seldom been combined with sanctity. The other guardian, who didn't know better than that a gas-lamp could be lighted with "ile," was himself so destitute of all enlightenment that he may be excused as a simply irresponsible clown.

The euphemisms of Poor Law inspectors, who used colourless words such as "inadequate" and "insufficient" when "barbarous," "brutal" and "horrible" would have been nearer the mark, had been exposed by the *British Medical Journal* in 1868. If destitution was not a crime, why, asked *Punch*, was the pauper treated worse than the criminal? These abuses, in the exposure of which he joined hands with serious medical journals, explain and justify the intense and even passionate desire of self-respecting poor people to avoid the Union.

Though no lover of Jews, *Punch* in 1869 contrasts Jewish guardians favourably with their so-called Christian brother officials. Dickens's picture of old Betty in *Our Mutual Friend* is hardly overdrawn, and a year after Dickens's death *Punch* was still contrasting the comforts of prison life with the usual conditions of life amongst the submerged poor.

The State had not yet awakened to a sense of its responsibilities to the "legal poor." Much was being done by practical philanthropy, and it may be fairly said that no appeal to *Punch* for assistance or encouragement was left unanswered. Wholehearted in his support of Ragged Schools, he comes forward in 1858 to plead the cause of their logical corollary – Ragged Playgrounds: —

> Deprive a boy of healthy, fair and open games, and you drive him to resort to unwholesome, foul and sneaking ones. Deny him any playground but a hole-and-corner court, and you'll find that he'll betake himself to hole-and-corner games in it. In default of wholesome cricket, he'll become a dab at chuck-farthing; and will get from pitch and toss to still worse kinds of time-slaughter.
>
> If we mean then to teach the ragged young idea, we must give heed somewhat to the ragged body likewise. And the first thing to be done is to provide it with proper play space.

*Punch*, therefore, may be regarded as one of the pioneers of the admirable "Play Centres" movement. In the same year we find him applauding the conversion of an old thieves' public house in Westminster into the headquarters of the Ragged Schools, and appealing for funds to maintain it. Drinking fountains had been established in Manchester and Liverpool, and Punch expresses a desire to see them introduced into London. Here, at any rate, he was prepared to welcome the saying that what Lancashire thinks to-day, England will think to-morrow.

In the domain of social reform *Punch's* great bugbears were patronage, condescension and misplaced missionary efforts. Towards Exeter Hall philanthropy the old and rooted hostility remains throughout this period, and in 1865 we find *Punch* pleading vigorously for a greater interest in social reform at home to supplement the fashionable enthusiasm for foreign missions. For missionaries of the type of Livingstone he had nothing but praise, but that "perfect Christian gentleman," as Sir Bartle Frere described him, had severed his connexion with the London Missionary Society in 1857, and thenceforth had been subjected to "much hostile criticism from narrow-minded people."

Little London Arab: "Please 'm, ain't we black enough to be cared for?"

**(With *Mr. Punch's* compliments to Lord Stanley.)**

The benefactions of George Peabody roused *Punch's* interest from the very first. In 1862 and 1863 his pages abound in questions as to what was being done with the Peabody Fund. But in 1864 the first block of "Peabody dwellings" was opened in Spitalfields, soon followed by others in Chelsea, Bermondsey, Islington and Shadwell; and in 1866, on learning that Mr. Peabody had increased his gift to the London poor from £150,000 to a quarter of a million, *Punch* was ashamed at the lack of public recognition of his generosity. The letter from a "London correspondent" is more than an expression of gratitude – it is a valuable contribution to the study of Victorian sociology.

## MR. PEABODY'S GIFT

> "I will confess to you that I indulged myself with the thought that it would be a graceful conclusion to the reference sure to be made to American affairs in the Queen's speech, if a few words of cordial recognition were devoted to the munificence of this great American citizen. Of course, I was immediately ashamed of myself for thinking such a thing possible; and I hope you will overlook the ignorance of etiquette, routine and precedent – the shadowy creatures that hold us back when we are yearning to obey some noble impulse – betrayed by such a disordered fancy. When I read the Speech, all feelings of disappointment about Mr. Peabody evaporated, for I found that from the beginning to the end of the Royal oration there was not a line to commemorate the name and the fame of the Great Minister [Lord Palmerston] lying so near in the sacred silence of the Abbey. The shadowy creatures were again appalled by my audacious expectation, and held out menacingly a noose of ruddy tape.
>
> "I then waited to see whether Mr. Childers, in proposing a public loan in aid of the erection of houses for the labouring poor, would introduce Mr. Peabody's name. He did, and handsomely; and I am not without hope that before the vessel of State gets into the chopping seas that lie in its track, the captain, or perhaps the first lieutenant, may say something on this American question which would give unqualified satisfaction on both sides of the Atlantic. You will not misunderstand me. You will not suppose that when I speak of thanking Mr. Peabody, I am thinking of gold boxes, or addresses beautifully engrossed on vellum and enclosed in polished

caskets, or public banquets, or services of plate. His gift towers above all ordinary gifts, as St. Paul's rises over all meaner edifices; but it does seem to me that it should be acknowledged and gratefully recorded by the voice of the eloquent speaker and the pen of the eloquent writer, be it in Parliament or in the pulpit, from the public platform or in the columns of the omnipotent Press. To some extent this has been done, but not commensurate with the magnitude, the rarity, and the disinterestedness of the gift.

"When I read the unprofitable proceedings of Convocation, the discussions about canons and catechisms, rubrics and conscience clauses, I think to myself that Mr. Peabody may be doing more for the souls of the poor, by providing for their bodies, than both Houses of Convocation will do, though they should sit to the end of the century, and enjoy a fresh gravamen at each sitting.

"If I were the Bishop of London, out of the fund with which his name will be imperishably associated, in every district containing a Peabody block of buildings, or dwellings for the poor, such as Alderman Waterlow understands how to build, I would provide a working clergyman, sure that he would find eager listeners in men and women, translated from styes of filth and disease, and degradation, to homes abounding in cleanliness, and health, and comfort, through the direct bounty or beneficent example of the man who has arisen to the rescue and deliverance of the poor of London – George Peabody.

"Perhaps the best commemoration of their benefactor by the Peabody settlements would be a day's holiday in the country every summer, on his birthday, if it falls in one of the leafy months."

The neglect of which *Punch* complains cannot be laid to the door of the Queen. When Mr. Peabody was about to return to America in March, 1866, she acknowledged his munificence in an autograph letter, saying how gladly she would have conferred upon him either a baronetcy or the Grand Cross of the Bath (both of which he declined), and asking his acceptance of a miniature portrait of herself.

Peabody's gifts to London amounted in all to £500,000, and set an example which native millionaires have done well to follow. But he was an even more munificent benefactor to his own country, where he gave at least a million to education. When he died in London in 1869 *Punch*, in his memorial verses, contrasted the feelings aroused in the two nations with those of the "mourners" of most rich men: —

No common mourners here such office fill —
A mother and a daughter, grand of frame,
Albeit one in blood, oft twain in will,
And jealous either of the other's fame.

But by this bier they pause from jar and boast,
Urged by no rivalry but that which strives
Him that lies here to love and honour most,
Ranking his life highest among the lives.

Of men that in their tongue and blood claim part:
And well may child and mother mourn for one
Who loved mother and child with equal heart,
Nor left, for either, Love's best works undone.

The beneficent use of great wealth on a great scale seldom evades ultimate acknowledgment. *Punch* said no more in his tribute to Peabody than that great and humane American deserved. But minor endeavours were not overlooked, even where they led to no immediate results. Such, for example, was the proposal of F. D. Maurice and others to found a Working Women's College in 1864. Classes for women had been held at the Working Men's College from 1855 to 1860. The larger scheme was not realized, but has been revived within the last year by the establishment of the Working Women's College at Beckenham. Such again was the establishment of the London Dressmaking Company in 1865, under the patronage of Lord Shaftesbury and the Bishops of London and Oxford, to which *Punch* gave a vigorous puff-preliminary in his editorial columns.

In 1858 the fate of Emily Druce had shown that the plea of Hood's "Song of the Shirt" was in danger of being forgotten. But sweated labour was not confined to the cheap clothing trade. In 1863 West-End milliners came under the microscope of Parliament and *Mr. Punch*: —

> Public indignation has been excited by the accounts of the death of Mary Anne Walkley, a girl employed by Madame Elise, of Regent Street, wife of one Isaacson, and a notorious dressmaker. "Long hours in an overcrowded room and sleeping in an ill-ventilated bedroom," said Sir George Grey, "caused the young girl's death." What is to be done? Lord Shaftesbury in the Lords, and Mr. Bagwell in the Commons, called attention to the system under which such girls are killed; and the man Isaacson, who seems to fill a similar office to that of Mr. Mantalini, and who writes English of which that gent would be proud, issued a letter full of impertinence and bad grammar, in defence of Mrs. Isaacson's place. Thereupon the parish requested other testimony, and Dr. Lankester examined the premises, and found the dormitories rather better and the workroom rather worse than had been expected.

Madame La Modiste: "We would not have disappointed your Ladyship, at any sacrifice, and the robe is finished *à merveille*."

These tragedies and the efforts which they prompted serve as a convenient transition to a more general survey of Labour problems, Labour legislation, and Labour organization and representation as they are revealed and discussed in the pages of *Punch* from 1857 to 1874. Under the recently established and rapidly extending joint reign of steam and coal, it was only natural that rural life should recede into the background. Railway construction had drawn off many labourers from agriculture, and the influx of labour into the manufacturing districts continued apace. In the prospectus of the Dressmaking Company given above, the work-hours are given as ten. But in 1859 the movement among working-men for a nine-hours' day had already been started. Strikes were common, but *Punch* discourages them on the ground that the men always lost in the long run, and that the "agitators" – the name "Labour Leaders" had not yet emerged – were the real criminals. The *Examiner* took the same line in 1861 when it wrote "the submission of workmen to the tyranny of their Unions is at once one of the most curious and lamentable phenomena of our time." Yet the existence of genuine distress is not denied, and in a little parable in verse entitled "Men and Bees," profit-sharing between masters and men is recommended as the true solution.

On what was still, in spite of Factory Acts and other measures, the greatest blot on our industrial system – the employment of child labour —*Punch* spoke with no uncertain voice. Early in 1860 he gives Lord Brougham a good mark for taking up the question in the Lords: —

> Lord Brougham, always true to his humane instincts, brought before the Lords the case of the young children employed in Bleach Works. It is a cruel one. Infants of seven and eight years old are at work for eighteen hours, and are sometimes four nights without sleep. The brutalities by which the poor little children are kept sufficiently awake for the purposes of their task-masters are shocking. Years ago,

> when the cruelties of the climbing-boy trade were exposed in the Lords, a noble Lord told a good story, made their Lordships laugh, and by getting the Bill thrown over for a year, left a new batch of children to the mercies of the Sweep. There was nothing of this kind to-night, and Lord Granville promised information. He will be good enough to remember that Lord Brougham *has* tendered information, which proves that our friend Mammon is, as usual, doing the work of Moloch.
>
> Climbing Boys and Girls

Here, at any rate, there is no sympathy for the greedy capitalist, who comes off as badly as the "agitator." The mention of the chimney-sweeps is timely. In 1864 the employment of the climbing boys had been prohibited by Act of Parliament for twenty years. Yet the Act had been so systematically evaded that in that year more than 3,000 children were still kept at labour in that filthy and unhealthy form of slavery. The subject was brought up in the House of Commons in April by Mr. Digby Seymour, and furnished *Punch* with an excuse for assailing those "sentimental and pious ladies" who "prefer subscribing to societies for converting little Hottentots to using influence to suppress the atrocities committed upon little white children at home." A month later Lord Shaftesbury intervened in the Lords: the details which he brought forward were too shocking for reproduction, but "fine ladies who mew over the sorrows of the Circassians, and devout ladies who send missionaries to the Chinese, had better know what is done in their own houses, and within a few feet of their own beds, with the children of white English folk."

The kidnapping of little boys had been revived, and at a meeting held in York the following agreement was signed by the assembled sweeps: —

> "We, the undersigned Master Sweeps of the City of York, mutually agree, from and after this date, not to employ Climbing Boys and Girls in our business; that the Act of Parliament on their behalf made should be strictly complied with; and that we ought no longer to risk the heavy penalties it prescribes, both against householders and ourselves."

It thus appears that, in York at least, the employment of climbing girls had become almost or quite as common as that of climbing boys.

Lord Shaftesbury's "Chimney Sweepers Regulation Act" (1864) provided that a chimney sweeper convicted of causing or allowing any person under the age of twenty-one to ascend or descend a chimney or enter a flue for the purpose of sweeping it or extinguishing a fire might be sent to prison for a term not exceeding six months with or without hard labour. But master chimney sweeps still continued to "snap their sooty fingers at the law." In the issue of March 2, 1867, *Punch* reproduces the following business "card": —

> "William Burges, Chimney Sweeper, No. 36 Bolton Street, Chorley, flatters himself with having boys of the best size for such branch of business suitable for a Tunnel or Chimney, and that it is now in his power to render his assistance in a more extensive manner than he usually has done. He also carries his boys from room to room occasionally, to prevent them staining or marking any room floor with their feet."

In short, there was good ground for the complaint that while a great deal had been said about our working men, but little notice had been taken of our working children. A discussion of the "half-time system" at a working men's club in which another enlightened and benevolent peer, Lord Lyttelton, took part, is accordingly welcomed as sensible and opportune: —

> "By this system," said Lord Lyttelton, "which compelled every parent who chose to send his child to work also to send him or her half the day to school, a very useful compromise had been effected between the demands of labour and

education… This system, as carried out in the manufacturing towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, had resulted in the increased education, and consequent improved life and conduct, of their inhabitants, as had been manifested during the late cotton famine, and in many other ways."

Gentlemen of England who live at home at ease perhaps have little notion of how hard some children work, and how needful it appears to make some effort to relieve them. From a Blue-Book he produced at the meeting we have mentioned, Lord Lyttelton

"Gave an instance of a little girl engaged in a brickyard near Birmingham from 6 a. m. to 8 p. m., only having fifteen minutes for breakfast, and thirty minutes for dinner, no time for tea, and during one day she would have to catch and throw to her neighbour fifteen tons of bricks."

What a mercy it would be to such poor little working children if their fathers were compelled to send them every day to school!

*White Slaves in the Black Country*

Towards the end of the same year the Town Council of Sheffield met to consider the report of the Children's Employment Commission relative to the overworking of children in the trades of that town: —

According to that Report, a boy, only nine years old, living at Wadsley, four or five miles from Sheffield, was obliged by his father to work as cellar-boy in one of the furnaces, on most days of the week from six in the morning to six or seven in the evening, and on Saturdays from three in the morning till three in the afternoon. This enforced labour at a high temperature would, if only occasional, appear to be equivalent to a somewhat long compulsory innings in the Turkish bath. Imposed nearly every day, it may be considered by some who do not consider too deeply, to constitute a combination of the Turkish bath with Turkish tyranny, and tyranny about as barbarous as ever was practised in Turkey.

The "Good Parson" (to applicant for instruction in the Night School): "Have you been confirmed, my boy?"

Boy (hesitating): "Please, sir – I – don't know."

Parson: "You understand me; has the Bishop laid his hands on you?"

Boy: "Oh, no, sir, but his Keeper have, sir – very often, sir!"

Naturally, such outspoken comments gave offence, and in 1866 and again in 1868 *Punch* was very much in the black books of the Black Country for what he said on the state of morals, manners and education among the workers of that region of coal and iron. The controversy began with some lines, "The Queen in the Black Country," which were inspired by the inauguration of Prince Albert's statue at Wolverhampton. These gave pain to certain susceptible inhabitants of that town. *Punch's* reply was to quote from the report of the Children's Employment Commission of 1864 on the trades in the Wolverhampton district, showing that all the large employers lived far away from the workpeople they employed; that a few ministers of religion were almost the only representatives of the upper class resident in the "Black Country"; that large numbers of children, youths, young persons and women worked the same long hours as the men, from 6 or 7 a. m. to 9, 10 and 11 p. m.; that among them little girls were often kept bellows-blowing fourteen hours a day.

Laws to Protect Children

In January, 1868, *Punch* was accused of being a Rip Van Winkle, who had been asleep for half a century, because when Bishop Selwyn was translated from New Zealand to Lichfield he had published some verses ending up with the question, "What's the savage o'er sea to the savage at

home?" His answer was to say that he wished he *could*, like Rip Van Winkle, fall asleep not over the Black Country only, but over every manufacturing district of England, to wake in fifty years and find education for ignorance, thrift and comfort for improvidence and squalor, gentleness and refinement for coarseness and brutality among men and women; health and happiness for sickliness and suffering, premature decrepitude and deadening of mind among children. But the facts were too strong for him: —

> We never said, or meant to say, that things were as bad in the Black Country now as they were fifty, forty, or twenty years ago. We are quite ready to believe, with a more courteous and kindly Black Country correspondent than Mr. Lawley, that much has been done, and that much is doing, for religion, education and civilization in that region as everywhere else.

If *Mr. Punch* has been unfair to the Black Country, he has, at least, been sinning in good company. Hear what Mr. Justice Keating spoke from the Bench, in a Black Country case, not three weeks ago: —

> "I cannot help noticing the most deplorable state of matters shown by the evidence of these girls. We call ourselves a Christian people and pride ourselves upon being a civilized nation. These two girls have said that they could neither read nor write; that they had never in their lives been at school, church or chapel; that they had never heard of the Bible; and, as the learned counsel had suggested, in all probability they had never heard of a Divine Being. We send out missionaries to the heathen, but what avails all this when we see such a state of things at home?"

The introduction of the Metalliferous Mines Bill in the Lords in July, 1872, prompted *Punch* to express his ironic satisfaction: —

> Would you be surprised to hear that we already protect women and children to this extraordinary extent? No children under 15 are sent down into the mines, and women are not worked more than twelve hours, and – will you believe it? – not at all on Sundays.

In the same month the Lords read a second time the Bill for protecting children against those who cruelly train them to become acrobats. There is hardly a single mention throughout all these years of efforts to secure humane treatment for working children in which the honoured name of Lord Shaftesbury is not prominent, as it was in this debate. There was, as *Punch* says, no sentimentality about this interference, and we ought not to leave children to be tortured for the delectation of the lower class of folks, well-dressed or not, who are pleased by unnatural acrobatic feats.

It gave *Punch* no pleasure to write sermons on Blue Books, least of all when the Blue Books only gave him the blues. He usually abstained from the discussion of merely painful subjects. But just indignation often forced him to make exceptions. Thirty years after the passage of the first, and nine after the passage of the second Chimney Sweepers Regulation Act, a very bad case of evasion occurred in the North of England: —

> We take this paragraph from the *Pall Mall Gazette*: —
>
> "Chimney-sweeps, who continue, in defiance of the law, to employ 'climbing boys' may take warning from a case which has been tried at Durham. A Gateshead chimney-sweeper was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for the manslaughter of an unhappy little lad who was suffocated in attempting to carry out his orders in clearing a flue."
>
> Apart from the individual ruffianism in this case, *Mr. Punch* asks whether the Act which was intended to deliver little children from the most hideous cruelties is becoming a dead letter in any part of the kingdom. Is there any other place than

Gateshead where little lads are rammed into foul flues to be suffocated? The present generation may not remember the struggle that had to be fought out, over and over, before the children could be protected. It had to be waged against habit, prejudice, greed, ridicule; but the victory was won. James Montgomery,[1] the poet, with one ghastly but damaging volume, The *Chimney Sweep's Magazine and Climbing Boy's Album*, gave thousands a nightmare that lasted for years, but he carried the Act. There was a poem in the book, too, by Blake, the painter, that did yeoman's service. We got the Act, and believed that the system of atrocious cruelty was at an end. But the above paragraph wakes painful doubts.

We should call the sentence on the fellow who killed the child ridiculously mild, could anything ridiculous connect itself with such a theme. We wish that this master chimney-sweeper of Gateshead could have been sentenced to two years' imprisonment, varied by twenty sound lashes with the cat every quarter day, except the last, when he should have had fifty, as a parting testimonial of the public sense of his character.

*A Child Heroine*

This was written in the issue of March 15, 1873. Just a year later, at the close of the Ashanti campaign, an appeal was made, and not in vain, to *Punch* to recognize the heroism of another working child: —

## A TEN-YEAR-OLD MARTYR

"Dear Mr. Punch,

"There will be a great deal of war-paint going round soon, in the shape of titles, honours, and decorations, official rewards for 'killing, slaying and burning.' Will you give a decoration to the little motherless girl of ten, Louisa Row,[2] who 'undertook the cooking' for her father, 'a labourer,' and his family, and died in the execution of her duty?

"She has not killed anyone, black or white, except herself; she has not burned anyone's huts, or anyone's villages – she has only burned herself. She will get no glory, unless you, with a stroke of your pen, will put one little star of honour upon her unknown grave.

*"The Author of Olive Varcoe."*

Will our correspondent accept this inscription for her poor little martyr's tombstone?

Duty's small Servant, without prize or praise,
How soon on thy hard life hath death come down!
Take this brief record of thy childish days —
Gold, tried with fire, makes the best Martyr's Crown.

[1] No mention is made in the otherwise full and sympathetic notice of James Montgomery in the D.N.B. of this, not the least honourable of the services of that Sheffield worthy. Though his verse, especially in the epic vein, was unequal, the D.N.B., differing from Lord Jeffrey who slated it in the *Edinburgh*, agrees with *Punch* in according James Montgomery the title of poet, reserving that of "Poetaster" to Robert or "Satan" Montgomery, who also dealt in epics, and was the victim of Macaulay's famous and ferocious castigation in the *Quarterly*.

[2] "A painful death by burning has happened at Torquay. Louisa Row, aged ten, lost her mother a few weeks ago, and undertook the cooking for her father, a labourer, and the rest of the family. She had well performed the duties devolving upon her since her mother's death, until one day she went too near the grate, her frock was ignited, and she was terribly burned. The poor child lived several days after the accident. At the inquest a verdict of 'Accidental death' was returned."

*Punch's* record as the champion of the working children leaves little room for criticism. And we have seen in several of the extracts given above that his severest censures are directed against the employers of labour, the greed of gain, the worship of Mammon. But if he cannot be convicted of partiality to capital, he was not always fair to labour. Even in his most democratic days he showed a distrust of "delegates." The working man's grievances were admitted, but his salaried spokesmen, when they were drawn from his own order, were condemned, with very few exceptions, as untrustworthy mischief-makers. How acute this distrust had now become may be gathered from the acrimonious article which appears in 1861 under the heading "A Dig at the Delegates": —

> A Delegate is generally a lazy, idle lout, who likes to sit and talk much better than to work; and who, considering himself as being "gifted with the gab," tries to foster small dissensions and causes of dispute, that he may have the pleasure of hearing himself prate about them. In other words, he is a drone that goes buzzing about the beer-shops, and living upon the honey that the working bees have toiled for. His business is to set a man against his master, and to keep afloat the Unions that tend to nurture Strikes, by giving men a false idea of their own strength, and underrating the resources and resistance of employers. Having duped the shallow-pated to elect him as their mouthpiece and being paid by them to lead a lazy life in looking to what he is pleased to call their interests, the Delegate grows fat on their starvation and their Strikes, and what is death to them becomes to him the means of life. Fancied grievances and most unreasonable demands the Delegate endeavours to encourage and support, for squabbling brings him into notice and his tongue into full play, and raises his importance in the pothouse-haunting world. A claim for ten hours' pay for only nine hours' work is just the sort of trade demand that a Delegate delights in; for he knows that its injustice must prevent its being listened to, and he will have the chance of swigging nightly, gratis, pots of beer while denouncing the iniquity of rapacious masters, in all the frothy eloquence of a public-house harangue.
>
> As nobody but a fool would submit to have his earnings eaten into by a sloth, it is the business of the Delegate to clap a stop on cleverness, and keep the brains of working men down to the muddle-pated level of those who are his tools. He, of course, fears the quick sight of any workman of intelligence, lest it may see through his iniquitous designs. He, therefore, gets the best hands marked on the Black List, and does the utmost in his power to reduce the active, skilful and industrious working man to the standard of the stupid, slothful, sluggish sot.

Mrs. North: "You see, Mr. Lincoln, we have failed utterly in our course of action; I want peace, and so, if you cannot effect an amicable arrangement, I must put the case into other hands."

There have always been people who trade on discontent, and would find their occupation gone were it removed. But to represent such motives as animating the majority of Trade Union delegates was a gross exaggeration; and it was both unfair and unjust to draw so hard and fast a distinction between the rank and file of the working classes and those whom they chose to represent them. The weakness of *Punch's* position was severely tested during the war of North and South in America and the Lancashire cotton famine, of which that war was the cause. Just as *Punch* failed to recognize the existence of idealism in the leaders of the North, and consistently maligned and misrepresented Lincoln until his death, so he failed to render justice to the idealism of the cotton operatives, who espoused a cause which was not only unpopular and unfashionable, but the promotion of which entailed the maintenance of that blockade which caused widespread distress and misery in Lancashire. *Punch's* attitude towards America in the earlier stages of the conflict showed a complete inability to comprehend the great issues involved, and an impartial dislike of both sides tempered by a sentimental leaning towards the South. It must be remembered that at this time the cause of the South was

favoured by nearly all classes, that it appealed to Mr. Gladstone; that the Duke of Argyll and John Bright were almost the only statesmen who backed the North; and that amongst London newspapers of any weight the *Spectator* stood almost alone on that side. *Punch's* reading of the war at the close of 1861 is shown in the cartoon which represents King Cotton as Prometheus, bound with the chains of Blockade, and with the American Eagle preying on his vitals. The verses which accompany the picture emphasize the suicidal folly of the eagle, but the question of slavery or the Union is not even mentioned. A fortnight later the point of the "other [Cotton] Kings" is explained by another cartoon in which John Bull, addressing the combatants, says, "If you like fighting better than business, I shall deal at the other shop."

Here the verses drive home the *argumentum ad pocketum* in the crudest way. Cousin Jonathan is told not to be an ass, or "bid Mrs. Britannia stop ruling the wave": —

> We'll break your blockade, Cousin Jonathan, yet,
> Yes, darn our old stockings, C. J., but we will.
> And the cotton we'll have, and to work we will set
> Every Lancashire hand, every Manchester mill.
>
> We're recruiting to do it – we'll make no mistakes:
> There's a place they call India just over the way;
> There we're raising a force which, Jerusalem, snakes!
> Will clean catawampus your cruisers, C. J.

"Distressed Millionaires"

Events entirely failed to justify these truculent words. A year later the cotton famine was at its height, and an appeal for funds is headed "Welly Clamming," with the explanation, "Everywhere we hear this, the Lancashire Doric for 'nearly starving.'" *Punch* applauds the zeal of the Quakers in relieving the distress caused by famine, fever and frost, and simultaneously reproduces this extraordinary advertisement from the *Manchester Guardian*: —

> *Travel*: A gentleman, whose son, aged 17, is thrown out of occupation by the Cotton Famine, would be glad to meet with one or two other young gentlemen to accompany his son on a Tour, for five or six months, in the Mediterranean or elsewhere.
>
> Address F. 127 at the Printers.

The advertiser, according to *Punch*, appears to be "one of those distressed millionaires who, because their mills have ceased working, declare themselves destitute mill-owners, and devolve on the squires and farmers and the British public the duty of rescuing their unemployed workpeople from starvation."

When a ship was sent to Liverpool bearing the contributions of the United States to the relief of Lancashire in February, 1863, *Punch* welcomed the gift without reserve, as linking the two worlds anew by the chain of fraternal goodwill. But a very different spirit is shown in his acid comments on the debate in the House of Commons initiated by W. E. Forster, who attacked the Government for not interfering to prevent ships of war being supplied by our builders to the Confederates, and said that we incurred great danger of war. The facts and the sequel fully justified Forster's protest, but *Punch* was not content with backing up Palmerston's defence of the Government, and treated with contempt and ridicule Bright's insistence on the sympathy of the working classes with the North: —

> Here it may be mentioned that Mr. Bright[3] alluded in his speech to a meeting held the day before at the St. James's Hall, where he had been in the chair, and a crowded assembly of workmen testified the utmost sympathy with the North. This meeting is grandiloquently described by the Yankee organ here, but shall describe itself for *Mr. Punch's* readers. It was chiefly composed of Trade Union men, and when a person who had chosen to be free and act for himself ventured to speak, although on the same side as the other orators, these lovers of liberty interrupted him with cries of "He's not a Society man!" Mr. Bright made a fervid and eloquent speech in favour of the North, and a shoemaker came next, who abused *Mr. Punch*, said "that a monster in human shape had been guest of the Lord Mayor," and that "the Devil, in the shape of *The Times* newspaper, was carrying out an infernal purpose." A joiner then called Lord Palmerston a liar, and a Professor Beestley, or some such name, attacked the "wicked press," meaning the respectable journals. An address to Mr. Lincoln was agreed to, assailing the "infamous *Times*," the "arrogant aristocracy," the "diabolical" South, our "unscrupulous moneyocracy," and the "infamous rebellion," and terminating with some gushing bosh about the vivifying Sun of Liberty. This document is penned in *New York Herald* style, and probably owes its origin to Yankee inspiration. To this kind of meeting, and this kind of language, Mr. Bright referred, complacently, in the House of Commons. The North must be in a bad way when such allies are coveted.
>
> *Libelling Lincoln*

The South was in a much worse way when a "respectable journal" was reduced to explaining away the undoubted and disinterested support of the North by Lancashire cotton spinners and other British working men as Trade Union tyranny, to say nothing of that worst infirmity of political controversy – the vulgar perversion of an opponent's name. *Punch* was on stronger ground in criticizing the spread-eagling of the northern Press, as when the *New York Herald* declared that: —

> They (the American people) know that when this rebellion began the aristocrats of England took advantage of the chance to destroy us, and joined heart and hand with the slaveholding rebels. They know that this rebellion was born in Exeter Hall, nurtured by the English aristocracy, armed from English arsenals, and supported by English sympathy and assistance.

*Punch*, though no lover of Exeter Hall, could not refrain from ironically vindicating its innocence, and makes for the rest some good debating points against the *Herald*. But there is little "neutrality" in his statement that Southern loyalty was as staunch as that of the North, "though not so truculent or atrocious"; and when he falls foul of the Yankees – a word invariably used in a disparaging sense – for calling the confederates "rebels," he did not know that the magnanimous Lincoln would never allow them to be called by that name in his presence. He is made to do so, however, in *Punch's* parody of one of Lincoln's speeches – a truly lamentable performance, in which the President claims dictatorial powers, calls for whipcord to whip the rebels, abuses the "rotten old world," talks with the utmost cynicism of the blacks, and in general behaves like a vulgar buffoon. The true Lincoln is to be found in the immortal Second Inaugural delivered on March 4, 1865.

As for the British working men, though *Punch* had undoubtedly endeavoured to discount the strength of the tide of feeling which continued to run strongly against the slave power, in spite of

[3] The variations of view in *Punch's* estimate of John Bright form an interesting study. In the main, while admiring his courage, *Punch* found him too fond of asserting an impracticable independence. The masses distrusted him as a cottonocrat; the middle-classes as an out-and-out democrat and therefore an advocate of mob-rule. Punch himself had described *Bright* as an inciter to class-hatred in 1860.

the terrible suffering brought about by the blockade, he quoted with approval Lord Palmerston's formidable and damaging indictment of the manufacturers in the House of Commons on July 30: —

> "We know," he said, "that in the county most fortunes have been made by the manufacturers. I do not agree with the Hon. Member for Stockport that it has all been invested in the mills. On the contrary they have accumulated much more than their mills could have cost. There are enormous capitalists in the county, some of whom, I am sorry to say, though they have starving populations at their gates, and anticipate worse distress as coming, have actually, for the sake of profit, sold and sent out of the country the cotton which they ought to have used for the employment of the people. I say, why are these people to be exempt, and not to be made to contribute to the distress which they see around them?"

This speech, *Punch* observes, enraged Cobden, who was furious with Palmerston for his unjust, reckless and incorrect charge; but his reply was inconclusive, as he could only say that a large proportion of Lancashire mill-owners had *not* sold their stocks of unsold cotton to foreigners for the sake of the high prices which the fibre commanded. Cobden returned to the charge a couple of days later in a speech which is a most extraordinary prospective plagiarism of the election address of any anti-waste Independent Liberal candidate in the year 1921, as may be judged from *Punch's* summary: —

> The present is the most extravagant government that ever existed in peace time.
>
> This is all Lord Palmerston's fault.
>
> He is always interfering and getting up sensations.
>
> If the Liberals do not disentangle themselves from this system they will "rot out of existence."
>
> The Tories keep Lord Palmerston in Office and have more confidence in him than in their own chief.
>
> He is puffed by a clever and noisy *claque*.
>
> All the questions dear to Radicals and Dissenters have gone back under his leadership.
>
> This sort of thing must not go on next year.
>
> *Our Noble Selves*

The honours of the debate, which did not enhance Cobden's reputation, rested with Palmerston, but apart from his extreme frankness in dealing with the Lancashire mill-owners, he owed his triumph to his unrivalled Parliamentary opportunism. The Governments of neutral states cannot play heroic *rôles* in a great war. More scope is left to opposition leaders. Lord Derby distinguished himself by his liberality and energy in organizing relief measures, but the Lancashire working man was the most heroic figure in English public life from 1861 to 1865, though *Punch* had only a glimmering of the truth. The note of complacent satisfaction over the tranquillity and prosperity of England as compared with the disturbed state of Europe is frequently sounded, and the Exhibition of 1862 is taken as the occasion to blow the national trumpet in "Our Noble Selves": —

> All the world we invite to behold a grand sight
> Of not only goods, chattels, and treasures,
> But of law that's obeyed because mended or made
> By men who bring forward good measures.
> Let them come then, and see what a people are we,
> Steady-going, not headlong and skittish.
> What a world this of ours would be, O foreign Powers,

If all nations behaved like the British!

This is Liberty Hall; no restriction at all
On the freedom of speaking and writing;
The result is that, say any fool what he may,
Foolish language occasions no fighting.
'Tis the easiest job to disperse any mob,
Without being so much as pumped on
By a fire-engine hose, off the multitude goes,
Mind, Order reigns bloodless at Brompton.

This mood is, however, tempered by moments of self-criticism. The social millennium had not arrived when in 1862 a statue was erected in Bolton to its benefactor Crompton, the inventor of the spinning-mule, while his descendants were living in destitution: —

> The spinning mule made Bolton. Samuel Crompton made the spinning mule… He died in 1827, at the age of 74, and now Bolton, whose master-manufacturers cheated him living, honours him dead with a statue… But Samuel Crompton left more behind him than the great invention and the memory of his wrongs and struggles. He begat sons and daughters as well as invented mules. He died a pauper, and they have fared as the children of those who die paupers are apt to do… One of his sons is living dependent on charity, as his father died. Somebody bought him a suit of clothes that he might make a decent appearance at the inauguration of his father's statue. Besides this son, there are living some half a dozen grandchildren, some dozen great-grandchildren, of the inventor – all, with one exception, in poverty of the meanest, most pinching kind. Not one of them, son, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren, was invited to the inauguration of Samuel Crompton's statue.

London Arab: "Please, sir, can't I have a shill'n's 'orth?]

A sum of £2,000 had been collected for the statue: a few weeks after its inauguration Lord Palmerston sent £50 to the surviving son. Assuredly there have been few more remarkable examples of asking for bread and being given a stone. And mill-owners were not the only masters whose methods exposed them to criticism. When in 1863 the engine-driver and fireman of a luggage train were fined 15s. each at the Oxford City Court for being found drunk and incapable on their engine, *Punch* admits the moderation of the punishment, but asks his readers to ponder the story told by the delinquents, and put the saddle on the right horse: —

> They declared in the presence of the Company's Officers and without contradiction, that their day was fourteen hours, and that owing to extra pressure, they had only had seventeen hours sleep the whole of last week… On whom should fall the blame and punishment? On the men, outworn, and driven to stimulants as a substitute for sleep or a support under exhaustion, or on the managers of the Company, who thus overwork, or, in other words, underpay their servants?

Overworked Pointsman (puzzled): "Let's see! There's the 'scursion' were due at 4.45, and it ain't in; then, afore that were the 'mineral' – no! that must ha' been the 'goods,' or the 'cattle.' No! that were after – cattle's shunting now. Let's see. Fast train came through at – con-found! – and here comes 'the express' afore its time, and blest if I know which line she's on!

The cartoon published nine years later, in 1872, showed that *Punch* was still dissatisfied with the conditions of railway servants. *A propos* of the railways, it is worth recording that in 1860 there were cheap excursions to Brighton and back for 3s. Also that in 1868 *Punch* commits himself to

the view that an increase in railway fares means less revenue – an interesting parallel to the recent controversy.

In 1865 the cattle plague led to a sharp rise in the price of meat; but the attempt to introduce and popularize cheap jerked (or charqued) beef from South America – sold at threepence a pound – was not successful, though *Punch* appealed to the public to give it a fair chance in a set of verses with the refrain: —

> Oh, the jerked beef of La Plata,
> A platter give me of jerked beef.

"Progress at high prices," in *Punch's* opinion, was dearly bought. When two demonstrations were held by working men at Worcester this summer to protest against the high price of meat which was attributed to a monopoly amongst the farmers and butchers, and a resolution was adopted to abstain from the consumption of meat for a certain time, *Punch* saw in this move a tacit acknowledgment that the high price was owing to demand, and cordially endorsed the comments of *The Times*: —

> There can be no doubt that the present high price of meat is mainly to be traced to the fact that the consumption on the part of the working classes has of late years enormously increased, owing to their prosperous condition, good wages, and cheap bread. A general resolution on their part to limit the consumption would soon bring down the price.
>
> *Honest Fault-finding*

The strike against the butchers was one in which the working classes might safely combine to turn out. "They will not injure themselves, nor hurt their wives and families: on the contrary, all the while the strike lasts they will be putting by money. The public will support instead of discouraging them." But it is impossible to take the commendation seriously in view of the last sentence; "whilst others, I trust, are endeavouring, by total abstinence from butchers' meat, to reduce the butchers to reason, I remain medicinally, of course, always 'A Beefeater.'" Much more effective, because untainted by irony, are the plain-spoken verses on the British workman as painted by his flatterers, his detractors and his candid friends: —

> While Democrat orators praise him and puff him
> As the land's bone and sinew, and Nature's own nob:
> Aristocrat talkers calumniously cuff him,
> As shiftless, and soulless, sot, spendthrift, and snob.
>
> 'Twixt the daub of his bully, the daub of his backer,
> The true British Workman's been able to stand,
> And at once to disclaim both the brighter and blacker,
> As alike wide of truth, from the right and left hand.

The success of "Tom Brown" (Tom Hughes), who was elected for Lambeth in 1865, encouraged the enthusiastic friends of the British workman in the hope that he would now be painted without fear or favour, but Tom Brown's honest unvarnished portraiture was more than his sitter could stand: —

> While a fact is a fact 'twill do no good to blink it,
> Put up with the shadows Tom Brown dares to show,
> Your face may be darker than you like to think it,

If the shadows ain't fast, wash, and let's see them go.

While your Union pickets still waylay and "ratten"
The knob-sticks, who work on their own honest hook,
While on your hard earnings strike-delegates batten,
And machines and machine-work are in your black book;

While men who earn more by the week than their curate
Are content in one room of a hovel to pig;
While shop-drinks and Saint Monday their old rate endure at,
And the wife and the young 'uns come after the swig;

While limb's rest and soul's light to your infants begrudging,
You drive them to workshop, to mine, loom or wheel,
To drag through long years of unnatural drudging
As though minds could die out, and yet bodies not feel;

While such are the shadows your features that darken,
Needs must that the blacks in your picture appear;
And they're no friends who bid you your own praises hearken,
When an honest fault-finder is craving your ear!

Later on, however, Tom Brown was himself taken to task for flattering the working man.

On the question of housing and sanitation *Punch* refused to believe that landlords were altogether to blame. Social reformers and legislators found themselves up against stubborn facts, and none were more stubborn than the Briton's prejudices in favour of vested rights and a man's house being his own castle, wherein he is free to do what he likes with his own: —

> These stubborn facts are, no doubt, at the bottom of much that is worthy of respect in John Bull's character. They have not a little to do with his Magna Charta and his Habeas Corpus. But they occasionally stop the way all the same; obstruct the efforts of the Local Board or Nuisance Removal Committee, crouch like lions in the path of the Officer of Health, trip up the heels of the Inspector of Nuisances, and crop out in back slums, by-lanes, and blind alleys for district visitors and zealous clergymen to break their shins over.
>
> *Village Sanitation in 1865*

These remarks form the preface to a series of extracts from the verbatim report of a Visiting Committee appointed in 1865 to inspect a little seaside village. The name of the place is withheld, but *Punch* pledges his word for the absolute veracity of the reporter, adding that what the Committee found in the way of stinks, putrid wells, foul accumulations, and purblind or pig-headed people was to be found in nineteen out of every twenty English villages, seaside or inland, rural or suburban. The houses in a sample street were occupied by an old gardener, a small pork butcher, three pilots, three sailors' wives, and two coast-guardsmen. The description of the well in the pork butcher's house is enough, in Dickens's phrase, to sicken a scavenger. But the complacent fatalism which marked all these householders rises to a pitch of sublimity in the immortal phrase of the first coast-guardsman: -

> "Had the cholera in '44: ain't afeared of it. *Considers as it's a natural went for the overplush of mankind.* When his time comes, knows as he 'as got to go. Considers as his time wasn't come in '44. Always keeps his house very clean: does

> all the scrubbing himself, and paints his bedsteads and chests of drawers with red lead and turps twice a year."

According to the local doctor, all the inhabitants of these houses were drinking water strongly impregnated with lead, but "they appear to like it so I can't help it, especially as the landlord refuses to alter the pumps." The first pilot considered that he had a right to drink his own sewage if he liked it. The second coast-guardsman "couldn't abear chloride of lime," and, in general, disinfectants were dreaded more than bad drains. An optimistic speaker on Social Science in October, 1859, had declared that the advance of education was certainly very marked. "Classes once illiterate now show a love of literature, the taste for which has even reached our cabmen, who in demeanour and civility are not the men they were." *Punch* was sceptical about the cabman and printed an ironical poem on his progress modelled on "She wore a wreath of roses." The passages we have quoted show that six years later pork butchers, pilots and coast-guardsmen left a good deal to be desired in their knowledge of practical hygiene. But *Punch* does not acquit the landlords or Government officials, and, though no lover of despotism abroad or at home, there were moments when he felt that a little more "paternal government" would not be a bad thing. As he put it a little later: "when *Mr. Punch* is reminded of tanks, cisterns, bins and butts for miles along a tainted shore being overlooked by a mythical Inspector of Nuisances instead of being looked into, in his utter bewilderment he is tempted to exclaim, Wanted a Bismarck."

With the death of Palmerston the question of organic reform re-emerged, but the Russell administration, hampered by the disaffected Adullamite Liberals – brilliantly led by Lowe – and restrained by Whig caution, handled their Bill in a half-hearted spirit which courted defeat. Russell resigned at the end of June, 1866, and was succeeded by Lord Derby with Disraeli again as Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is on record that Gladstone, shortly after Palmerston's death, agreed with Denison, the Speaker, that there was no strong feeling for reform in the country. Yet within a few months the diagnosis was completely falsified. Immediately after the fall of the Russell administration came the historic Hyde Park riots and a vigorous agitation throughout the country. "The artisans, who had seemed apathetic towards the franchise when it was dangled before them, became angry when it was refused." *Punch's* account of the rioting and its sequel is liberal of censure, but cannot be regarded as either impartial or judicial or as appreciative of the significance of the episode: —

> *Monday, July 23.*– It did not seem to suit the Fates that our friends the Conservatives should slide into the recess quite so quietly as had been anticipated. Sir George Grey, the late Home Secretary, had ordained that the proposed Reform Demonstration should not be allowed to take place in Hyde Park, but his Ministry went out in time to save him any further trouble in the matter. Mr. Walpole had to vindicate the law, and his gentle soul has been a good deal perturbed by events. One Beales insisted on holding the meeting, and Sir Richard Mayne locked the Park Gates. The result was inevitable. The artisan class attended in large numbers, and of course behaved perfectly well; but, equally of course, the processions were supplemented by a vast mass of Roughs, who behaved perfectly ill. *Mr. Punch* is unable to compliment the Reform League, inasmuch as its acts tended to violate order, and its "experiment of right" could have been tried with a hundred men instead of with thousands. Nor can we compliment the authorities who endeavoured to defend an untenable post, inasmuch as law could have been asserted by the arrest of a few individuals. He does not make a great noise about the breaking down of some railings, and the destruction by some roughs of trees and shrubs, nor would he put London in a state of siege because a good many windows have been broken, but all this sort of thing is really the fault of one Beales, who knew that a mob would follow the working man. Rough and Bludgeon came largely into contact, to

the discomfort of the former, and the Beaks looked to the rest, Mr. Knox having especially distinguished himself by firmness and moderation, coming down sternly on ruffians and being lenient to mere fools.

But Mr. Walpole had to defend himself in the House, and also had to see a Reform deputation, before whom he wept, and some of whom managed to misunderstand him, or pretended to do so, whereby there was another meeting summoned, as if with Government sanction, but after explanations, in and out of the House, the idea was given up. So ended the campaign, and *Mr. Punch* is almost ashamed of the fuss which has been made over an affair of broken heads, while two great nations are mourning over slaughtered myriads.

Working Man: "Look here, you vagabond! Right or wrong, we won't have your help."

"One Beales"

"One Beales," as *Punch* contemptuously describes him, was a political agitator, but of a very different type from the "delegate" as depicted in a previous page. He was an Etonian, a scholar of his college at Cambridge, a barrister of the Middle Temple, and a revising barrister for Middlesex, who died in the odour of legal sanctity as a County Court Judge. But as a member of the Emancipation Society in the Civil War, a member of Mill's Jamaica Committee in connexion with the case of General Eyre, and above all as President of the Reform League, and advocate of Manhood Suffrage and the right of public meeting, he had incurred *Punch's* unremitting hostility. "Beales and his Bubbly-jocks" were constantly held up to ridicule. But they were very far from being ridiculous. The League served as a spear-head for the discontent aroused by the failure of Russell's Reform Bill, which it had cordially supported. The meeting in Trafalgar Square on July 2, 1866, had been prohibited, but Sir Richard Mayne, the first Commissioner of Police, withdrew the prohibition, and the meeting, attended by nearly 70,000 persons, passed off quietly. Beales is declared to have shown great courage and coolness on July 23. The meeting assembled near the gates of Hyde Park; the invasion of the Park and the pulling down of the railings occurred as the crowd were returning to Trafalgar Square, but the leaders were in no way responsible. The police were roughly handled and had to be reinforced by the Guards before the crowd was driven out; but an amicable arrangement was reached between Beales and Walpole next day as to the discontinuance of any further meetings except by arrangement with the government. The Reform League had done its work; its mission was virtually ended when Disraeli's Reform Bill passed in 1867 and it was formally dissolved in March, 1869, three days after Beales had resigned the presidency. No amount of belittling of Beales can disguise the fact that he and his League gave a great impetus to the Reform movement – the Lord Mayor of London actually presided over one of its meetings in the sacred precincts of the Guildhall – and forced on the introduction of the Bill of 1867. During its progress through Parliament another great meeting convened by the Reform League was held in Hyde Park in May, 1867. The Home Secretary issued a notice warning all persons against attending it, but was practically over-ruled by the Prime Minister, who announced that nothing would be done to hinder it. The meeting, attended by 200,000 people, passed off without any disturbance or untoward incident, and Walpole soon afterwards retired. As Walpole, in consequence of his Hyde Park associations, had become one of *Punch's* regular butts, it is only fair to his memory to say that the story of his having broken down and wept before a deputation is denied by the D.N.B. *Punch's* review of the episode quoted above is thoroughly typical of his temper in this period of transition; of his independence, his readiness to acknowledge the moderation and sanity of British working men, his anxiety to distinguish between them and the hooligan fringe; and at the same time of his distrust of their leaders and of any organization which in his view savoured of extremism. There were "bubbly-jocks" in Beales's following, but he was no bubbly-jock, as Wilkes was no Wilkesite, and in many ways though by different means was working towards the same end as *Punch* himself. Beales had no gifts as a mob-orator. His real strength lay in his knowledge of the law; and it was on the legal ground

that he worsted Lord Derby and Walpole. There are some who think that modern democracy was born on July 23, 1866. Be that as it may, the Hyde Park riot was a great landmark in our political history.

### The Future of Coal

It is pleasant to turn from *Punch's* not very happy handling of the Hyde Park incident to his wiser, if fanciful comment on the warnings of the philosophical alarmists who predicted the speedy exhaustion of our coal supplies, and asked What, then, would Posterity do for force and for fuel? *Punch* suggests another conceivable fear to balance that of the coal pessimists. If our population continued to increase at the same rate, not only would the bowels of the land be consumed, but its entire face be covered up with towns and factories. For his part he feared neither the one nor the other event: —

> If the coal ever runs out, something equivalent to it will doubtless turn up, or else turn down. Somebody will discover a cheap way to set the Thames on fire, or to draw below, and store, atmospheric electricity. By a system of vertical elevation instead of lateral extension, our architecture will be adapted to our area, and our cities, no longer expanding, will continue to ascend. The higher they rise the less will Posterity be troubled with any amount of smoke which it may be unable to consume. The future of England will then be as fresh as a daisy, still as familiar a flower as ever.

The growth of industrialism was not to be dreaded if it was humanely and wisely controlled and directed. That is the moral which *Punch* draws from the opening of the new docks at Barrow-in-Furness in September, 1867. The occasion was indeed "worth a crowd and a crow": —

> A Barrow that has grown, one may say, from a barrow into a coach-and-four in ten years! A Barrow that has swelled almost within the memory of the youngest inhabitant from the quiet coast-nest of some five score fishermen into the busy, bustling, blazing, money-making, money-spending, roaring, tearing, swearing, steaming, sweltering seat of twenty thousand iron workers, and the crime and culture, the dirt and disease, the hard-working and hard-drinking, the death and life, the money and misery they bring along with them!! A Barrow out of which they are tipping 600,000 tons of iron every year!!! A Barrow big enough to hold a Monster-Iron-Mining-and-Smelting Company, with two Dukes among its directors, to say nothing of Lord knows who, in the way of Lords, and Lord knows how many millionaires!!!!

The two Dukes – one of them, Devonshire, a Second Wrangler into the bargain – were both present, and also the first of living orators, Mr. Gladstone. But the person who interested *Mr. Punch* most was the master-spirit of the great iron company, "one Schneider," and he is not slow to improve the occasion: —

> He has hitherto been known to fame among public men chiefly as an ex-M.P., turned out of his seat at Lancaster for gross and shameless bribery. He has seen so much done by energy and money that he probably thought the one as legitimate a lever into Parliament as the other. But he has been punished for his mistake. He has now an opportunity to repair it. His name is the same as that of the President of the French Legislative Assembly, the energetic, far-sighted M. Schneider, whom *Mr. Punch* has already honoured as the head and heart of the admirably-conducted firm which has made the iron manufacturing district of Le Creusot, a model as yet to be imitated among the great English industries of the same kind…
>
> And now for *Mr. Punch's* proposition. Suppose M. Schneider were to set himself in real earnest to wipe out the recollection of Lancaster by the redemption of

> Barrow? What if he were to prove himself the ditto of M. Schneider of Le Creusot, not in name only but in deed, and to make Barrow-in-Furness the Creusot of England, in morals, manners, civilization, education, domestic comfort and culture, as well as in industry, energy and money-making? Here is a work worthy of the noblest ambition, the most determined energy, the highest intelligence, and certain of the richest reward – a reward not to be gauged by dividends, it is true, but beyond the measure of millions. Let there be two Schneiders known in the world for their noble conception and perfect discharge of the duties of a great captain of industry, and let one of them be an Englishman.
>
> *Reform Bill of 1867*

Henry William Schneider, who started the Barrow Steel Works and was for many years one of the directors, died in 1887. His namesakes of Le Creusot still continue their dynasty. Early in 1870, the year of the Franco-Prussian war, *Punch*

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