Ririro
READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Full Report of the First Meeting of the Mudfog Association

Charles Dickens

We have made the most unparalleled and extraordinary exertions to place before our readers a complete and accurate account of the proceedings at the late grand meeting of the Mudfog Association, holden in the town of Mudfog; it affords us great happiness to lay the result before them, in the shape of various communications received from our able, talented, and graphic correspondent, expressly sent down for the purpose, who has immortalized us, himself, Mudfog, and the association, all at one and the same time. We have been, indeed, for some days unable to determine who will transmit the greatest name to posterity—ourselves, who sent our correspondent down; our correspondent, who wrote an account of the matter; or the association, who gave our correspondent something to write about. We rather incline to the opinion that we are the greatest men of the party, inasmuch, as the notion of an exclusive and authentic report originated with us; this may be prejudice; it may arise from a prepossession on our part in our own favor. Be it so. We have no doubt that every gentleman concerned in this mighty assemblage is troubled with the same complaint in a greater or less degree; and it is a consolation to us to know that we have at least this feeling in common with the great scientific status, the brilliant and extraordinary luminaries, whose speculations we record.

We give our correspondent's letters in the order in which they reached us. Any attempt at amalgamating them into one beautiful whole would only destroy that glowing tone, that dash of wildness, and rich vein of picturesque interest, which pervade them throughout.

"Mudfog, Monday night, seven o'clock.

"We are in a state of great excitement here. Nothing is spoken of but the approaching meeting of the association. The inn-doors are thronged with waiters anxiously looking for the expected arrivals; and the numerous bills which are watered up in the windows of private houses, intimating that there are beds to let within, give the streets a very animated and cheerful appearance, the wafers being of a great variety of colors, and the monotony of printed inscriptions being relieved by every possible size and style of handwriting. It is confidently rumored that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy have engaged three beds and a sitting-room at the Pig and Tinder-Box. I give you the rumor as it has reached me; but I

cannot, as yet, vouch for its accuracy. The moment I have been enabled to obtain any certain information upon this interesting point, you may depend upon receiving it."

" Half-past seven.

"I have just returned from a personal interview with the landlord of the Pig and Tinder-Box. He speaks confidently of the probability of Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy taking up their residence at his house during the sitting of the association, but denies that the beds have been yet engaged; in which representation he is confirmed by the chambermaid—a girl of artless manners, and interesting appearance. The boots denies that it is at all likely that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy will put up here; but I have reason to believe that this man has been suborned by the proprietor of the Original Pig, which is the opposition hotel. Amidst such conflicting testimony it is difficult to arrive at the real truth; but you may depend upon receiving authentic information upon this point the moment the fact is ascertained. The excitement still continues. A boy fell through the window of the pastry-cook's shop at the corner of the high street about an hour ago, which has occasioned much confusion. The general impression is that it was an accident. Pray heaven it may prove so!"

"Tuesday, noon.

"At an early hour this morning the bells of all the churches struck seven o'clock; the effect of which, in the present lively state of the town, was extremely singular. While I was at breakfast, a yellow gig, drawn by a dark gray horse, with a patch of white over his right eyelid, proceeded at a rapid pace in the direction of the Original Pig stables; it is currently reported that this gentleman has arrived here for the purpose of attending the association, and, from what I have heard, I consider it extremely probable, although nothing decisive is yet known regarding him. You may conceive the anxiety with which we are all looking forward to the arrival of the four o'clock coach this afternoon.

"Notwithstanding-the excited state of the populace, no outrage has yet been committed, owing to the admirable discipline and discretion of the police, who are nowhere to be seen. A barrel-organ is playing opposite my window, and groups of people, offering fish and vegetables for sale, parade the streets. With these exceptions everything is quiet and I trust will continue so."

"Five o'clock.

"It is now ascertained beyond all doubt that Professors Snore, Doze, and Wheezy will not repair to the Pig and Tinder-Box, but have actually engaged apartments at the Original Pig. This intelligence is exclusive; and I leave you and your readers to draw their own inferences from it. Why Professor Wheezy, of all

people in the world, should repair to the Original Pig in preference to the Pig and Tinder-Box, it is not easy to conceive. The professor is a man who should be above all such petty feelings. Some people here openly impute treachery and a distinct breach of faith to Professors Snore, and Doze; while others, again, are disposed to acquit them of any culpability in the transaction, and to insinuate that the blame rests solely with Professor Wheezy. I own that I incline to the latter opinion; and, although it gives me great pain to speak in terms of censure or disapprobation of a man of such transcendent genius and acquirements, still I am bound to say, that if my suspicions be well founded, and if all the reports which have reached my ears be true, I really do not well know what to make of the matter.

"Mr. Slug, so celebrated for his statistical researches, arrived this afternoon by the four o'clock stage. His complexion is a dark purple, and he has a habit of sighing constantly. He looked extremely well, and appeared in high health and spirits. Mr. Woodensconce also came down in the same conveyance. The distinguished gentleman was fast asleep on his arrival, and I am informed by the guard that he had been so, the whole way. He was, no doubt, preparing for his approaching fatigues; but what gigantic visions must those be that flit through the brain of such a man when his body is in a state of torpidity!

"The influx of visitors increases every moment. I am told (I know not how truly) that two post-chaises have arrived at the Original Pig within the last half-hour; and I myself observed a wheelbarrow, containing three carpet-bags and a bundle, entering the yard of the Pig and Tinder-Box no longer ago than five minutes since. The people are still quietly pursuing their ordinary occupations; but there is a wildness in their eyes, and an unwonted rigidity in the muscles of their countenances, which shows to the observant spectator that their expectations are strained to the very utmost pitch. I fear, unless some very extraordinary arrivals take place tonight, that consequences may arise from this popular ferment, which every man of sense and feeling would deplore."

" Twenty minutes past six.

"I have just heard that the boy who fell through the pastry-cook's window last night has died of the fright. He was suddenly called upon to pay three-and-sixpence for the damage done, and his constitution, it seems, was not strong enough to bear up under the shock. The inquest, it is said, will be held to-morrow."

" Three-quarters past seven.

"Professors Muff and Xogo have just driven up to the hotel door; they at once ordered dinner with great condescension. We are all very much delighted with the urbanity of their manners, and the ease with which they adapt themselves to

the forms and ceremonies of ordinary life. Immediately on their arrival they sent for the head-waiter, and privately requested him to purchase a live dog—as cheap a one as he could meet with—and to send him up after dinner, with a pie-hoard, a knife and fork, and a clean plate. It ? conjectured that some experiments will be tried upon the clog to-night; if any particulars should transpire I will forward them by express."

" Half-past eight.

"The animal has been procured. He is a pug-dog, of rather intelligent appearance, in good condition, and with very short legs. He has been tied to a curtain-peg in a dark room, and is howling dreadfully."

" Ten minutes to nine.

"The dog has just been rung for. With an instinct which would appear almost the result of reason, the sagacious animal seized the waiter by the calf of the leg when he approached to take him, and made a desperate, though ineffectual, resistance. I have not been able to procure admission to the apartment occupied by the scientific gentlemen; but, jndging from the sounds which reached my ears when I stood upon the landing-place just now, outside the door, I should be disposed to say that the dog had retreated growling beneath some article of furniture, and was keeping the professors at bay. This conjecture is confirmed by the testimony of the hostler, who, after peeping through the keyhole, assures me that he distinctly saw Professor Nogo on his knees, holding forth a small bottle of prussic acid, which the animal, who was crouched beneath an arm-chair, obstinately declined to smell. You cannot imagine the feverish state of irritation we are in, lest the interests of science should be sacrificed to the prejudices of a brute creature, who is not endowed with sufficient sense to foresee the incalculable benefits which the whole human race may derive from so very slight a concession on his part."

" Nine o'clock.

"The dog's tail and ears have been sent downstairs to be washed; from which circumstance we infer that the animal is no more. His forelegs have been delivered to the boots to be brushed, which strengthens the supposition."

" Half after ten.

"My feelings are so overpowered by what has taken place in the course of the last hour and a half, that I have scarcely strength to detail the rapid succession of events which have quite bewildered all those who are cognizant of their occurrence. It appears that the pug-dog mentioned in my last was surreptitiously obtained—stolen, in fact—by some person attached to the stable department, from an unmarried lady resident in this town. Frantic on discovering the loss of

he favorite, the lady rushed distractedly into the street, calling in the most heart-rending and pathetic manner upon the passengers to restore her her Augustus—for so the deceased was named, in affectionate remembrance of a former lover of his mistress, to whom he bore a striking personal resemblance, which renders the circumstance additionally affecting. I am not yet in a condition to inform you what circumstances induced the bereaved lady to direct her steps to the hotel which had witnessed the last struggles of her protégé. I can only state that she arrived there, at the very instant when his detached members were passing through the passage on a small tray. Her shrieks still reverberate in my ears! I grieve to say that the expressive features of Professor Mutt' were much scratched and lacerated by the injured lady; and that Professor Nogo, besides sustaining several severe bites, has lost some handfuls of hair from the same cause. It must be some consolation to these gentlemen to know that their ardent attachment to scientific pursuits has alone occasioned these unpleasant consequences; for which the sympathy of a grateful country will sufficiently reward them. The unfortunate lady remains at the Pig and Tinder-Box, and up to tills time is reported in a very precarious state.

"I need scarcely tell you that this unlooked-for catastrophe has cast a damp and gloom upon us in the midst of our exhilaration; natural in any case, but greatly enhanced in this, by the amiable qualities of the deceased animal, who appears to have been much and deservedly respected by the whole of his acquaintance.

" Twelve o'clock.

"I take the last opportunity before sealing my parcel to inform you that the boy who fell through the pastry-cook's window is not dead, as was universally believed, but alive and well. The report appears to have had its origin in his mysterious disappearance. He was found half an hour since on the premises of a sweet-stuff maker, where a raffle had been announced for a second-hand seal-skin cap and a tambourine: and where—a sufficient number of members not having been obtained at first—he had patiently waited until the list was completed. This fortunate discovery has in some degree restored our gayety and cheerfulness. It is proposed to get up a subscription for him without delay.

"Everybody is nervously anxious to see what to-morrow will bring forth. If any one should arrive in the course of the night, I have left strict directions to be called immediately. I should have sat up, indeed, but the agitating events of this day have been too much for me.

"No news, yet, of either of the Professors Snore, Doze, or Wheezy. It is very strange!"

" Wednesday afternoon.

"All is now over: and upon one point, at least, I am at length enabled to set the

minds of your readers at rest. The three professors arrived at ten minutes after two o'clock, and, instead of taking up their quarters at the Original Pig, as it was universally understood in the course of yesterday that they would assuredly have done, drove straight to the Pig and Tinder-Box, where they threw off the mask at once, and openly announced their intention of remaining. Professor Wheezy may reconcile this very extraordinary conduct with his notions of fair and equitable dealing, but I would recommend Professor Wheezy to be cautious how he presumes too far upon his well-earned reputation. How such a man as Professor Snore, or, which is still more extraordinary, such an individual as Professor Doze, can quietly allow himself to be mixed up with such proceedings as these, you will naturally inquire. Upon this head rumor is silent; I have my speculations, but forbear to give utterance to them just now."

" Four o'clock.

"The town is filling fast; eighteen pence has been offered for a bed and refused. Several gentleman were under the necessity last night of sleeping in the brick-fields, and on the steps of doors, for which they were taken before the magistrates in a body this morning, and committed to prison as vagrants for various terms. One of these persons I understand to be a highly respected thinker, of great practical skill, who had forwarded a paper to the president of Section D., Mechanical Science, on the construction of pipkins with copper bottoms and safety-valves, of which report speaks highly. The incarceration of this gentleman is greatly to be regretted, as his absence will preclude any discussion on the subject.

"The bills are being taken down in all directions, and lodgings are being secured on almost any terms. I have heard of fifteen shillings a week for two rooms, exclusive of coals and attendance, but I can scarcely believe it. The excitement is dreadful. I was informed this morning that the civil authorities, apprehensive of some outbreak of popular feeling, had commanded a recruiting sergeant and two corporals to be under arms; and that, with tlhe view of not irritating the people unnecessarily by their presence, they had been requested to take up their positions before daybreak in a turnpike, distant about a quarter of a mile from the town. The vigor and promptness of these measures cannot be too highly extolled.

"Intelligence has just been brought me, that an elderly female, in a state of inebriety, has declared in the open street her intention to 'do' for Mr. Slug. Some statistical returns compiled by that gentleman, relative to the consumption of raw spiritous liquors in this place, are supposed to be the cause of the wretch's animosity. It is added, that this declaration was loudly cheered by a crowd of persons who had assembled on the spot; and that one man had the boldness to designate Mr. Slug aloud by the opprobrious epithet of 'Stick-in-the-mud!' It is

earnestly to be hoped that now, when the moment has arrived for their interference, the magistrates will not shrink from the exercise of that power which is vested in them by the constitution of their common country."

" Half-past ten.

"The disturbance, I am happy to inform you, has been completely quelled, and the ringleader taken into custody. She had a pail of cold water thrown over her, previous to being locked up, and expresses great contrition and uneasiness. We are all in a fever of anticipation about tomorrow; but now that we are within a few hours of the association, and at last enjoy the proud consciousness of having its illustrious members among us, I trust and hope everything may go off peaceably. I shall send you a full report of to-morrow's proceedings by the night coach."

" Eleven o'clock.

"I opened my letter to say nothing whatever has occurred since I folded it up."

" Thursday.

"The sun rose this morning at the usual hour. I did not observe anything particular in the aspect of the glorious planet, except that he appeared to me (it might have been a delusion of my heightened fancy) to shine with more than common brilliancy, and to shed a refulgent lustre upon the town, such as I had never observed before. This is the more extraordinary, as the sky was perfectly cloudless, and the atmosphere peculiarly fine. At half-past nine o'clock the general committee assembled, with the last year's president in the chair. The report of the council was read; and one passage, which stated that the council had corresponded with no less than three thousand five hundred and seventy-one persons (all of whom paid their own postage), on no fewer than seven thousand two hundred and forty-three topics, was received with a degree of enthusiasm which no effort could suppress, The various committees and sections having been appointed, and the mere formal business transacted, the great proceedings of the meeting commenced at eleven o'clock precisely. I had the happiness of occupying a most eligible position at that time, in

"SECTION A — ZOOLOGY AND BOTANY.
"GREAT ROOM, PIG AND TINDER,-BOX.
" PRESIDENT—PROFESSOR SNORE. VICE-PRESIDENTS—
PROFESSORS DOZE AND WHEEZY.

"The scene at this moment was particularly striking. The sun streamed through the windows of the apartments, and tinted the whole scene with its brilliant rays, bringing out in strong relief the noble visages of the professors and scientific gentlemen, who, some with bald heads, some with red heads, some with brown

heads, some with gray heads, some with black heads, some with block heads, presented a *coup-d'œil* which no eyewitness will readily forget. In front of these gentlemen were papers and inkstands; and round the room, on elevated benches extending as far as the forms could reach, were assembled a brilliant concourse of those lovely and elegant women for Which Mudfog is justly acknowledged to be without a rival in the whole world. The contrast between their fair faces and the dark coats and trowsers of the scientific gentlemen I shall never cease to remember while memory holds her seat.

"Time having been allowed for a slight confusion, occaisioned by the falling down of the greater part of the platforms, to subside, the president called on one of the secretaries to read a communication entitled, ' Some remarks on the industrious fleas, with considerations on the importance of establishing infant schools among that numerous class of society; of directing their industry to useful and practical ends; and of applying the surplus fruits thereof, toward providing for them a comfortable and respectable maintenance in their old age."

"The author stated, that, having long turned his attention to the moral and social condition of these interesting animals, he had been induced to visit an exhibition in Regent Street, London, commonly known by the designation of "The Industrious Fleas." He had there seen many fleas, occupied certainly in various pursuits and avocations, but occupied, he was bound to add, in a manner which no man of well-regulated mind could fail to regard with sorrow and regret. One flea, reduced to the level of a beast of burden, was drawing about a miniature gig, containing a particularly small effigy of his Grace the Duke of Wellington; while another was staggering beneath the weight of a golden model of his great adversary Napoleon Bonaparte. Some, brought up as mountebanks and ballet-dancers, were performing a figure-dance (he regretted to observe that, of the fleas so employed, several were females); others were in training, in a small card-board box, for pedestrians—mere sporting characters —and two were actually engaged in the cold-blooded and barbarous occupation of dueling; a pursuit from which humanity recoiled with horror and disgust. He suggested that measures should be immediately taken to employ the labor of these fleas as part and parcel of the productive power of the country, which might easily be done by the establishment among them of infant schools and houses of industry, in which a system of virtuous education, based upon sound principles. should be observed, and moral precepts strictly inculcated. He proposed that every flea who presumed to exhibit, for hire, music or dancing, or any species of theatrical entertainment, without a license, should be considered a vagabond, and treated accordingly; in which respect he only placed him upon a level with the rest of mankind. He would further suggest that their labor should be placed under the control and regulation of the state, who should set apart from the profits a fund for the support of superannuated or disabled fleas, their widows and orphans.

With this view, he proposed that liberal premiums should be offered for the three best designs for a general alms-house; from which—as insect architecture was well known to be in a very advanced and perfect state—we might possibly derive many valuable hints for the improvement of our metropolitan universities, national galleries, and other public edifices.

"The president wished to be informed how the ingenious gentleman proposed to open a communication with fleas generally, in the first instance, so that they might be thoroughly imbued with a sense of the advantages they must necessarily derive from changing their mode of life, and apply themselves to honest labor. This appeared to him the only difficulty.

"The author submitted that this difficulty was easily overcome, or rather that there was no difficulty at all in the case. Obviously the course to be pursued, if her majesty's government could be prevailed upon to take up the plan, would be to secure, at a remunerative salary, the individual to whom he had alluded as presiding over the exhibition in Regent Street at the period of his visit. That gentleman would at once be able to put himself in communication with the mass of the fleas, and to instruct them in pursuance of some general plan of education, to be sanctioned by parliament, until such time as the" more intelligent among them were advanced enough to officiate as teachers to the rest.

"The president and several members of the section highly complimented the author of the paper last read, on his most ingenious and important treatise. It was determined that the subject should be recommended to the immediate consideration of the council.

"Mr, Wigsby produced a cauliflower somewhat larger than a chaise-umbrella, which had been raised by no other artificial means than the simple application of highly carbonated soda water as manure. He explained that by scooping out the head, which would afford a new and delicious species of nourishment for the poor, a parachute, in principle somewhat similar to that constructed by M. Garnerin, was at once obtained; the stalk of course being kept downward. He added that he was perfectly willing to make a descent from a height of not less than three miles and a quarter; and had, in fact, already proposed the same to the proprietors of the Vauxhall Gardens, who, in the handsomest manner, at once consented to his wishes, and appointed an early day next summer for the undertaking; merely stipulating that the rim of the cauliflower should be previously broken in three or four places to insure the safety of the descent.

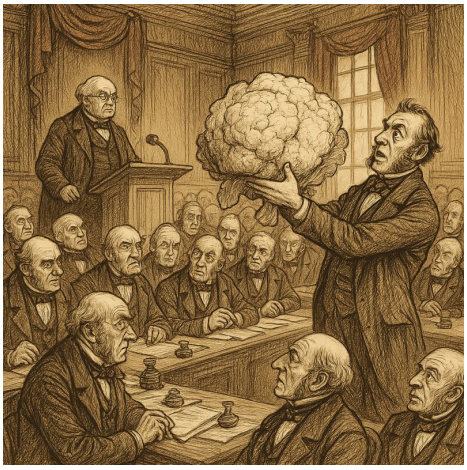
"The president congratulated the public on the grand gala in store for them, and warmly eulogized the proprietors of the establishment alluded to, for their love of science, and regard for the safety of human life, both of which did them the highest honor.

"A member wished to know how many thousand additional lamps the royal property would be illuminated with, on the night after the descent.

"Mr. Wigsby replied that the point was not yet finally decided; but he believed it was proposed, over and above the ordinary illuminations, to exhibit in various devices eight millions and a half of additional lamps.

"The member expressed himself much gratified with this announcement.

"Mr. Blunderum delighted the section with a most interesting and valuable paper 'on the last moments of the learned pig,' which produced a very strong impression upon the assembly, the account being compiled from the personal recollections of his favorite attendant. The account stated in the most emphatic terms that the animal's name was not Toby, but Solomon; and distinctly proved that he could have no near relatives in the profession, as many designing persons had falsely stated, inasmuch as his father, mother, brothers and sisters, had all fallen victims to the butcher at different times. An uncle of his, indeed, had with very great labor been traced to a sty in Somers Town; but as he was in a very infirm state at the time, being afflicted with measles, and shortly afterward disappeared, there appeared too much reason to conjecture that he had been converted into sausages. The disorder of the learned pig was originally a severe cold, which, being aggravated by excessive trough indulgence, finally settled upon the lungs, and terminated in a general decay of the constitution. A melancholy instance of a presentiment entertained by the animal of his approaching dissolution was recorded. After gratifying a numerous and fashionable company with his performances, in which no falling off whatever was visible, he fixed his eyes on the biographer, and, turning to the watch, which lay on the floor, and on which he was accustomed to point out the hour, deliberately passed his snout twice around the dial. In precisely four-and-twenty hours from that time he had ceased to exist!



"Professor Wheezy inquired, whether, previous to his demise, the animal had expressed, by signs or otherwise, any wishes regarding the disposal of his little property. " Mr. Blunderum replied, that, when the biographer took up the pack of cards at the conclusion of the performance, the animal grunted several times in a significant manner, and nodded his head as he was accustomed to do when gratified. From these gestures, it was understood he wished the attendant to keep the cards, which he had ever since done. He had not expressed any wish relative to his watch, which had accordingly been pawned by the same individual.

"The president wished to know whether any member of the section had ever seen or conversed with the pig-faced lady, who was reported to have worn a black velvet mask, and to have taken her meals from a golden trough.

"After some hesitation a member replied that the pig-faced lady was his mother-in-law, and that he trusted the president would not violate the sanctity of private life.

"The president begged pardon. He had considered the pig-faced lady a public cliaracter. Would the honorable member object to state, with a view to the advancement of science, whether she was in any way connected with the learned pig?

"The member replied in the same low tone, that, as the question appeared to involve a suspicion that the learned pig might be his half-brother, he must decline answering it.

"SECTION B.—ANATOMY AND MEDICINE.
"COACH-nOUSE, PIG AND TINDER-BOX.
"PRESIDENT—DR. TOORELL. VICE-PRESIDENTS—PROFESSORS
MUFF AND NOGO.

"Dr. Kutankumagen (of Moscow) read to the section a report of a case which had occurred within his own practice, strikingly illustrative of the power of medicine, as exemphfied in his successful treatment of a virulent disorder. He had been called in to visit the patient on the 1st of April, 1837. He was then laboring under symptoms peculiarly alarming to any medical man. His frame was stout and muscular, his step firm and elastic, his cheeks plump and red, his voice loud, his appetite good, his pulse full and round. He was in the constant habit of eating three meals *per diem* and of drinking at least one bottle of wine, and one glass

of spirituous liquors diluted with water, in the course of four-and- twenty hours. He laughed constantly, and in so hearty a manner that it was terrible to hear him. By dint of powerful medicine, low diet and bleeding, the symptoms in the course of three days perceptibly decreased. A rigid perseverance in the same course of treatment for only one week, accompanied with small doses of water-gruel, weak broth and barley-water, led to their entire disappearance. In the course of a month he was sufficiently recovered to be carried down stairs by two nurses, and to enjoy an airing in a close carriage, supported by soft pillows. At the present moment he was restored so far as to walk about, with the slight assistance of a crutch and a boy. It would perhaps be gratifying to the section to learn that he ate little, drank little, slept little, and was never heard to laugh by any accident whatever.

"Dr. W. R. Fee, in complimenting the honorable member upon the triumphant cure he had effected, begged to ask whether the patient still bled freely?

"Dr. Kutankumagen replied in the affirmative.

"Dr. W. R. Fee.—And you found that he bled freely during the whole course of the disorder?

"Dr. Kutankumagen.—Oh dear, yes; most freely. "Dr. Neeshawts supposed, that if the patient had not submitted to be bled with great readiness and perseverance, so extraordinary a cure could never, in fact, have been accomplished. Dr. Kutankumagen rejoined certainly not.

"Mr. Knight Bell (M. R. C. S.) exhibited a wax preparation of the interior of a gentleman who in early life had inadvertently swallowed a door-key. It was a curious fact that a medical student of dissipated habits, being present at the *post-mortem* examination, found means to escape unobserved from the room, with that position of the coats of the stomach upon which an exact model of the instrument was distinctly impressed, with which he hastened to a locksmith of doubtful character, who made a new key from the pattern so shown to him. With this key the medical student entered the house of the deceased gentleman, and committed a burglary to a large amount, for which he was subsequently tried and executed.

"The president wished to know what became of the original key after the lapse of years. Mr. Knight Bell replied that the gentleman was always much accustomed to punch, and it was supposed the acid had gradually devoured it.

"Dr. Neeshawts and several of the members were of opinion that the key must have lain very cold and heavy upon the gentleman's stomach.

"Mr. Knight Bell believed it did at first. It was worthy of remark, perhaps, that for some years the gentleman was troubled with nightmare, under the influence of

which he always imagined himself a wine-cellar door.

"Professor Muff related a very extraordinary and convincing proof of the wonderful efficacy of the system of infinitesimal doses, which the section were doubtless aware was based upon the theory that the very minutest amount of any given drug, properly dispersed through the human frame, would be productive of precisely the same result as a very large dose administered in the usual manner. Thus, the fortieth part of a grain of calomel was supposed to be equal to a five-grain calomel pill, and so on in proportion throughout the whole range of medicine. He had tried the experiment in a curious manner upon a publican who had been brought into the hospital with a broken head, and was cured upon the infinitesimal system in the incredibly short space of three months. This man was a hard drinker. He (Professor Muff) had dispersed three drops of rum through a bucket of water, and requested the man to drink the whole. What was the result? Before he had drunk a quarter, he was in a state of beastly intoxication; and five other men were made dead-drunk with the remainder.

"The president wished to know whether an infinitesimal dose of soda-water would have recovered them? Professor Muff replied that the twenty-fifth part of a teaspoonful, properly administered to each patient, would have sobered him immediately. The president remarked that this was a most important discovery, and he hoped the lord mayor and court of aldermen would patronize it immediately.

"A member begged to be informed whether it would be possible to administer—say, the twentieth part of a grain of bread and cheese to all grown-up paupers, and the fortieth part to children, with the same satisfying effect as their present allowance.

"Professor Muff was willing to stake his professional reputation on the perfect adequacy of such a quantity of food to the support of human life—in workhouses; the additional of the fifteenth part of a grain of pudding twice a week would render it a high diet.

"Professor Nogo called the attention of the section to a very extraordinary case of animal magnetism. A private watchman, being merely looked at by the operator from the opposite side of a wide street, was at once observed to be in a very drowsy and languid state. He was followed to his box, and being once slightly rubbed on the palms of the hands, fell into a sound sleep, in which he continued without intermission for ten hours.

"SECTION C—STATISTICS.
"HAY-LOFT, ORIGINAL PIG.

"PRESIDENT—MR. WOODENSCONSE. VICE-PRESIDENTS—MR. LEDBRAIN AND MR. TIMBERED.

"Mr. Slug stated to the section the result of some calculations he had made with great difficulty and labor, regarding the state of infant education among the middle classes of London. He found that, within a circle of three miles from the Elephant and Castle, the following were the names and numbers of children's books principally in circulation.

"He found that the proportion of Robinson Crusoes to Philip Quarles was as four and a half to one; and that the preponderance of Valentine and Orsons over Goody Two Shoeses was as three and an eight of the former to half a one of the latter; a comparison of Seven Champions with Simple Simons gave the same result. The ignorance that prevailed was lamentable. One child being asked whether he would rather be Saint George of England or a respectable tallow-chandler, instantly replied, 'Taint George of Ingland.' Another, a little boy of eight years old, was found be firmly impressed with a belief in the existence of dragons, and openly stated that it was his intention when he grew up, to rush forth sword in hand for the deliverance of captive princesses, and the promiscuous slaughter of giants. Not one child among the number interrogated had ever heard of Mungo Park—some inquiring whether he was at all connected with the black man that swept the crossing; and others whether he was in any way related to the Regent's Park. They had not the slightest conception of the commonest principles of mathematics, and considered Sinbad the Sailor the most enterprising voyager that the world had ever produced.

"A member strongly deprecating the use of all the other books mentioned, suggested that Jack and Jill might perhaps be exempted from the general censure, inasmuch as the hero and heroine, in the very outset of the tale, were depicted as going *up* a hill to fetch a pail of water, which was a labrious and useful occupation—supposing the family linen was being washed, for instance.

"Mr. Slug feared that the moral effect of this passage was more than counterbalanced by another in a subsequent part of the poem in which very gross allusion was made to the mode in which the heroine was personally chastised by her mother.

{{block center|"'For laughing at Jack's disaster':

besides, the whole work had this one great fault, *it was not true*.

"The president complimented the honorable member on the excellent distinction he had drawn. Several other members, too, dwelt upon the immense and urgent necessity of storing the minds of children with nothing but facts and figures; which process the president very forcibly remarked, had made them (the section) the men they were.

"Mr. Slug then stated some curious calculations respectmg the dogs'-meat barrows of London. He found that the total number of small carts and barrows engaged in dispensing provisions to the cats and dogs of the metropolis was one thousand seven hundred and forty-three. The average number of skewers delivered daily with the provender by each dogs'-meat cart or barrow was thirty-six. Now, multiplying the number of skewers so delivered, by the number of barrows, a total of sixty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight skewers daily would be obtained. Allowing that, of these sixty-two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight skewers, the odd two thousand seven hundred and forty-eight were accidentally devoured with the meat, by the most voracious of the animals supplied, it followed that sixty thousand skewers per day, or the enormous number of twenty-one millions nine hundred thousand skewers annually, were wasted in the kennels and dust-holes of London; which, if collected and warehoused, would in ten years' time afford a mass of timber more than sufficient for the construction of a first-rate vessel of war for the .use of her majesty's navy, to be called 'The Royal Skewer,' and to become under that name the terror of all the enemies of this island.

"Mr. X. Ledbrain read a very ingenious communication, from which it appeared that the total number of legs belonging to the manufacturing population of one great town in Yorkshire was, in round numbers, forty thousand, while the total number of chair and stool legs in their houses was only thirty thousand, which, upon the very favorable average of three legs to a seat, yielded only ten thousand seats in all. From this calculation it would appear—not taking wooden or cork legs into the account, but allowing two legs to every person—that ten thousand individuals (one half of the whole population) were either destitute of any rest for their legs at all, or passed the whole of their leisure time in sitting upon boxes.

"SECTION D.—MECHANICAL SCIENCE.
"COACH-HOUSE, ORIGINAL PIG.
PRESENT—MR. CARTER. VICE-PRESIDENTS—MR. TRUCK AND MR. WAGHORN.

"Professor Queerspeck exhibited an elegant model of a portable railway, neatly mounted in a green case, for the waistcoat pocket. By attaching this beautiful instrument to his boots, any bank or public office clerk could transport himself from his place of residence to his place of business, at the easy rate of sixty-five miles an hour, which, to gentlemen of sedentary pursuits, would be an incalculable advantage,

"The president was desirous of knowing whether it was necessary to have a level surface on which the gentleman was to run.

"Professor Queerspeck explained that city gentlemen would run in trains, being handcuffed together to prevent confusion or unpleasantness. For instance, trains

would start every morning at eight, nine, and ten o'clock, from Camden Town, Islington, Camberwell, Hackney, and various other places in which city gentlemen are accustomed to reside. It would be necessary to have a level, but he had provided for this difficulty by proposing that the best line that the circumstances would admit of should be taken through the sewers which undermine the streets of the metropolis, and which, well lighted by jets from the gas-pipes which ran immediately above them, would form a pleasant and commodious arcade, especially in winter-time, when the inconvenient custom of carrying umbrellas, now general, could be wholly dispensed with. In reply to another question, Professor Queerspeck stated that no substitute for the purposes to which these arcades were at present devoted had yet occurred to him, but that he hoped no fanciful objection on this head would be allowed to interfere with so great an undertaking.

"Mr. Jobba produced a forcing-machine on a novel plan, for bringing joint-stock railway shares prematurely to a premium. The instrument was in the form of an elegant gilt weather-glass of most dazzling appearance, and was worked behind by strings, after the manner of a pantomime trick, the strings being always pulled by the directors of the company to which the machine belonged. The quicksilver was so ingeniously placed, that when the acting directors held shares in their pockets, figures denoting very small expenses and very large returns appeared upon the glass; but the moment the directors parted with these pieces of paper, the estimate of needful expenditures suddenly increased itself to an immense extent, while the statements of certain profits became reduced in the same proportion. Mr. Jobba stated that the machine had been in constant requisition for some months past, and he had never once known it to fail.

"A member expressed his opinion that it was extremely neat and pretty, he wished to know whether it was not liable to accidental derangement? Mr. Jobba said that the whole machine was undoubtedly liable to be blown up, but that was the only objection to it.

"Professor Nogo arrived from the anatomical section to exhibit a model of a safety fire-escape, which could be fixed at any time, in less than half an hour, and by means of which, the youngest or most infirm persons (successfully resisting the progress of the flames until it was quite ready) could be preserved if they merely balanced themselves for a few minutes on the sill of their bedroom window, and got into the escape without falling into the street. The professor stated that the number of boys who had been rescued in the day-time by this machine from houses which were not on fire was almost incredible. Not a conflagration had occurred in the whole of London for many months past to which the escape had not been carried on the very next day, and put in action before a concourse of persons.

"The president inquired whether there was not some difficulty in ascertaining which was the top of the machine, and which the bottom, in cases of pressing emergency?

"Professor Nogo explained that of course it could not be expected to act quite as well when there was a fire as when there was not a fire; but in the former case he thought it would be of equal service whether the top were up or down."

With the last section, our correspondent concludes his most able and faithful report, which will never cease to reflect credit upon him for his scientific attainments, and upon us for our enterprising spirit. It is needless to take a review of the subjects which have been discussed; of the mode in which they have been examined; of the great truths which they have elicited. They are now before the world, and we leave them to read, to consider, and to profit.

The place of meeting for next year has undergone discussion, and has at length been decided; regard being had to, and evidence being taken upon, the goodness of its wines, the supply of its markets, the hospitality of its inhabitants, and the quality of its hotels.

We hope at this next meeting our correspondent may again be present, and that we may be once more the means of placing his communications before the world. Until that period we have been prevailed upon to allow this member of our Miscellany to be retailed to the public, or wholesaled to the trade, without any advance upon our usual price.

We have only to add, that the committees are now broken up, and that Mudfog is once again restored to its accustomed tranquillity—that professors and members have had balls, and *soirees*, and suppers, and great mutual complimentations, and have at length dispersed to their several homes—whither all good wishes and joys attend them, until next year!

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.
Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom