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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Full Report of the Second Meeting of the Mudfog Association

Charles Dickens

In October last, we did ourselves the immortal credit of recording, at an enormous expense, and by dint of exertions unparalleled in the history of periodical publications, the proceedings of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Every Thing, which in that month held its first great half-yearly meeting, to the wonder and delight of the whole empire. We announced, at the conclusion of that extraordinary and most remarkable report, that when the second meeting of the society should take place, we should be found again at our post renewing our gigantic and spirited endeavors, and once more making the world ring with the accuracy, authenticity, immeasurable superiority, and intense remarkability of our account of its proceedings. In redemption of this pledge, we caused to be dispatched, per steam, to Oldcastle, at which place this second meeting of the society was held on the 20th instant, the same superhumanly endowed gentleman who furnished the former report, and who—gifted by nature with transcendent abilities, and furnished by us with a body of assistants scarcely inferior to himself—has forwarded a series of letters, which for faithfulness of description, power of language, fervor of thought, happiness of expression, and importance of subject-matter, have no equal in the epistolary literature of any age or country. We give this gentleman's correspondence entire, and in the order in which it reached our office.

"Saloon of Steamer, Thursday night, half-past eight.

"When I left New Burlington Street this evening in the hackney cabriolet, number four thousand two hundred and eighty-five, I experienced sensations as novel as they were oppressive. A sense of importance of the task I had undertaken; a consciousness that I was leaving London, and stranger still, going somewhere else; a feeling of loneliness, and a sensation of jolting quite bewildered my thoughts, and for a time rendered me even insensible to the presence of my carpet-bag and hat-box. I shall ever feel grateful to the driver of a Blackwall omnibus, who, by thrusting the pole of his vehicle through the small door of the cabriolet, awakened me from a tumult of imaginings that are wholly indescribable. But of such materials is our imperfect nature composed!

"I am happy to say that I am the first passenger on board, and shall thus be enabled to give you an account of all that happens in the order of its occurrence.

The chimney is smoking a good deal, and so are the crew; and the captain, I am informed, is very drunk in a little bouse upon the deck, something like a black turnpike. I should infer from all I hear, that he has got the steam up

"You will readily guess with what feelings I have just made the discovery that my berth is in the same closet with those engaged by Professor Woodensconce, Mr. Slug, and Professor Grime. Professor Woodensconce has taken the shelf above me, and Mr. Slug and Professor Grime, the two shelves opposite. Their luggage has already arrived. On Mr. Slug's bed is a long tin tube of about three inches in diameter, carefully closed at both ends. What can this contain? Some powerful instrument of a new construction doubtlees."

" Ten minutes past nine.

"Nobody has yet arrived, nor has anything fresh come in my way except several joints of beef and mutton, from which I conclude that a good plain dinner has been provided for tomorrow. There is a singular smell below, which gave me some uneasiness at first; but, as the steward says it is always there, and never goes away, I am quite comfortable again. I le;irn from this man that the different sections will be distributed at the Black Roy and Stomach-Ache, and the Boot-Jack and Countenance. If this intelligence be true, and I have no reason to doubt it, your readers will draw such conclusions as their different opinions may suggest."I write down these remarks as they occur to me, or as the facts come to my knowledge, in order that my first impressions may lose nothing of their original vividness. I shall dispatch them in small packets as opportunities arise."

" Half-past nine.

"Some dark object has just appeared upon the wharf. I think it is a travelling carriage."

" A quarter to ten.

"No, it isn't."

" Half-past ten.

"The passengers are pouring in every instant. Four omnibuses full have just arrived upon the wharf, and all is bustle and activity. The noise and confusion are very great. Cloths are laid in the cabins, and the steward is placing blue plates full of knobs of cheese at equal distances down the centre of the tables. He drops a great many knobs; but being used to it, picks them up again with great dexterity, and, after wiping them on his sleeve, throws them back into the plates. He is a young man of exceedingly prepossessing appearance—either dirty or a mulatto, but I think the former.

"An interesting old gentleman who came to the wharf in an omnibus has just

quarrelled violently with the porters, and is staggering toward the vessel with a large trunk in his arms. I trust and hope that he may reach it in safety; but the board he has to cross is narrow and slippery. Was that a splash? Gracious powers!

"I have just returned from the deck. The trunk is standing upon the extreme brink of the wharf, but the old gentleman is nowhere to be seen. The watchman is not sure whether he went down or not, but promises to drag for him the first thing to-morrow morning. May his humane efforts prove successful! "Professor Nogo has this moment arrived with his night-cap on under his hat. He has ordered a glass of cold brandy-and-water, with a hard biscuit and a basin, and has gone straight to bed. What can this mean?

"The three other scientific gentlemen to whom I have already alluded have come on board, and have all tried their beds, with the exception of Professor Woodensconce, who sleeps in one of the top ones, and can't get into it. Mr. Slug, who sleeps in the other top one is unable to get out of his, and is to have his supper handed up by a boy. I have had the honor to introduce myself to these gentlemen, and we have amicably arranged the order in which we shall retire to rest ; which is necessary to agree upon, because, although the cabin is very comfortable, there is not room for more than one gentleman to be out of bed at a time, and even he must take his boots off in the passage.

"As I anticipated, the knobs of cheese were provided for the passengers' supper, and are now in course of consumption. Your readers will be surprised to hear that Professor Woodensconce has abstained from cheese for eight years, although he takes butter in considerable quantities. Professor Grime, having lost several teeth, is unable, I observe, to eat his crusts without previously soaking them in his bottled porter. How interesting are these peculiarities!"

" Half-past eleven.

"Professors Woodensconce and Grime, with a degree of good humor that delights us all, have just arranged to toss for a bottle of mulled port. There has been some discussion whether the payment should be decided by the first toss or the best out of three. Eventually the latter course has been determined on. Deeply do I wish that both gentlemen could win; but that being impossible, I own that my personal aspirations (I speak as an individual, and do not compromise either you or your readers by this expression of feeling) are with Professor Woodensconce. I have backed that gentleman to the amount of eighteen pence."

" Twenty minutes to twelve.

"Professor Grime has inadvertently tossed his half-crown out of one of the cabin windows, and it has been arranged the steward shall toss for him. Bets are offered on any side to any amount, but there are no takers.

"Professor Woodensconce has just called 'woman;' but the coin having lodged in a beam is a long time coming down again. The interest and suspense of this one moment are beyond anything that can be imagined."

{{right|" Twelve o'clock. "The mulled port is smoking on the table before me, and Professor Grime has won. Tossing is a game of chance; but on every ground, whether of public or private character, intellectual endowments, or scientific attainments, I cannot help expressing my opinion that Professor Woodensconce *ought* to have come off victorious. There is an exultation about Professor Grime incompatible, I fear, with greatness."

"A quarter-past twelve.

"Professor Grime continues to exult, and to boast of his victory in no very measured terms, observing that he always does win, and that he knew it would be a 'head' beforehand, with many other remarks of a similar nature. Surely this gentleman is not so lost to every feeling of decency and propriety as not to feel and know the superiority of Professor Woodensconce. Is Professor Grime insane? or does he wish to be reminded in plain language of his true position in society, and the precise level of his acquirements and abilities? Professor Grime will do well to look to this."

"One o'clock.

"I am writing in bed. The small cabin is illuminated by the feeble light of a flickering lamp suspended from the ceiling; Professor Grime is lying on the opposite shelf, on the broad of his back, with his mouth wide open. The scene is indescribably solemn. The ripple of the tide, the noise of the sailors' feet overhead, the gruff voices on the river, the dogs on the shore, the snoring of the passengers, and a constant creaking of every plank in the vessel, are the only sounds that meet the ear. With these exceptions, all is profound silence.

"My curiosity has been within the last moment very much excited. Sir. Slug, who lies above Professor Grime, has cautiously withdrawn the curtains of his berth, and after looking anxiously out, as if to satisfy himself that his companions are asleep, has taken up the tin tube of which I have before spoken and is regarding it with great interest. What rare mechanical combinations can be obtained in that mysterious case? It is evidently a profound secret to all."

"A quarter past one.

"The behavior of Mr. Slug grows more and more mysterious, He has unscrewed the top of the tube, and now renews his observation upon his companions; evidently to make sure that he is wholly unobserved. He is clearly on the eve of some great experiment. Pray heaven that it be not a dangerous one; but the interests of science must be promoted, and I am prepared for the worst."

" Five minutes later.

"He has produced a large pair of scissors, and drawn a roll of some substance, not unlike parchment in appearance, from the tin case. The experiment is about to begin. I must strain my eyes to the utmost, in the attempt to follow its minutest operation."

" Twenty minutes before two.

"I have at length been enabled to ascertain that the tin tube contains a few yards of some celebrated plaster recommended—as I discover on regarding the label attentively through my eyeglass—as a preservative against sea-sickness. Mr. Slug has cut it up into small portions, and is now sticking it over himself in every direction."

" Three o'clock.

"Precisely a quarter of an hour ago we weighed anchor, and the machinery was suddenly put in motion with a noise so appalling, that Professor Woodensconce, who had ascended to his berth by means of a platform of carpet-bags arranged by himself on geometrical principles, darted from his shelf headforemost, and gaining his feet with all the rapidity of extreme terror, ran wildly into the ladies' cabin; under the impression that we were sinking, and uttering loud cries for aid. I am assured that the scene which ensued baffles all description. There were one hundred and forty-seven ladies in their respective berths at the time.

"Mr. Slug has remarked, as an additional instance of the extreme ingenuity of the steam-engine as applied to purposes of navigation, that, in whatever part of the vessel a passenger's berth may be situated, the machinery always appears to be exactly under his pillow. He intends stating this very beautiful, though simple, discovery to the association."

" Half-past three.

"We are still in smooth water; that is to say, in as Smooth water as a steam-vessel ever can be, for, as Professor Woodensconce, who has just woke up, learnedly remarks, another great point of ingenuity about a steamer is that it always carries a little storm with it. You can scarcely conceive how exciting the jerking pulsation of the ship becomes. It is a matter of positive difficulty to get to sleep."

"Friday afternoon, six o'clock.

"I regret to inform you that Mr. Slug's plaster has proved of no avail. He is in great agony, but has applied several large additional pieces, notwithstanding. How affecting is this extreme devotion to science and pursuit of knowledge under the most trying circumstances!

"We were extremely happy this morning and the breakfast was one of the most animated description. Nothing unpleasant occurred until noon, with the exception of Dr. Foxey's brown silk umbrella and white hat becoming entangled in the machinery while he was explaining to a knot of ladies the construction of the steam-engine. I fear the gravy-soup for lunch was injudicious. We lost a great many passengers almost immediately afterwards."

" Half-past six.

"I am again in bed. Anything so heart-rending as Mr. Slug's sufferings it has never yet been my lot to witness."

" Seven o'clock.

"A messenger has just come down for a clean pocket-handkerchief from Professor Woodensconce's bag, that unfortunate gentleman being quite unable to leave the deck, and imploring constantly to be thrown overboard. From this man I understand that Professor Nogo, though in a state of utter exhaustion, yet clings feebly to the hard biscuit and cold brandy-and-water, under the impression that they will yet restore him. Such is the triumph of mind over matter.

"Professor Grime is in bed, to all appearances quite well; but he *will* eat, and it is disagreeable to see him. Has this gentleman no sympathy with the sufferings of his fellow-creatures? If he has, on what principle can he call for mutton-chops, —and smile?"

"Black Boy and Stomache-Ache, Oldcastle Saturday noon,

"You will be happy to learn that I have at length arrived here in safety. The town is excessively crowded, and all the private lodgings and hotels are filled with *savans* of both sexes. The tremendous assemblage of intellect that one encounters in every street is in the last degree overwhelming.

"Notwithstanding the throng of people here, I have been fortunate enough to meet with very comfortable accommodations on very reasonable terms, having secured a sofa in the first-floor passage at one guinea per night, which includes permission to take my meals in the bar, on condition that I walk about the streets at other times, to make room for other gentlemen similarly situated. I have been over the outhouses intended to be devoted to the reception of the various sections, both here and at the Boot-Jack and Countenance, and am much delighted with the arrangements. Nothing can exceed the fresh appearance of the sawdust with which the floors are sprinkled. The forms are unplaned deal, and the general effect, as you can well imagine, is extremely beautiful."

" Half-past nine.

"The number and rapidity of the arrivals are quite bewildering. Within the last ten minutes a stage-coach has driven up to the door, filled, inside and out, with distinguished characters, comprising Mr. Muddlebrains, Mr. Drawley, Professor Muff, Mr. X. Misty, Mr. X. X. Misty, Mr. Purblind, Professor Rummin, The Honorable and Reverend Mr. Long Ears, Professor John Ketch, Sir William Joltered, Dr. Buffer, Mr. Smith, of London, Mr. Brown, of Edinburgh, Sir Hookham Snivey, and Professor Pumpkinskull. The last ten named gentlemen were wet through, and looked extremely intelligent."

" Sunday, two o'clock, p. m.

"The Honorable and Reverend Mr. Long Ears, accompanied by Sir William Joltered, walked and drove this morning. They accomplished the former feat in boots, and the latter in a hired fly. This has naturally given rise to much discussion.

"I have just learned that an interview has taken place at the Boot-Jack and Countenance between Sowster, the active and intelligent beadle of this place, and Professor Pumpkinskull, who, as your readers are doubtless aware, is an influential member of the council. I forbear to communicate any of the rumors to which this very extraordinary proceeding has given rise until I have seen Sowster, and endeavor to ascertain the truth from him."

"Half-past six.

"I engaged a donkey-chaise shortly after writing the above, and proceeded at a brisk trot in the direction of Sowster's residence, passing through a beautiful expanse of country, with red brick buildings on either side, and stopping in the market-place to observe the spot where Mr. Kwakley's hat was blown off yesterday. It is an uneven piece of paving, but has certainly no appearance which would lead one to suppose that any such event had recently occurred there. From this point I proceeded—passing the gas-works and tallow-melter's—to a lane which had been pointed out to me as the beadle's place of residence; and before I had driven a dozen yards further, I had the good fortune to meet Sowster himself, advancing toward me.

"Sowster is a fat man, with a more enlarged development of that peculiar formation of countenance which is vulgarly termed a double chin than I remember to have ever seen before. He has also a very red nose, which he attributes to a habit of early rising—so red, indeed, that but for this explanation I should have supposed it to proceed from occasional inebriety. He informed me that he did not feel at liberty to relate what had passed between himself and Professor Pumpkinskull, but had no objection to state that it was connected with a matter of police regulation, and added with a peculiar significance, 'Never wos sitch times!'

"You will easily believe that this intelligence gave me considerable surprise, not wholly unmixed with anxiety, and that I lost no time in waiting on Professor Pumpkinskull, and stating the object of my visit. After a few moments' reflection, the professor, who, I am bound to say, behaved with the utmost politeness, openly avowed, that he had requested Sowster to attend on the Monday morning at the Boot-Jack and Countenance, to keep off the boys; and that he had further desired that the under-beadle might be stationed, with the same object, at the Black-boy and Stomach-Ache!

"Now I leave this unconstitutional proceeding to your comments and the consideration of your readers. I have yet to learn that a beadle, without the precincts of a church, churchyard, or work-house, and acting otherwise than under the express orders of churchwardens and overseers in council assembled, to enforce the law against people who come upon the parish, and other offenders, has any lawful authority whatever over the rising youth of this country. I have yet to learn that a beadle can be called out by any civilian to exercise a domination and despotism over the boys of Britain. I have yet to learn that a beadle will be permitted by the commissioners of poor-law regulation to wear out the soles and heels of his boots in illegal interference with the liberties of people not proved poor, or otherwise criminal. I have yet to learn that a beadle has power to stop up the queen's highway at his will and pleasure, or that the whole width of the street is not free and open to any man, boy, or woman in existence, up to the very walls of the houses—ay, be they Black Boys and Stomach-aches, or Boot-jacks and Countenances, I care not."

" Nine o'clock.

"I have procured a local artist to make a faithful sketch of the tyrant Sowster, which, as he has acquired this infamous celebrity, you will no doubt wish to have engraved, for the purpose of presenting a copy with every copy of your next number. The under-beadle has consented to write his life, but it is to be strictly anonymous.



"The likeness is of course from the life, and complete in every respect. Even if I had been totally ignorant of the man's real character, and it had been placed before me without remark, I should have shuddered involuntarily. There is an intense malignity of expression in the features, and a baleful ferocity of purpose in the ruffian's eyes, which appalls and sickens. His whole air is rampant with cruelty, nor is the stomach less characteristic of his demoniac propensities.

{{right|" Monday. "The great day has at length arrived. I have neither eyes, nor ears, nor pens, nor ink, nor paper for anything but the wonderful proceedings

that have astounded my senses. Let me collect my energies and proceed to the account.

"SECTION A.—ZOOLOGY AND BOTANY.
" FRONT PARLOR, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.
PRESIDENT—SIR WILLIAM JOLTERKD. VICE-PRESIDENTS—MR.
MUDDLEBRAINS AND MR. DRAWLEY.

"Mr. X. X. Misty communicated some remarks on the disappearance of dancing bears from the streets of London, with observations on the exhibition of monkeys as connected with barrel-organs. The writer had observed with feelings of the utmost pain and regret, that some years ago a sudden and unaccountable change in the public taste took place with reference to itinerant bears, who, being discountenanced by the populace, gradually fell off one by one from the streets of the metropolis, until not one remained to create a taste for natural history in the breasts of the poor and uninstructed. One bear, indeed—a brown and ragged animal,—had lingered about the haunts of his former triumphs, with a worn and dejected visage and feeble limbs, and had essayed to wield his quarter-staff for the amusement of the multitude; but hunger and an utter want of any due recompense for his abilities, had at length driven him from the field, and it was only too probable that he had fallen a sacrifice to the rising taste for grease. He regretted to add that a similar and no less lamentable change had taken place with reference to monkeys. Those delightful animals had formerly been almost as plentiful as the organs on the tops of which they were accustomed to sit; the proportion in the year 1829, it appeared by the parliamentary return, being as one monkey to three organs. Owing however to an altered taste in musical instruments and the substitution in a great measure of narrow boxes of music for organs, which left the monkeys nothing to sit upon, this source of public amusement was wholly dried up. Considering it a matter of the deepest importance in connection with national education, that the people should not lose such opportunities of making themselves acquainted with the manners and customs of two most interesting species of animals, the author submitted that some measures should be immediately taken for the restoration of those pleasing and truly intellectual amusements.

"The president inquired by what means the honorable member proposed to attain this most desirable end? "The author submitted that it could be most fully and satisfactorily accomplished, if her majesty's government would cause to be brought over to England, and maintained at the public expense, and for the public amusement, such a number of bears as would enable every quarter of the town to be visited—say at least by three bears a week. No difficulty whatever need be experienced in providing a fitting place for the reception of those animals, as a commodious bear-garden could be erected in the immediate neighborhood of both houses of parliament; obviously the most proper and

eligible spot for such an establishment.

"Professor Mull doubted very much whether any correct ideas of natural history were propagated by the means to which the honorable member had so ably adverted. On the contrary, he believed that they had been the means of diffusing very incorrect and imperfect notions on the subject. He spoke from personal observations and personal experience, when he said that many children of great abilities had been induced to believe, from what they had observed in the streets, at and before the period to which the honorable gentleman had referred, that all monkeys were born in red coats and spangles, and that their hats and features also came by nature. He wished to know distinctly whether the honorable gentleman attributed the want of encouragement the bears had met with to the decline of public taste in that respect, or to a want of ability on the part of the bears themselves?

"Mr. X. X. Misty replied that he could not bring himself to believe but that there must be a great deal of floating talent among the bears and monkeys generally; which, in the absence of-any proper encouragement, was dispersed in other directions.

"Professor Piimpkinskull wished to take that opportunity of calling the attention of the section to a most important and serious point. The author of the treatise just read had alluded to the prevalent taste for bear's grease as a means of promoting the growth of hair, which undoubtedly was diffused to a very great and, as it appeared to him, very alarming extent. No gentleman attending that section could fail to be aware of the fact that the youth of the present age evinced, by their behavior in the streets and all places of public resort, a considerable lack of that gallantry and gentlemanly feeling which, in more ignorant times, had been thought becoming. He wished to know whether it were possible that a constant outward application of bear's grease by the young gentlemen about town, had imperceptibly infused into those unhappy persons something of the nature and quality of the bear? He shuddered as he threw out the remark; but if this theory, on inquiry, should prove to be well founded, it would at once explain a great deal of unpleasant eccentricity of behavior, which, without some such discovery, was wholly unaccountable.

"The president highly complimented the learned gentleman on his most valuable suggestion, which produced the greatest effect upon the assembly; and remarked that only a week previous he had seen some young gentleman at a theatre eyeing a box of ladies with a fierce intensity, which nothing but the influence of some brutish appetite could possibly explain. It was dreadful to reflect that our youth were so rapidly verging into a generation of bears.

"After a scene of scientific enthusiasm it was resolved that this important question should be immediately submitted to the consideration of the council.

"The president wished to know whether any gentleman could inform the section what had become of the dancing dogs?

"A member replied, after some hesitation, that on the day after three glee-singers had been committed to prison as criminals by a late most zealous police-magistrate of the metropolis, the dogs had abandoned their professional duties, and dispersed themselves in different quarters of the town to gain a livelihood by less dangerous means. He was given to understand that since that period they had supported themselves by lying in wait for and robbing blind men's poodles.

"Mr. Flummery exhibited a twig, claiming to be a veritable branch of that noble tree known to naturalists as the Shakespeare, which has taken root in every land and climate, and gathered under the shade of its broad green boughs the great family of mankind. The learned gentleman remarked that the twig had been undoubtedly called by other names in its time; but that it had been pointed out to him by an old lady in Warwickshire, where the great tree had grown, as a shoot of the genuine Shakespeare, by which name he begged to introduce it to his countrymen.

"The president wished to know what botanical definition the honorable gentleman could afford of the curiosity?

"Mr. Flummery expressed his opinion that it was a DECIDED PLANT.

"SECTION B.—DISPLAY OF MODELS AND MECHANICAL SCIENCE.
"LARGE ROOM, BOOT-JACK AND COUNTENANCE.
"PRESIDENT—MR. MALLET. VICE-PRESIDENTS—MESSRS. LEAVER AND SCROO.

"Mr. Crinkles exhibited a most beautiful and delicate machine, of a little larger size than an ordinary snuff-box, manufactured entirely by himself, and composed exclusively of steel; by the aid of which more pockets were picked in one hour than by the present slow and tedious process in four-and-twenty. The inventor remarked that it had been put into active operation in Fleet Street, the Strand, and other thoroughfares, and had never been once known to fail.

"After some slight delay, occasioned by the various members of the section buttoning their pockets, the president narrowly inspected the invention, and declared that he had never seen a machine of more beautiful or exquisite construction. Would the inventor be good enough to inform the section whether he had taken any and what means for bringing it into general operation?

"Mr. Crinkles stated that after encountering some preliminary difficulties, he had succeeded in putting himself in communication with Mr. Fogle Hunter, and other gentlemen connected with the swell mob, who had awarded the invention the

very highest and most unqualified approbaition. He regretted to say, however, that those distinguished practitioners, in common with a gentleman of the name of Gimlet-eyed Tommy, and other members of a secondary grade of the profession whom he was understood to represent, entertained an insuperable objection to its being brought into general use, on the ground that it would have the inevitable effect of almost entirely superseding manual labor, and throwing a great number of highly deserving persons out of empoyment.

"The president hoped that no such fanciful objections would be allowed to stand in the way of such a great public improvement.

"Mr. Crinkles hoped so too; but he feared that if the gentlemen of the swell mob persevered in their objection, nothing could be done.

"Professor Grime suggested that surely in that case her majesty's government might be prevailed upon to take it up.

"Mr. Crinkles said that if the objection were found to be insuperable, he should apply to parliament, who, he thought, could not fail to recognize the utility of the invention.

"The president observed that up to his time parliament had certainly got on very well without it; but as they did their business on a very large scale, he had no doubt they would gladly adopt the improvement. His only fear was that the machine might be worn out by constant working.

"Mr. Coppernose called the attention of the section to a proposition of great magnitude and interest, illustrated by a vast number of models, and stated with much clearness and perspicuity, in a treatise entitled 'Practical suggestions on the necessity of providing some harmless and wholesome relaxation for the young noblemen of England.' His proposition was that a space of ground of not less than ten miles in length and four in breadth should be purchased by a new company, to be incorporated by act of parliament, and inclosed by a brick wall of not less than twelve feet in height. He proposed that it should be laid out with highway roads, turnpikes, bridges, miniature villages, and every object that could conduce to the comfort and glory of four-in-hand clubs, so that they might be fairly presumed to require no drive beyond it. This delightful retreat would be fitted up with most commodious and extensive stables, fur the convenience of such of the nobility and gentry as had a taste for hostlering, and with houses of entertainment furnished in the most expensive and handsome style. It would be further provided with whole streets of door-knockers and bell-handles, of extra size, so constructed that they could be easily wrenched off at night, and regularly screed on again by attendants provided for the purpose, every day. There would also be gas-lamps of real glass, which could be broken at a comparatively small expense per dozen, and a broad and handsome foot-

pavement for gentlemen to drive their cabriolets upon when they were humorously disposed—for the full enjoyment of which feat, live pedestrians would be procured from the workhouse at a very small charge per head. The place being inclosed and carefully screened from the intrusion of the public, there would be no objection to gentlemen laying aside any any article of their costume that was considered to interfere with a pleasant frolic, or, indeed, to their walking about without any costume at all, if they liked that better. In short, every facility of enjoyment would be afforded that the most gentlemanly person could possibly desire. But as even these advantages would be incomplete, unless there were some means provided of enabling the nobility and gentry to display their prowess when they sallied forth after dinner, and as some inconvenience might be experienced in the event of their being reduced to the necessity of pummelling each other, the inventor bad turned his attention to the construction of an entirely new police-force, composed exclusively of automaton figures, which, with the assistance of the ingenious Signor Gagliardi, of Windmill Street, in the Haymarket, he had succeeded in making, with such nicety that a policeman, cab-driver, or old woman, made upon the principle of the models exhibited, would walk about until knocked down, like any real man; nay, more, if set upon and beaten by six or eight noblemen or gentlemen, after it was down the figure would utter divers groans, mingled with entreaties for mercy; thus rendering the illusion complete, and the enjoyment perfect. But the invention did not stop even here, for station-houses would be built, containing good beds for noblemen and gentlemen during the night, and in the morning they would repair to a commodious police-office, where a pantomimic investigation would take place before automaton magistrates—quite equal to life—who would fine them so many counters, with which they would be previously provided for the purpose. This office would be furnished with an inclined plane for the convenience of any nobleman or gentleman who might wish to bring in his horse as a witness, and the prisoners would be at perfect liberty, as they were now, to interrupt the complainants as much as they pleased, and to make any remarks that they thought proper. The charge of those amusements would amount to very little more than they already cost, and the inventor submitted that the public would be much benefited and comforted by the proposed arrangement.

"Professor Nogo wished to be informed what amount of automaton police-force it was proposed to raise in the first instance.

"Mr. Coppernose replied that it was proposed to begin with seven divisions of police of a score each, lettered from A to G inclusive. It was proposed that not more than half the number should be placed on active duty, and that the remainder should be kept on shelves in the police-office, ready to be called out at a moment's notice.

"The president, awarding the utmost merit to the ingenious gentleman who had

originated the idea, doubted whether the automaton police would quite answer the purpose. lie feared that noblemen and gentlemen would perhaps require the excitement of thrashing living subjects.

"Mr. Coppernose submitted, that as the usual odds in such cases were ten noblemen to one policeman or cab-driver, it could make very little difference, in point of excitement, whether the policeman or cab-driver were a man or a block. The great advantage would be that the policeman's limb might be knocked off, and yet he would be in a condition to do duty next day. lie might even give his evidence next morning with his head in his hand, and give it equally well.

"Professor Muff.—Will you allow me to ask you, sir, of what materials it is intended that the magistrates' heads shall be composed?

"Mr. Coppernose.—The magistrates will have wooden heads of course, and they will be made of the toughest and thickest materials that can possibly be obtained.

"Professor Muff.—I am quite satisfied. This is a great invention.

"Professor Nogo.—I see but one objection to it. It appears to me that the magistrates ought to talk.

"Mr. Coppernose no sooner heard this suggestion than he touched a small spring in each of the two models of magistrates which were placed upon the table; one of the figures immediately began to exclaim with great volubility, that he was sorry to see gentlemen hi such a situation, and the other to express a fear that the policeman was intoxicated.

"The section as with one accord declared with a shout of applause, that the invention was complete; and the president, much excited, retired with Mr. Coppernose, to lay it before the council. On his return,—"Mr. Tickle displayed his newly invented spectacles, which enabled the wearer to discern in very bright colors objects at a great distance, and rendered him wholly blind to those immediately before him. It was, he said, a most valuable and useful invention, based strictly upon the principle of the human eye.

"The president required some information upon this point. He had yet to learn that the human eye was remarkable for the peculiarities of which the honorable gentleman had spoken.

"Mr. Tickle was rather astonished to hear this, when the president could not fail to be aware that a large number of most excellent persons and great statesmen could see with the naked eye most marvellous horrors on West India plantations, while they could discern nothing whatever in the interior of Manchester cotton-mills. He must know, too, with what quickness of perception most people could discover their neighbor's faults, and how very blind they were to their own. If the

president, differed from the great majority of men in this respect, his eye was a defective one, and it was to assist his vision that these glasses were made.

"Mr. Blank exhibited a model of a fashionable annual, composed of copper-plates, gold leaf, and silk boards, and worked entirely by milk and water.

"Mr. Prosee, after examining the machine, declared it to be so ingeniously composed, that he was wholly unable to discover how it went on at all.

"Mr. Blank.—Nobody can, and that is the beauty of it.

"SECTION C.—ANATOMY AND MEDICINE.
"BAR-ROOM, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.
"PRESIDENT—DR. SOEMUP. VICE-PI5SIDENTS—MESSRS. PESSEL AND MORTAR.

"Dr. Grummidge stated to the section a most interesting case of monomania, and described the course of treatment he had pursued with perfect success. The patient was a married lady in the middle rank of life, who, having seen another lady at an evening party in a full suit of pearls, was suddenly seized with a desire to possess a simular equipment, although her husband's finances were by no means equal to the necessary outlay. Finding her wish ungratified, she fell sick, and the symptoms soon became so alarming, that he. Dr. Grummidge, was called in. At this period the prominent tokens of the disorder were sullenness, a total indisposition to perform domestic duties, great peevishness, and extreme languor, except when pearls were mentioned, at which times the pulse quickened, the eyes grew brighter, the pupils dilated, and the patient, after various incoherent exclamations, burst into a passion of tears and exclaimed that nobody cared for her, and that she wished herself dead. Finding that the patient's appetite was affected in the presence of company, he began by ordering a total abstinence from all stimulants, and forbidding any sustenance but weak gruel; he then took twenty ounces of blood, applied a blister under each ear, one upon the chest, and another on the back; having done which, and administered five grains of calomel, he left the patient to her repose. The next day she was somewhat low, but decidedly better; and all appearances of irritation were removed. The next day she improved still further, and on the next again. On the fourth there was some appearance of a return of the old symptoms, which no sooner developed themselves than he administered another dose of calomel, and left strict orders, that unless a decidedly favorable change occurred within two hours, the patient's head should be immediately shaved to the very last curl. From that moment she began to mend, and in less than four-and-twenty hours was perfectly restored; she did not now betray the least emotion at the sight or mention of pearls or any other ornaments. She was cheerful and good-humored, and a most beneficial change had been effected in her whole temperament and condition.

"Mr. Pipkin, M. R. C. S, read a short but most interesting communication in which he sought to prove the complete belief of Sir William Courtenay, otherwise Thom, recently shot at Canterbury, in the homœopathic system. The section would bear in mind that one of the homœopathic doctrines was, that infinitesimal doses of any medicine which would occasion the disease under which the patient labored, supposing him to be in a healthy state, would cure it. Now it was a remarkable circumstance—proved in the evidence—that the diseased Thom employed a woman to follow him about all day with a pail of water, assuring her that one drop, a purely homœopathic remedy, the section would observe, placed upon his tongue after death, would restore him. What was the obvious inference? That Thom, who was marching and countermarching in osier beds, and other swampy places, was impressed with a presentiment that he should be drowned; in which case, had his instructions been complied with, he could not fail to have been brought to life again instantly by his own prescriptions. As it was, if this woman, or any other person, had administered an infinitesimal dose of lead and gunpowder, immediately after he fell, he would have recovered forthwith. But unhappily the woman concerned did not possess the power of reasoning by analogy, or carrying out a principal, and thus the unfortunate gentleman had been sacrificed to the ignorance of the peasantry.

SECTION D.—STATISTICS.
"OUT-HOUSE, BLACK BOY AND STOMACH-ACHE.
"PRESIDENT—MR. SLUG. VICE-PRESIDENTS—MESSRS. NOAKES AND STYLES.

"Mr. Kwakley stated the result of some most ingenious statistical inquiries relative to the difference between the value of the qualification of several members of parliament, as published to the world, and its real nature and amount. After reminding the section that every member of parliament for a town or borough was supposed to possess a clear freehold estate of three hundred pounds per annum, the honorable gentleman excited great amusement and laughter by stating the exact amount of free-hold property possessed by a column of legislators, in which he had included himself. It appeared from this table that the amount of such income possessed by each was pounds, shillings, and pence, yielding an average of the same. (Great laughter.) It was pretty well known that there were accommodating gentlemen in the habit of furnishing new members with temporary qualifications, to the ownership of which they swore solemnly, of course, as a mere matter of form. He argued from these data that it was wholly unnecessary for members of parliament to possess any property at all, especially as, when they had none, the public could get them so much cheaper.

"SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION E.—UMBUGOLOGY AND DITCH—WATERISTICS.
"PRESIDENT—MR. GRUB. VICE-PRESIDENTS—MESSRS. DULL, AND DUMMY.

"A paper was read by the secretary, descriptive of a bay pony with one eye, which had been seen by the author standing in a butcher's cart standing at the corner of Newgate Market. The communication described the author of the paper as having in the prosecution of a mercantile pursuit, betaken himself one Saturday morning last summer from Somers Town to Cheapside; in the course of which expedition he had beheld the extraordinary appearance above described. The pony had one distinct eye; it had been pointed out by his friend Captain Blunderbore of the Horse Marines, who assisted the author in his search, that whenever he winked his eye he whisked his tail, possibly to drive the flies off, but that he always winked and whisked at the same time. The animal was lean, spavined and tottering; and the author proposed to constitute it of the family of *Fltfordogsmeataurious*. It certainly did occur to him that there was no case on record of a pony with one clearly defined and distinct organ of vision, winking and whisking at the same moment.

"Mr. Q. J. Snuffletoffle had heard of a pony winking his eye, and likewise of a pony whisking his tail, but whether they were two ponies or the same pony he could not undertake positively to say. At all events he was acquainted with no authenticated instance of a simultaneous winking and whisking, and he really could not but doubt the existence of such a marvellous pony in opposition to all those natural laws by which ponies were governed, deferring, however, to the mere question of his one organ of vision, might he suggest the possibility of this pony having been literally half asleep at the time he was seen, and having closed only one eye?

"The president observed that whether the pony was half asleep or fast asleep, there could be no doubt that the association was awake, and therefore that they had better get the business over and go to dinner. He had certainly never seen anything analogous to this pony; but he was not prepared to doubt its existence, for he had seen many queerer ponies in his time, though he did not pretend to have seen any more remarkable donkeys than the other gentlemen around him,

"Professor John Ketch was then called upon to exhibit the skull of the late Mr. Greenacre, which he produced from a blue bag, remarking, on being invited to make any observations that occurred to him, 'that he'd 'pound it as that 'ere 'spectable section had never seed a more gamerer cove nor he vos.'

"A most animated discussion upon this interesting relic ensued; and some difference of opinion arising respecting the real character of the deceased gentleman, Mr. Blubb delivered a lecture upon the cranium before him, clearly showing that Mr. Greenacre possessed the organ of destructiveness to a most unusual extent, with a most remarkable development of the organ of carveativeness. Sir Hookham Snivey wasproceeding to combat this opinion, when Professor Ketch suddenly interrupted the proceedings by exclaiming, with

great excitement of manner, 'Walker!'

'The president begged to call the learned gentleman to order.

"Professor Ketch.—'Order be blowed! you've got the wrong 'un, I tell you. It ain't no 'ed at all; it's a coker-nut as my brother-in-law has been a-carvin' to hornament his new baked tatur-stall vot's a-coming down here vile the 'sociation's in the town. Hand over, vill you?"

"With these words Professor Ketch hastily repossessed himself of the cocoanut, and drew forth the skull, in mistake for which he had exhibited it. A most interesting conversation ensued; but, as there appeared some doubt ultimately whether the skull was Mr. Greenacres', or a hospital patient's, or a pauper's or a man's, or a woman's, or a monkey's, no paiticular result was attained.

"I cannot," says our talented correspondent, in conclusion—"I cannot close my account of these gigantic researches, and sublime and noble triumphs, without repeating a *bon-mot* of Professor Woodensconce's, which shows how the greatest minds may occasionally unbend, when truth can be presented to listening ears, clothed in an attractive and playful form. I was standing by, when, after a week of feasting and feeding, that learned gentleman, accompanied by the whole body of wonderful men, entered the hall yesterday where a sumptuous dinner was prepared; where the richest wines sparkled on the board, and fat bucks—propitiatory sacrifices to learning—sent forth their savory odors. 'Ah!' said Professor Woodensconce, rubbing his hands, 'this is what we meet for; this is what inspires us; this is what keeps us together, and beckons us onward; this is the *spread* of science, and a glorious spread it is!"

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