

CHARLES GRAVES

MR. PUNCH'S HISTORY
OF MODERN ENGLAND.
VOLUME 3 OF
4.—1874-1892

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Charles L. Graves

Mr. Punch's History of Modern England, Vol. 3 (of 4).—1874-1892

PART I THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK

HIGH POLITICS

The pageant of the Victorian age reached its grand climacteric in the period on which we now enter. As a "drum and trumpet chronicle" the history of the eighteen years from 1874 to 1892 was void of any British military operations on the grand scale. Of the names Kandahar, Maiwand, Isandhlwana, Majuba, Khartoum and Tel-el-Kebir only the first and last minister to our complacency. Yet the achievements of Lord Roberts in the two Afghan campaigns were splendid examples of bold leadership and British endurance, and Lord Wolseley's suppression of the revolt of Arabi was more than efficient. In the mid 'seventies Germany came perilously near forcing a fresh war on France; but the influence of the British Crown and Government was largely instrumental in averting the calamity. We were twice on the verge of war with Russia in 1878, first in April after the Treaty of San Stefano at the close of the Russo-Turkish war, and second in July over Russia's intervention in Afghanistan. The country was divided, for while there had been a revival of the old distrust of Russia, Gladstone had thrown the whole weight of his influence into the campaign of protest against the "Bulgarian atrocities." The Government, on the whole, steered a middle course between the "Jingoes" and those who supported Gladstone's "bag and baggage" policy towards the Turks. At the height of the Tory Press campaign against Russia, Lord Salisbury, in a speech in the City, observed: "It has been generally acknowledged to be madness to go to war for an idea, but it is yet more unsatisfactory to go to war against a nightmare." *Punch*, who was never pro-Russian, but at the moment was strongly anti-Turk, interpreted this saying as a caution against Jingo scaremongering.

In one of the earliest of his cartoons on the possibility of war over the Eastern question, he represented Disraeli standing on the edge of a precipice with Britannia, asking her to move "just a leetle nearer." Britannia declines to move one inch farther, adding, "I'm a good deal nearer than is pleasant already." But four months later, in May, 1878, when he showed Britannia between two advisers, Disraeli and Bright¹—the former wearing a sword camouflaged with an olive wreath—*Punch* supported neither, but applauded the third Voice, that of Neutrality. Professorial intervention he resented strongly; and severely rebuked Freeman, the historian, for a violent and unpatriotic speech. In fine, he was equally down on the blatant bunkum of the music-halls and the ill-considered agitation of fussy Pacificists; on War-Donkeys and Peace-Donkeys; "Asses are asses, whether bound in Lion or in Calf."

But if in Europe Great Britain never got beyond the stage of naval demonstrations and the summoning of troops from India, these eighteen years were not devoid of great as well as spectacular events. They opened with the triumphant return to power of Disraeli, admirably

¹ Bright had recently made a vehement speech at Manchester against the Turks. It was about the same time that he described Lord Salisbury as "prostrating his intellect (to Lord Beaconsfield) in hope of a succession that might never come."

symbolized in Tenniel's great cartoon of the chariot driver and his fallen rival, and with his efforts to translate into practical politics his grandiose doctrines of Imperialism. He made the Queen Empress of India, he riveted our hold on the Suez Canal by the opportune purchase of the Khedive's shares in 1875; he claimed to have brought back "Peace with Honour" from the Berlin Congress of 1878, the year which marked the zenith of his power and the beginning of its decline. The twelve years that followed Gladstone's success at the polls in 1880 were crowded with momentous events; the rise and ferment of the new nationalities abroad; the advent of new champions and gladiators in the political arena at home – Parnell and Randolph Churchill and Chamberlain. In the sphere of domestic politics Ireland dominated the scene. Parliamentary obstruction was raised to a high art; the activities of the physical force extremists culminated in the tragedy of the Phoenix Park murders, and the history of the next few years is written in the two words Coercion and Conciliation, which split the Liberal Party, brought back the Conservatives to power in 1886, and under the Balfourian *régime* restored a certain measure of peace and prosperity to Ireland. Lord Beaconsfield's "spirited foreign policy" had been largely reversed under Gladstone, and the results did not nourish our national pride. The handling of our frontier troubles in India had at least the support of some of the wisest Anglo-Indian experts, but our magnanimity to the Boers after Majuba was not merely open to the charge of craven-spiritedness, it paved the way to further troubles. It has been said that "any fool can annex"; but it needs a wise man to know when to grant autonomy. Moreover, the loyalty of Gladstone's supporters – including *Punch* – was strained to the uttermost by the disastrous failure of the attempt to relieve Gordon at Khartoum. The full knowledge now available makes it clear that Gordon's appointment was a risky experiment – that his judgment was not equal to his nobility of character – but the months and months of procrastination and vacillation, and the inadequacy of the relieving force when dispatched, cannot be explained away. It was just one of those situations which warranted the old gibe against Gladstone's "three courses." There were moments, and this was one of the most searching, in which he was mentally incapable of "seeing his duty, a dead sure thing" and going for it "there and then" in the way in which plain men with plain minds would have done.

Wilful Wilhelm: "Take the nasty *Punch* away!
I won't have any *Punch* to-day!"

Young Wilhelm was a wilful lad,
And lots of "cheek" young Wilhelm had.

He deemed the world should hail with joy
A smart and self-sufficient boy,

And do as it by *him* was told;
He *was* so wise, he *was* so bold.

When we add to this brief summary the Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887, the passing of Lord Beaconsfield and Bright among the elder statesmen, and the tragic eclipse of Parnell, it will be seen that there was enough and more than enough to engage the pen and pencil of *Punch* as a political and social chronicler. Mention has already been made of our thorny relations with Russia. With regard to Germany, the attitude of England might be described as one of reluctant admiration punctuated by moments of misgiving. These moments were not infrequent in the days of the old Emperor; they ceased during the brief reign of his son, only to recur in a more acute form when Kaiser Wilhelm II "dropped the pilot," made it clear that he intended not only to rule but govern, and by his meteoric versatility and frequent references to his divine mission and to the Germans as the

chosen race, awakened the world to the emergence of a new and formidable promoter of European unrest. Our relations with France were correct rather than cordial; her *rapprochement* with Russia did not make for popularity on this side of the Channel; but in the main English observers read the inner meaning of the Boulanger episode aright, and without exactly exulting over his collapse, were relieved by his failure to revive a military dictatorship.

By way of filling in this rough outline with more detail, we may note that Gladstone's resignation of the Liberal leadership at the close of 1874 was regarded by *Punch* as premature. In one of the first cartoons in the next year Dizzy is shown saying good-bye to his great antagonist: "Sorry to lose you! I *began* with books; you're *ending* with them. Perhaps you're the wiser of the two." Perhaps he would have been – in the ultimate verdict of posterity – had his decision been final. But *Punch* was right in regarding Gladstone as an unspent force, and in his regretful and affectionate farewell clearly indicates a hope of his return: —

Will he who, from Llandudno's calm retreat
Late burst, at once, on battle and defeat,
Will he, though Harcourt gird, and Granville pray,
Himself the Leader's truncheon fling away,
Still in his prime of power, unbent by years,
Renounce the joy of battle with his peers,
Unmoved by *Punch's* counsel, or his prayer,
Nor to his realm relinquished name an heir?

The New Shepherd

Lord Hartington, moved by public spirit rather than ambition or enthusiasm, undertook what in the circumstances was the far from enviable task of leading the Liberals. *Punch* hit off the situation truly enough in the cartoon in which Bright hands the crook of leadership to the "New Shepherd" – and Hartington in his smock-frock replies, "Hey, but Measter! – Where be the sheep?"

The parallel is followed up in the doggerel lines: —

The Marquis Bo-Peep
Herds the Liberal Sheep —
If he only knew where to find them.
Will they ever come home
And – please Home Rule and Rome —
Bring their Irish tails behind them?

Punch, always concerned with the dignity of the Mother of Parliaments, was from the very outset exasperated by the increasing levity and obstructiveness of the new House. The levity he satirized in a series of burlesque entertainments with Mr. Whalley as call-boy and Dr. Kenealy as gasman. Dr. Kenealy's efforts to re-open the Tichborne case ended in absurdity – his motion being supported by only two members, Mr. Whalley and Major O'Gorman, that gigantic playboy of the West.² Obstruction, another and far more serious matter, was soon organized into a science, and led to repeated scenes of which more anon. Of the new Ministers, Mr. Ward Hunt, the First Lord, was especially singled out for attack because of his cavalier treatment of the loss of the *Vanguard* and the Admiralty's Fugitive Slave Circulars. *A propos* of the former, *Punch* represented Neptune

² Major O'Gorman does not appear in the D.N.B. But he inspired an immortal comment from a sympathetic compatriot, who calling to inquire about the Major's progress during a serious illness, was told that he was being kept up by periodic teaspoonfuls of brandy. "Taspoons!" was the indignant retort. "And what use 'ud a teaspoon be, sthrayin' about in such a wilderness of a man?"

warning Britannia that there would be a row if she did not rule the waves properly. The Fugitive Slave question led to protracted debates and much hostile criticism. In October, 1875, a cartoon shows a slave crawling on board a British warship and clinging to the flagstaff, while Ward Hunt, popping up from the companion, observes: "A runaway slave, John. You'll have to give him up, you know! See our Circular of July 31." John Bull retorts: "Give 'im up, yer Honour!! As well order me to haul down that there flag at once!!!" A fortnight later Ward Hunt is made to reply to his friend *Punch*: —

We haven't hauled down the British Flag
(See one of your recent productions),
But we've chosen the other alternative —
We've hauled down our Mis-instructions.

Punch's view, expressed in comments on the debate in the following February, was that the matter should be left in the discretion of captains – as it had been for thirty-six years. He declared, not without reason, that both circulars were virtually dead, and that the country would not stand them. Meanwhile the growth of the German Navy, which in his earlier years *Punch* had persistently ridiculed and belittled, had begun to excite attention and misgiving; *Punch*, though a Liberal, was a "big Navy" man, and, early in 1875, was concerned with the dangers of our falling behind in the race of naval armaments: —

RULE, GERMANIA!

The Times informs us that, of "iron-clad cruisers of the strongest type, Germany will, in the present year, have seven built against five of our own navy." *The Pall Mall Gazette* is of opinion that "the Germans have too many irons in the political fire to give exclusive attention to any one of them."

But very soon, unless we get beforehand with the Germans, will they not have too many irons in the water, too?

Dizzy: "Bulgarian Atrocities! I can't find them in the Official Reports'!!!"

The restoration of the monarchy in Spain under Alfonso XII, in the same year, also gave *Punch* occasion for serious thought. We may pass over the cartoon representing John Bull's anxiety about Spanish bonds as a satire on British commercialism. But there is shrewd political insight in the picture of Alfonso between two fires – Bismarck and the Pope. The German Chancellor makes his support conditional on the withdrawal of the anti-Protestant edicts; while the Pope, on the other hand, maintains the claims of his Church.

In 1876 the Queen assumed the title of Empress of India; Disraeli went to the Lords as Earl of Beaconsfield, Sir Stafford Northcote succeeding him as Leader of the House of Commons; and the "Bulgarian Atrocities" proved the first phase in the conflict which made the Balkans the cockpit of Europe for over forty years. *Punch* did not cavil at Disraeli's earldom, though he thought his refusal of the Garter in 1878 well calculated rather than modest. He suggests, moreover, that Earl of Coningsby would have been a better title; and in the cartoon headed, "Empress and Earl, or One Good Turn deserves Another," shows Dizzy kneeling to the Queen and saying, "Thank your Majesty! I might have had it before! *Now* I think I have *earned* it!" More sympathetic are the verses in which *Punch* describes the realization of Disraeli's triple dream of success in Fashion, Letters and Politics – the dream that inspired him when he was only an articled clerk and a Jew boy: —

After forty years' fighting, he steps from the fire

To the height scarcely scaled in his Old Jewry dream;
Adds a third to his two wreaths of boyish desire,
Though sore set against him the stress of the stream.

And all who can honour faith, patience, and power
And the strenuous purpose that runs a life through
Like a muscle of iron, are glad of the hour
That sees his hand close on the honour his due!

Mr. Gladstone was now employing his leisure by felling trees at Hawarden, and the contrast lent point to one of Tenniel's happiest cartoons – that of "The Earl and the Woodman"; Disraeli, in his earl's robes and coronet, contemplates Gladstone arrayed *à la* Watteau, and observes with emotion: "How happy is this blithe peasant, whilst I, alas! – " (Dissembles.) *Punch*, however, was becoming more sceptical of the genuineness of Gladstone's desire for retirement, and in a parody of "You are old, Father William," scouts the notion of his prematurely posing as a Nestor.

The British Lion: "Look here! I don't understand *you*! – But it's right you should understand *me*! *I don't fight to uphold what's going on yonder!!*"

The Balkan trouble led to a violent conflict of public opinion in which *Punch* sided wholeheartedly with Gladstone against those, and they were many, who upheld the traditional view of the "Gentlemen's party," that the Turk was the only "gentleman" in the Near East, and that he might do what he liked with his own. Disraeli's scepticism; his professed inability to find any "atrocities" in official reports; and his dismissal as "coffee-house babble" of evidence brought by a Bulgarian to a vice-Consul, roused *Punch's* indignation against the Premier and his official informants. It was a "hideous subject" of which Government had heard a good deal and was likely to hear a good deal more: —

Let *Punch* speak his mind in this matter. Political partisanship and party spirit are both at low, as well as lukewarm, water in England just now; but, if anything will fire John Bull's blood to fever heat, it is such horrors as have been perpetrated in Bulgaria – and part of his wrath will assuredly be visited on those who have striven to interpose official blinds or buffers between England and the sight or shock of these horrors... The head of Her Majesty's Opposition asserted for the Newspaper Correspondents the credit which English common sense and experience unite to claim for them.

Contemporary records – including the files of *Punch*– do not bear out the statement about the lukewarmness of party spirit. The country was acutely divided, and dissatisfaction with Sir H. Elliot, our Ambassador at Constantinople, prompted *Punch's* retort, when Lord Beaconsfield declared that the Bulgarian atrocities were "beyond recall," "Yes, but your Ambassador isn't." Gladstone is rebuked for hiding in his tent; but he made amends by launching his famous, though sadly premature, phrase about clearing the Turk out of Europe, "bag and baggage."

Neutrality under Difficulties

Serbia's resistance was soon overcome, but the Powers forced Turkey to grant her an armistice, and largely through Great Britain's influence, a Conference was held at Constantinople where Lord Salisbury was our representative. A short breathing-space was thus gained, but the Conference was abortive, and war between Russia and Turkey broke out in 1877. *Punch* was in rather a delicate position: for while distinctly anti-Turk, he had never trusted Russia. Thus, while assailing the *Daily Telegraph*, *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Morning Post* for their Chauvinism, and the Tory press generally for their campaign against Russia and their support of the "veracious Turk," he was hardly less severe in his strictures on the belligerent humanitarians who would have welcomed

pro-Russian intervention. *Punch* advocated neutrality, but he was fully alive to the difficulties of the situation, and expressed them in a cartoon in which the British Lion is exhibited in a bothered mood, distrustful of Russia, and unable to make out what the Government meant, or the Opposition either. In his comments on the debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolution, *Punch* deplores the weakness and dissensions of the Opposition and supports the bolder spirits. Many years were to elapse before Lord Salisbury made his remarkable speech about our having "backed the wrong horse," i.e. Turkey, in the Crimean War. That speech proved that *Punch* was fully justified in seizing on the caution which the same speaker had given nearly twenty years earlier. For Lord Salisbury declared in 1897 that the defence of the diplomacy of 1878 lay in its traditional character, not in its inherent excellence, and that neither he nor Lord Beaconsfield was free from misgivings as to its results. The music halls have not often enriched the language with permanent additions, but they added "Jingo" and "Jingoism" in 1877. *Punch's* comment on Macdermott's famous song is instructive. It was inspired by a reference in the *Paris Figaro*: —

On the back page of the *Figaro* is given one verse in English, with the music, of that "War Song" of the Music Halls, which just now enjoys its share of popularity with "*Nancy Lee*," and "*Jeremiah, Blow the Fire*," and a translation of the whole song into French, of which the *Figaro* says apologetically, "*Des vers français n'auraient pu arriver à la sauvage énergie de l'original*." The chorus of the song, as sung by most of our London street-boys, instead of "*They all do it*," and "*Woa Emma*," recently shelved, is this: —

"We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do," etc. And the translation, which "*n'aurait pu arriver à la sauvage énergie de l'original*," is:

"*Nous ne voulons pas la guerre, mais, par Dieu! si nous combattons*," etc.

If "*par Dieu!*" is not to an Englishman's thinking rather more savagely energetic than "By Jingo!" then words are meaningless. If "*par Dieu!*" is to be accepted as an equivalent, and as, after all, rather a weak equivalent for "by Jingo!" then either the Frenchman has a very low idea of the Englishman's religion, or his "*Dieu*" means nothing more, ordinarily, than our "Jingo." But "Jingo" is not a savagely energetic exclamation, nor is the true feeling of this country to be gauged by the popularity of a Music-Hall song.

Punch was both right and wrong. The music halls are not a true index of the political sagacity of the country; but he did not foresee that the refrain of this particular song would survive, by virtue of its very blatancy, as a terse summary of national complacency. At the same time he paid homage to its merits by printing a neat Latin rendering from the pen of an Etonian: —

Inviti quamquam saevo conflagere bello,
Adsit opus, Jingo testamur Bellipotentem,
Sunt nobis nummi, sunt agmina, tela, carinae.

Indian Troops in Europe

The intervention of amateur diplomatists, clerical or professorial, however well-meant, was firmly and impolitely discouraged when Turkey and Russia were at death grips at Plevna. Early in 1878 *Punch* endeavoured to turn such efforts into ridicule, as instances of "self-election of the unfittest." Still the naval demonstration in Besika Bay found *Punch* in his most pacific mood, applauding Lord Carnarvon, who with Lord Derby had resigned, and condemning Lord Beaconsfield's dangerous action and unconvincing explanations. The calling out of the Reserves still further increased *Punch's* anxiety, and inspired a "Proclamation" calling for self-restraint. When it was announced that Carlyle had joined Bright and the Duke of Westminster in signing a

petition against war, *Punch* noted that the old sage of Chelsea was anything but a lover of peace at any price. But the incident which perturbed him and other critics of the Government more than anything else was the bringing of a contingent of Indian troops to Europe. *Punch* vigorously supported Gladstone, who held the action of the Government to be not merely provocative but unconstitutional. When the troops were re-shipped to India, he published a sarcastic inscription, to be engraved on a monument on Primrose Hill commemorating an exploit which had cost £750,000. It seems a little sum to us with our profligate habit of thinking in millions, but the frugal taxpayer of the 'seventies, as represented by *Punch*, thought it a monstrous extravagance. The inscription is too long to quote in its entirety, but we may give the peroration: —

So, having more than fulfilled
The Expectations of those who imported them
And who, after having transferred them to Cyprus,
Found themselves considerably embarrassed
What next to do with them,
They were re-shipped, quietly and unobtrusively,
To the general mystification of Europe
For the Land of their Birth;
Whence,
Though they have merited the Admiration of Some
And the Respect of Many,
And have left behind them
An Election Cry to All,
It is to be hoped that they will never again visit
The Western Dominions of their Imperial Mistress
Who, through the mouth of *Punch*
Gladly bids them *Adieu!*
Not *Au Revoir*.

Heu vatum ignarae mentes! But *Punch*, who printed this acid *jeu d'esprit* on August 3, 1878, could hardly be expected to foresee the need of August 4, 1914.

The year 1878 marked the zenith of Lord Beaconsfield's prestige, for it was the year of the Berlin Congress – from which he claimed to have brought back "Peace with Honour" – and of the annexation of Cyprus. *Punch*, however, was always suspicious of Dizzy's phrases and preferred to symbolize the results of the Congress in a *Pas de Deux* by Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, both Gartered, and in a rhymed dialogue complacently referring to their egg-dance. The Afghan trouble was assuming a menacing aspect, finely typified in Charles Keene's cartoon, "The Shadow on the Hills." *Punch* applauded vigilance, but distrusted the Government's intentions, deprecated the spirited policy which involved "a vague and boundless adventure of annexation," and showed Lord Beaconsfield leading John Bull by the nose in search of a "scientific frontier" – another Disraelian phrase – and the Ameer of Afghanistan, between the Bear and the Lion, exclaiming, "Save me from my friends."

The Transvaal had been annexed by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in the previous year, but *Punch* had received Lord Carnarvon's announcement with acquiescence rather than enthusiasm.

Bismarck's Creed

On the other hand, the visit of the Australian cricket team in 1878 furnished him with an occasion for paying tribute to the progress and enlightenment of the Colonies and acknowledging England's debt to their loyalty.

The services of King Edward as a promoter of the *Entente* with France date back to the same year, in which as Prince of Wales he is represented in a *Pas de Trois* with the Republic and Marshal MacMahon. *Punch* applauded the visit, but rebuked the flunkeyism of the accounts given by the Paris correspondent of *The Times*. For the moment Germany's home rather than her foreign policy engrossed attention, for this was the time of the *Kulturkampf* and the campaign against Socialism. Bismarck is shown in one cartoon squeezing down the Socialist Jack-in-the-Box. These repressive measures were deprecated by *Punch*, and a few months later he commented ironically on Bismarck's *rapprochement* with the Papacy, the cartoon "Of one mind (for once!)" showing Bismarck and the Pope barring the door against Socialism and Democracy. The reminiscences of the notorious Dr. Busch had appeared, and *Punch* based on them a bitter set of verses, "The Pious Chancellor's Creed," adapted from one of Lowell's *Biglow Papers*: —

I do believe in subtle skill
Disguised as brutal frankness;
And the display of ruthless will
In rowdy *Reiter*-rankness.
As well shirk shedding blood for fear
Of staining God's pure daisies,
As strive to rule this lower sphere
By sentimental phrases.

I hold the great Germanic race
Is Heaven's favourite bantling,
Supreme in virile power and grace
And breadth of moral scantling.
The Franks are hounds, their women pigs
Gr-r-r! I the vain vile vermin hate!
I'd squelch them – but for pap-soul'd prigs
Who funk the word exterminate.

Bismarck was alive and formidable. Thiers and Pio Nono passed away in 1877 and 1878. The services of the French Statesman are tersely summed up in the stanza: —

Monarchy loving much, he loved yet more
The realm, whoe'er its badge of headship wore;
And, waiving self, was willing to abide
That rule which Frenchmen would the least divide.

In the accompanying cartoon France is seen laying a wreath on the tomb inscribed "*Libérateur de la Patrie, 1872*," while the shades of monarchists and Communards are seen in the background. The tribute to Pius IX is kindly but not uncritical. He had outlived the patriotic Liberalism of his younger self: —

Happy that one thing he did *not* outlive,
The charitable soul, the kindly heart,
That rigid dogma's slaves could scarce forgive,
Fearing lest he might play them Balaam's part,

And bless whom he should curse; and so they drew

Their bonds about him closer day by day
Living or dying, till no will he knew
But theirs, and as they pointed, marked the way.

In Home Politics Ireland largely dominated the scene during the latter half of the Beaconsfield administration. As early as 1876 *Punch* had dealt faithfully with the plea advanced on behalf of political prisoners in the following caustic argument: —

Killing is no murder if complicated with treason. That renders it a mere misdemeanour. A military offence, simply capital, becomes a minor offence when treasonable besides. Treason is an extenuating circumstance of mutiny and murder, and its commission in committing those crimes reduces murderers and mutineers to political offenders. Therefore, instead of being hanged or shot, they ought, if punished at all, and not, on the contrary, rewarded, to be condemned to nothing worse than temporary seclusion, and should, all of them, after a merely nominal imprisonment, be respectfully released.

Obstruction and the Remedy

This was a logical and ironical *reductio ad absurdum*; yet *Punch* lived to see it translated into practical politics forty years later. In 1877 the scientific obstruction practised by the Irish Party in the House of Commons prompted a whole series of cartoons. In one Parnell, Biggar and Callan appear as "Erin's Three Graces." In another a drove of Irish pigs (including Whalley) are shown blocking the railway line of Parliament. In a third *Punch* bids schoolmaster Northcote to take down not the words, but something else of the obstructives. Commenting on the twenty-six hours' sitting in July, 1877, in which the House was held up by a group of obstructives that never rose above seven, *Punch* observes: —

Four Chairmen – Raikes, Childers, Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson, and W. H. Smith – were used up in the night-watches, and the House was kept, by relays, against the "Dauntless Three" – for Gray, Callan, Nolan and Kirk are but recruits to the banner of Biggar, Parnell and O'Donnell, the standard-bearers of Obstruction. All pretence of argument was early abandoned; and it became a mere contest of endurance, varied by episodes of more or less – generally less – lively squabbling and chaff – if such a word may be used of anything that passes in the august Temple of Legislation. All this while the new Standing Orders seemed, by tacit consent, set aside; and Parnell, Biggar and O'Donnell moved the Chairman out of the Chair, or report of progress, again and again. And yet the Leader of the House had the rod of suspension in his hand, though he forbore to use it, preferring the *reductio ad absurdum* of such a night's match between the toughness of the House and the tenacity of its Obstructives. Once only he went so far as to threaten more summary proceedings, on which, they say, O'Donnell collapsed. Of course, the great O denies it.

But why, *Punch* must again ask, allow debates to be degraded to a farce, and the House to a bear-garden? Go to his Cartoon, ye squeamish, and be wise. With the rod in the Speaker's hands, it is not the Obstructives' *words* that *Punch* would have taken down. The House sat from four o'clock on Tuesday till six on Wednesday.

The announcement of Mr. Gladstone's visit to Ireland later on in the year prompted a burlesque account of what his omniscience and omnivorous thirst for information would enable him to achieve. Nor could *Punch* be moved to treat seriously O'Donovan Rossa's threat to introduce osmic acid – a forerunner of tear-shells – into the House of Commons. But it was beginning to be

difficult to joke about Ireland, and there was grim point in Keene's picture of the native reassuring the English angler who hadn't a licence for salmon: "Sure ye might kill a man or two about here an' nobody'd say a word t'ye."

Saxon Angler: "Oh, but I can't try for a salmon, I haven't got a licence."

Native: "Is it a licence ye want to kill a fish? Sure ye might kill a man or two about here an' nobody'd say a word t'ye."

The death of Isaac Butt in the spring of 1879 marked the final close of the moderate stage of Parliamentary agitation; the reins of leadership had already passed into the hands of a bolder, more masterful and uncompromising chief – the "uncrowned King," as he was called, till the days of Committee Room 15. Moreover, discontent was aggravated by genuine distress in the South and West of Ireland, and here, unfortunately, benevolence was hampered by party politics, for the violent speeches made by Parnell in America at the close of 1879 were not exactly designed to assist the Duchess of Marlborough's Relief Fund. According to *Punch*, however, in his comments on "Irish Obstructives to Irish Aid," these speeches failed to influence the American public: —

The Zulu War

Uncle Sam is showing his sense by sending his liberal contributions in relief of Irish distress through all channels except the cruelly warped ones of Messrs. Parnell and Dillon. The arch-agitator has the impudence to accuse the Duchess of Marlborough's and all other relief agencies, except his own, of political bias. This is the Gracchi complaining of sedition with a vengeance! Pigs, we know, cut their own throats in trying to keep their heads above water. This Irish Mis-leader seems involuntarily to be imitating the short-sighted Irish animal. If any man *could* have frozen the current of charity – in New World and Old – it would be such a bitter and malignant advocate of mutual hate, civil strife, anarchy, and insecurity of life and property, as CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.

Ireland was only one of many embarrassments to the Beaconsfield administration in its closing years. Early in that year *Punch* published a cartoon on "Bull and his burdens" – John Bull as a patient ox carrying Russia; the Ameer; the Turk; a Glasgow Bank Director (commemorating a recent discreditable financial disaster); a striker; and last of all a Zulu jumping on behind. For this was the year of the unhappy Zulu war, which *Punch* described as "one of the costliest blunders of modern times" – it cost ten millions – and again as "alike unnecessary, costly, and disastrous." He saw in Isandhlwana not merely a tragedy but a lesson, and enforced it in a cartoon showing a Zulu warrior writing on a slate, "Despise not your enemy." The accompanying verses, while deprecating rashness, assert that the dead must be honoured and avenged. The heroes of Rorke's Drift, Chard and Bromhead, are duly acclaimed, but *Punch*, true to an old and honourable tradition, prints a letter on behalf of the non-combatant officers who gallantly took part in the defence. As the only rampart which they had was made of meal-bags, *Punch* ingeniously applies to them the phrase, "*Couvert de gloire et de farine*," which Voltaire had used of Frederick the Great, who spent his first battle sheltering in a mill behind sacks of flour. Cetewayo, the Zulu chieftain, was subsequently captured, brought to London and lionized, *Punch* observing that "the great Farini [the *impresario* who introduced Zazel, the acrobat who was shot from a cannon] suggests that he should be exhibited at the Aquarium."

Throughout the war and afterwards *Punch* was a harsh and ungenerous critic of the policy of Sir Bartle Frere, whom he regarded as a prancing proconsul and nothing more. Nor was *Punch* much happier in his treatment of the painful episode of the death of the Prince Imperial who, whether owing to his own rashness or the negligence or loss of nerve of his escort, fell to the assegais of the Zulus. *Punch's* inveterate anti-Imperialism is betrayed even in the memorial verses: —

Talk not of plots and plans that, ripening slow,
Are by this death struck down with blast and blight;

We have no thought but for that mother's woe,
The darkness of that childless widow's night.

Unfortunately, the raising of the question of a memorial to the Prince in Westminster Abbey induced *Punch* to abandon his resolve of reticence, and prompted other "thoughts," which he expressed with more vigour than good taste. There is no proof that the suggestion emanated from Dean Stanley, as *Punch* implies, though the Dean certainly favoured a proposal for which a strong precedent could be found in the burial in Henry VII's chapel of the Duc de Montpensier (the younger brother of Louis Philippe) who died an exile in England in 1807. Public opinion was divided, but democratic sentiment prevailed, and in deference to a hostile vote in the Commons the scheme was withdrawn.

Turnerelli's "Tribute"

The waning splendours of the Beaconsfield *régime* were not revived by the launching of one of the last of his phrases, "*Imperium et Libertas*." *Punch* only saw in it "the catchword of a self-seeking swaggerer." Great men suffer much at the hands of injudicious admirers, and the "People's Tribute" to Lord Beaconsfield organized by an amiable enthusiast, heavily weighted by the unpropitious name of Tracy Turnerelli, must have been a sore trial to the Premier, while it supplied *Punch* with food for mirth for the best part of a year. The subscriptions of the million were invited to purchase a gold wreath, but after a little while Mr. Turnerelli had to appeal for further funds to clear off a deficit. Later on, when the Tribute had been finally refused by Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Turnerelli offered to hand over the wreath to one of our great national museums, if a suitable case were provided. He also suggested that he might be reimbursed for his out-of-pocket expenses in getting up the Tribute. *Punch* recommended that he should pocket the affront and hand over the "Tribute" to Madame Tussaud's, where he had already appeared in wax. This is what actually happened, and in November, 1879, *Punch* sardonically records the fulfilment of his suggestion.

The disquieting news from the Afghan frontier led to a serious attack on the Government early in 1880, an attack in which *Punch* vigorously joined, publishing a list of questions all animated by misgiving and by distrust of Lord Beaconsfield's phrases and Lord Lytton's policy and silence. The tension was relieved by Lord Roberts' famous march to Kandahar, and on his return to England in the autumn *Punch* represented him as snowed under by invitations to complimentary banquets, and invoked the shade of Wellington to congratulate him on his celerity. Meanwhile, however, Parliament had been dissolved in March, and the verdict of 1874 completely reversed at the General Election. *Punch* hailed Gladstone triumphing with his axe over Lord Dalkeith, and borne aloft on a shield by Harcourt, Hartington, and Bright, under the heading, "Hail to the Chief." As a pendant we have the cartoons in which Lord Beaconsfield is eclipsed by the sun of Liberalism or watches the sinking of the sun of Popularity, and the verses in which the parting Sphinx soliloquizes on his methods of leadership – appeals to sentiment and passion and the deft use and reiteration of phrases which intoxicate the masses.

When the House reassembled, it was to find the Irish Question still further complicated by the activities of the Land League and the No Rent Campaign. There was also another burning question – that of the Parliamentary Oath – which the return of Mr. Bradlaugh made a matter of urgency. *Punch*, as the "sturdiest of Protestants, was perforce the staunch supporter of the right of private judgment which is the corner-stone of Protestantism." Also he frankly admitted that he had no desire to see Mr. Bradlaugh made a martyr. His point of view is developed with refreshing common sense in the following argument: —

The House has swallowed such a succession of camels, Quakers and Separatists, Moravians and Jews, Latitudinarians and Platitudinarians, Unitarians

and Humanitarians, Anythingarians and Nothingarians, and now it is straining over such a gnat as poor Mr. Bradlaugh, natural representative of the Northampton Shoemakers, who object to the immortality of the Sole, and spell the word indifferently with or without a "u" and an "e."

Irish Troubles

The time has surely passed when the House should seek shelter against objectionable beliefs or unbeliefs, behind such delusive defences as oaths and tests. "Let the Swearers swear, and the Sayers say," the Law has proclaimed, in all Courts. Why, then, not in the High Court of Parliament – the Court of Courts – the very conduit and fountain-head of Law?

Unluckily the collective wisdom of the House was slow to accept this view, and the inevitable conclusion was only arrived at after a great expenditure of time and a great loss of temper. Bradlaugh was ejected and finally admitted; but the pacification of Ireland seemed farther off than ever. Gladstone was anxious to proceed with the further instalment of his policy of conciliation inaugurated by the Disestablishment of the Irish Church in his previous administration, but *Punch* summed up his difficulties pretty accurately in the cartoon of November 20, 1880, in which Law tells Liberty to wait until Ireland first learned to respect her. *Punch* regarded the Land League as sheer anarchy; it was the League and not the Government who practised Coercion. He summoned up the shade of Dan O'Connell to condemn outrages and the tyranny of "Captain Moonlight." But posthumous evocations are seldom of any avail; and O'Connell's was no longer a name to conjure with. In the year 1880, "Boycott" ceased to be a surname, and became an engine of political intimidation, while in the House obstructionist methods continued, culminating in the suspension of some thirty Irish M.P.s *en masse* early in 1881. Irish "scenes" were frequent and only excited *Punch's* disgust. At the same time he administered a severe rap over the knuckles to the "Honourable the Irish Society of London" for maladministering their funds, pauperizing prosperous towns and neglecting to subsidize deserving poverty or encourage Irish industries. The appeal to the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Duke of Connaught to visit Ireland, signed, "Larry Doolan of the Irish Jaunting Car," is shorn of all its cogency by the Transpontine Donnybrook Fair language in which it is couched. *Punch* has been a frequent offender in this respect; and also in his representations of the Irish peasant. It did not really help the cause of Unionism to portray Fenians and Land Leaguers with baboon-like faces. Dan O'Connell, whom *Punch* again evoked from the shades, this time to play Virgil to Gladstone's Dante in the Irish "Inferno," though he was a potato-faced Irishman, would have resented this method of criticism. As a matter of fact, *Punch* was so seriously remonstrated with for his Irish cartoons that he published a long article in self-defence and justification of his methods, maintaining that he never hit the weaker side because it *was* the weaker side, but because that side at the time appeared to be in the wrong: —

"Death, violent death, and painful wounds upon his neighbour he inflicts; and wastes, by devastation, pillage, and the flames, his substance." – Dante, Canto XI.

Punch and Ireland

The Ogreish character is the embodiment of the spirit of Lawlessness, of Anarchy, and of that Communism which, by its recent No Rent manifesto, has now drawn down upon itself the just condemnation of such men as the Archbishops of Dublin and Cashel. Houghing and mutilating dumb animals, maiming men and women, and shooting defenceless victims, are ugly crimes, and the embodiment of them in one single figure cannot be made too hideous or too repulsive. On the other hand, *Punch* has consistently and persistently kept before the public his ideal classic figure of Hibernia, graceful, gentle, tender, loving but "distressful," as being more or less in fear of that Ogre, her evil genius, from whose bondage may

she soon be free; and then, mistress of herself, with peace and plenty in her land, blessed with wise Administration and Local Government, in happy and unbroken union with her sister, England, with a regal residence in her midst, may she see the emerald gem of the Western World set glittering in the crown of one who will be no longer a stranger.

Punch was moved to return to the subject in September, 1882, in order to repel the attacks made on him by the *Spectator* and the *Nineteenth Century*. The latter had not been sparing of rebuke: —

"No savages have ever been so mercilessly held up to loathing mockery as the Irish peasants by the one comic paper in Europe which has been most honourably distinguished for its restraint and decorum and good nature."

Here the defence takes the form of an imaginary trial before L.J. Public Opinion, in which Hibernia gives evidence in *Punch's* favour on the strength of cartoons published from 1844 onwards. Of course, *Punch* is acquitted and pronounced to have triumphantly refuted a calumnious attack. This much, however, must be admitted to *Punch's* credit, that he did not regard the campaign of outrage and defiance of the Law in Ireland as a reason for withholding remedial legislation, but supported Gladstone's measures designed to promote a settlement of the Land question.

Over the war with the Transvaal in 1881 *Punch* found it hard to find the *justum medium*. The true estimate of the situation was no more to be found in the view of the "excellent law-abiding people who would send off a British army of 15,000 men to crush out a rebellious enterprise," than in the demands of the enthusiastic humanitarians who would give "a struggling community their legitimate liberty." *Punch* frankly admitted that the Boers had been brutal to the natives, had shown an inability to govern themselves, and by their unfitness either to establish or extend civilization had almost jeopardized the hold of the white man on South Africa altogether. Yet he supported the Boers in their contention that the Proclamation of Sir Theophilus Shepstone in 1877 was invalid. There was wrong and right upon both sides. Writing in January, 1881, he expressed the hope that a pacific settlement might be arrived at by a Cabinet "not deficient either in the ready pluck which deals with pressing danger or the quieter courage that is not afraid of timely compromise." These hopes were not fulfilled, and *Punch's* confidence in the pluck and courage of the Gladstone Cabinet was severely shaken in 1884 and 1885. In 1881 he was hardly a true interpreter of public opinion in his comments on the disaster of Majuba, when he excused the British defeat by the valour of the Boers. The cartoon, "*Fas est et ab Hoste*," and the verses on the inadequacy of our military training, rubbed in the lessons of the war with more point than consideration. The sequel of Majuba humiliated the majority of Englishmen: and the policy of compromise and concession failed to achieve a lasting settlement.

Lord Beaconsfield died in the spring, but *Punch*, though respectful and appreciative, added little in his memorial tribute to what he had said on many previous occasions in the way of criticism and eulogy. The insecurity of Russian rule had a year previously been recognized in a cartoon representing Nihilism lighting a torch in a cavern beneath the throne. The assassination of the Tsar Alexander II prompts an appeal to the "Northern Terror." Ordered Liberty must disown such fiendish methods. *Punch*, no lover of autocracy, admits that the Tsar was "the gentlest of his line," and implores the Russians to put manhood in their wrath, and "not foul the work they call divine with demon ruthlessness," an appeal that still remains unanswered. This was the year in which another, but an uncrowned Head, was laid low in President Garfield, and the loss of the United States is recognized as a common sorrow.

Boer (to F. — M. H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief): "I say, Dook! You don't happen to want a practical 'musketry instructor,' do you?"

In Home politics no one is more frequently or unflatteringly referred to than Lord Randolph Churchill. Sambourne's "Fancy Portrait" represents him as a midge: in verse, bitter and derisive, he is dubbed "the coming mannikin." On the other hand, Mr. Balfour is welcomed as an accession of strength to his party, and his wit is commended as being no less pretty than his uncle's, though less explosive in its flashing forth. To this year also belongs the reaction of "Fair" against "Free" Trade; and the adoption of the new cry by Lord Randolph and Mr. James Lowther, amongst others, is alluded to in a parody of a once popular drawing-room song, "O Fair Dove, O Fond Dove." But these amenities and trivialities were soon forgotten. In May, 1882, came the terrible tragedy of the Phoenix Park murders – the first deliberate political assassinations that had stained our history for centuries – and if *Punch's* references in prose and verse seem perfunctory and laboured, it may be pleaded in the words of the classic aphorism: "small cares are vocal, mighty woes are dumb." Better justice was rendered to the event in the cartoon of the "Irish Frankenstein" in which Parnell crouches horrified before the monster of his own creation. *Punch* did not, however, despair of conciliation, and a fortnight later supported the Arrears of Rent Bill as "a gift badly wanted," though his support was tempered by the observation that "Ireland is to have a clean slate, and, as usual, at the expense chiefly of the British taxpayer. That patient Jackass is to be saddled with another burden."

In the latter half of 1882 Ireland gave place to Egypt as a storm-centre. Arabi's revolt, which involved us in another of our small wars, was speedily suppressed, after Alexandria had been bombarded by Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour, and the rebel forces on land had been routed at Tel-el-Kebir by Sir Garnet Wolseley, "our only General," as he was then called. *Punch* celebrated his success and his peerage in an "Idyll of the Queen," beginning, "Garnet the brave, Garnet the fortunate." But he also recognized the strained relations with France which the campaign brought about, and uncompromisingly maintained our position in his cartoon, "The Lion's Just Share." Here the claims of all the other Powers are made ridiculous in comparison with those of Britain, France figuring as a poodle, Turkey as a fox, Spain as a mule, and Italy as a toy greyhound. It is not a conciliatory picture; *Punch* was on safer ground in emphasizing the intrigues of Abdul Hamid and the unpatriotic sympathies of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt.

Parnell and his Monster

"The baneful and blood-stained Monster ... yet was it not my Master to the very extent that it was my Creature?... Had I not breathed into it my spirit?" ... (*Extract from the Works of C. S. Parnell, M.P.*)

Ireland resumed the first place as a preoccupying factor in British politics in 1883, when the capture of Monaghan by the Parnellites inspired *Punch* to depict him as cutting a bit off a coat labelled Ulster. Another cartoon, "Crowning the O'Caliban," prompted by the Irish leader's talk of the "moderation" of the Land League, shows him crowning a hideous figure, sitting on a barrel labelled Anarchy, Rebellion and Murder, and receiving from him a bag containing £40,000 – in reference to the "Parnell Tribute" presented to the Irish leader in that year.

Lord Randolph is easily the chief butt of the year. He is the "bumptious boy," the 'Arry of the hunting field, disregarding the old whip, Stafford Northcote. Yet amid all this derision there is an uneasy consciousness that this aggressive and ill-mannered young man may yet "arrive." In another cartoon Lord Randolph is drawn as a small boy looking at Lord Beaconsfield's statue and saying, "Ah! They'll have to give *me* a statue – some day." The twenty-fifth anniversary of John Bright's election for Birmingham, which fell in June, 1883, is treated in a very different spirit. *Punch* disagreed with Bright over the Egyptian war, but strikes no jarring note in the verses on his political silver wedding: —

Mellower voice has never rung
Round the lists of Party fray:

Sharper scorn has seldom stung.
Yet your Silver Wedding Day
Wakes good wishes near and far
E'en from fighters who have gone
Dead against you in the war.
Here's a health to you, Friend John.

That "annual blister, Marriage with deceased Wife's sister," as Gilbert called it, found *Punch* still faithful to the cause of relief, and exceedingly and impartially wroth against clerical obstructors, Anglican or Roman Catholic, to the extent of depicting Cardinal Manning and Archbishop Benson in the guise of old women. Where the Liquor Laws were concerned, however, *Punch* was frankly reactionary. In a "Look into Limbo" in July, 1883, he forecasts a general revolt against crotcheteers and faddists, his pet aversion being Local Option, which he defines as "a scheme for giving the six, who love spouting, supreme control over the liberty of the sixty or six hundred who dislike noise, and so hold their tongues until, in self-defence, they are compelled to use them."

German Militarism

Foreign politics do not obtrude themselves much on *Punch's* vision during the Gladstonian administration. But he was alive to the menace of militarism contained in a characteristic speech by Marshal von Manteuffel, the sentiment of which curiously resembles some of the utterances of the ex-Crown Prince William: —

THE PSALM OF DEATH

"Gentlemen, I am a soldier, and war is the soldier's element; and well I should like again to experience the elevated feeling of commanding in a pitched battle, knowing that the balls of the enemy are every instant summoning men before the judgment seat of God." — Marshal von Manteuffel to the Provincial Committee of Alsace-Lorraine.

What the heart of the young Teuton said to the old Marshal is summed up as follows: —

Tell me not in mournful numbers
Death is shocking. Not at all!
Death clears off the scum that cumbers
This o'er-populated ball.

Death is stirring, Death is splendid,
(Death of other men, not mine)
And its spreading is attended
By a feeling great — divine.

Let us then be up and fighting
(*A la* Marshal von Manteuffel)
Set the Mob to mutual smiting,
While *we* sing Death's O be joyful!

Gambetta's brief and stormy career had closed at the beginning of the year, and *Punch* acknowledged the debt which France owed to his passionate patriotism and "wild strength" in a cartoon showing the Republic leaning sadly against his memorial bust while Bismarck, with arms folded, stands in the background.

Punch had for some twenty years been, on the whole, a consistent supporter of Mr. Gladstone, but his loyalty was more severely tested in the years 1884 and 1885 than at any other time in the Liberal leader's career. Indeed, there were moments when it might be said to have broken down, and respect gave place to something like contempt. This mood was revealed in the very first of the Gordon cartoons early in 1884. Gordon is seen ploughing along through Egyptian difficulties with Gladstone, "The Grand Old Man of the (Red) Sea," complacently smirking on his back. In February *Punch* demands instant action. An angry John Bull bids Gladstone unmuzzle the British Lion *at once*, and *Punch* comments severely on the Premier's word-jugglery and sophistry. Later on we see Gladstone in the desert "after the Simoom," leading a camel. "Mirage" shows Gordon looking anxiously for relief from the battlements of Khartoum. A burlesque correspondence between a British Hero and the British Government pours satire on the cheap sympathy and lax opportunism of the Government, who are only concerned with saving their skin and their faces. The Premier's preoccupation with trivial home legislation comes in for indignant rebuke, and the Trelawny quatrain is adapted for the benefit of Gordon. The two cartoons in May are especially bitter. Mr. Gladstone, on the Treasury Bench, as Micawber, declares, "I am delighted to add that I have now an immediate prospect of something turning up. I am not at liberty to say in what direction." A fortnight later the Liberal Majority (or Mrs. Micawber) protests she will never desert Mr. Micawber – referring to the result of the Vote of Censure.

Punch, however, had no intention of crossing the floor of the House. The Conservative opposition to the Franchise Bill rekindled his Liberalism. Lord Salisbury's attitude in particular excited his hostility. He figures in verse as "The Losing Leader" (after Browning), and in a cartoon as the bell-wether followed into the pit by a flock of coroneted sheep. It was "no Curtius leap, but mutton madness," and the hotheads are compared to the Gadarene swine. *Punch* heaped laboured ridicule on the great Hyde Park Demonstration, printed burlesque advertisements suggesting employment for peers after the abolition of the House of Lords, and indulged in prophetic forecasts of "What it may come to."

The Franchise Bill

The Opposition suffered from the defection or lukewarmness of some of the wiser peers – Cranbrook, Cairns and Wemyss – and finally withdrew on the unofficial but opportune publication in the *Standard* of the outline of the Government's Redistribution Scheme. *Punch* gives his own account of the incident, according to which the whole Cabinet was mesmerized into revealing the Government plans, and summed up the whole business in his cartoon, "'Bill' the Giant-killer." The little Franchise Bill is seen blowing his horn before a castle (the House of Lords) with Lord Salisbury, as a huge Ogre, looking over the battlements and dismayed to find that his castle is not impregnable against Truth. In this context we may note that the payment of members was foreseen by *Punch* in a burlesque "Thumb-nail Summary for 1884," printed in the first issue of that year. Under July we read: —

Newly elected Parliament meets for the first time, and commences a campaign of active legislative reform by abolishing the Speaker.

The "Payment of Members Bill," involving a State income of £2,000 a year, the right to a stall at West End Theatres on first nights, family railway tourist-tickets during the summer season, and free dining for self and friend at the Holborn Restaurant while Parliament is in Session, carried without a division.

The "Payment of Members Bill," being thrown out by the Peers, the House of Lords is abolished by a short comprehensive Act, framed for the purpose, in one sitting.

Much aristocratic distress prevails towards the end of the month, and gangs of hungry Peers infesting the public thoroughfares are prosecuted daily by the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, and ultimately shipped to a Coral Island in the Pacific.

Mr. Gladstone's seventy-fifth birthday on December 29, 1884, was welcomed in a set of verses in which the eulogy is only tempered by a faint reserve as to his lack of youthful resolution and his excess of caution. Had the anniversary fallen a few weeks later, *Punch* might have found it harder to pay such generous homage, for on February 7 appeared the unlucky cartoon which assumed that Gordon had been relieved. Yet even then, when the truth became known and while raising the cry of "Too late," *Punch*, though condemning delay and caution, deprecated party rancour: —

Not this the hour to echo faction's cry
Of half-exultant chiding, or to ply
The Party-phraser's venom'd word-lash. No!
But laggard wills, counsels confused and slow
Should need no sharper spur, no keener goad
Than this to urge them on plain Honour's road.

The Tragedy of Khartoum

Punch's contribution to the Gordon "Memorial" was an ode from which we may quote one stanza: —

Gordon! A name to gild our island story,
Opulent yet in many a noble name,
With lustre brighter than mere statecraft's fame,
More radiant than the warrior's glittering glory.
Such lesser lights eclipse them in the fine
Sun-glow of selfless valour such as thine,
Soldier whose sword, like Galahad's, was not used
To hew out honour, but to champion right;
Plan-shaper who, in council as in fight,
Wast endlessly resourceful, yet refused,
Death-snared, an easy flight!

Other pens were busy over this episode, which inspired perhaps the most scarifying epigram of our times: —

Judas despairing died, his guilt confessed,
But had he lived in this our age and city,
He surely would have figured with the best
Upon a Christ Memorial Committee.

The disaster, however, had one heartening result in the offer of military assistance from Canada, Victoria and New South Wales, duly recorded by *Punch* in his cartoon of the Lion and

the Colonial cubs. The year 1885 had opened with a sinister display of activity by dynamiters, and *Punch* rebuked Sir William Harcourt for his alleged apathy and imperious resentment of criticism by calling him the "Not-at-Home Secretary." America promptly took legislative action, refusing sanctuary to dynamiters, and was loudly applauded, while Mr. Parnell, in *Punch's* opinion, missed a golden opportunity for disavowing and condemning these outrages. In "What Mr. Parnell *might* have said" *Punch* printed the speech which he did *not* make but ought to have made, "as a man, an Irishman and a Christian."

Mrs. Gummidge-Gladstone: "I ain't what I could wish myself to be. My troubles has made me contrary. I feel my troubles, and they make me contrary. I make the house uncomfortable. I don't wonder at it!!!"

John Peggotty-Bull (*deeply sympathizing aside*): "She's been thinking of the old 'un!"
—*David Copperfield*.

The days of the Gladstone administration were numbered, and the motion in favour of Proportional Representation excited but a languid and academic interest. *Punch* thought the system far too complicated, and sought to reduce it to absurdity by a practical illustration. He was much more serious in his resentment at the hectoring attitude of Bismarck *à propos* of a recent speech of the Imperial Chancellor. In "Lecturing a Lecturer – a Friendly Tip to the Teuton Titan," he showed Bismarck standing in a truculent pose before a map of Europe while *Punch* looks on in amusement. The point of the accompanying verses is that Britain was not to be scared or scolded into submission: —

Orbilian Colossus,
You'd chide us and spank us and goad us and toss us,
But when Polyphemus world-wigging would try
He may – pardon the *argot*– get "one in the eye."
And *Punch*, Herr Professor, whose point seldom misses,
Is ready if needful to play the Ulysses.

The attempt to represent Bismarck as a professor might not seem to show a very acute reading of the facts were it not that German professors proved the chief inflammers of militarism. It must be added that, as a set off to this expostulation, *Punch* indited a remarkably genial poem to Bismarck a couple of weeks later on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. But this can hardly have atoned for the extremely acid and acute satire on the Spirit of German Colonization published about the same time. Here Germania declares her intentions to the native races in language which the treatment of the Herreros in German South-West Africa proved to be well within the mark: —

I haf brought you German culture for the poddy and the mind,
Die erhabene Kultur of efery sort and efery kind;
All the pessimistic dogtrines of the Schopenhauer school
And the blessings of a bureaucratish-military rule.
I shall teach you shplendit knowledge, vot you hitherto haf lacked,
That religion is a fantasy, vhlst sausage is a fact;
Ja, the mysteries of sauerkraut to you shall be made clear,
And your souls shall learn to float on foaming waves of Lager-Bier!

I do not intend to long-while you mit missionary rant,
But to brighten up your intellects mit Hegel and mit Kant.
Mit our Army-Service system I'll begift you by-and-by,
And mit all the priceless blessings of our Hohe Polizei.

Ach! I lofes you as a moder, and your happiness, I shwear,
Shall forefer be the von surpassing object of my care.
I'll civilize you, Kinder, mid dem edlen Gerstenbrei,
And mit discipline, Potztausend! – or I'll know the reason vhy!

And then die hehre Göttin, hofring in the aether blue,
Vill summon up her gunboats and her Pickelhauben too,
Her bearded brawny varriors, vot nefer knew no fear,
And troops of learned bureaucrats, all buttoned-up to here.
Then if the shtupit natifes don't attend to vot she said,
And makes themselves unpleasant, they must all be shooted dead;
For trifles in the vay of German culture must not shtand —
Hoch soll der Bismarck leben! I drinks, "Our Fatherland!"

Lord Randolph Churchill

When the Government was defeated in June "on the Budget Stakes," as *Punch* put it, he went so far as to accuse Gladstone of "riding to lose," and resented this action as not quite on the square. A month earlier he had shown Gladstone as the political Mrs. Gummidge, the "Old 'un" being Disraeli, whose portrait hangs on the wall. There was a rumour of Mr. Gladstone going to the Lords, and *Punch* had a picture of Tennyson, in his robes in the "gay garden of elegant earls," inviting W. E. G. to "come into the garden," but Mr. Gladstone declines, preferring to paddle his own canoe. Lord Randolph was included in the Salisbury administration, which held office for six months, as Secretary of State for India, but his elevation to Cabinet rank did not appease *Punch's* distrust – rather the reverse. He was not really an undersized man, but he invariably appears in *Punch* about this time as a boy, a mannikin or some diminutive pest, while the vehemence of his language is resented in bitter criticism of his "mud-spattering" abuse, vulgar invective, and "Billingsgate Babel." In particular a speech which he delivered at a Conservative gathering at Canford Manor, Wimborne, excited *Punch's* wrath, and prompted the picture of "Funny Little Randolph," as a "star comique" singing a topical song, "I don't care a rap," and exulting in his grimaces and bad manners. In the previous year *Punch* had fallen foul of the "windy ravings of Loyalist Speakers" in Ireland, "the Loyalist Cæsar, and the Nationalist Pompey seem 'very much alike' indeed – in the matter of noisy mischief... One feels that the Orange Champions would not hate 'disloyalty' so much did they not hate their 'Green' fellow countrymen more."

Dick: "I've chose my Three Acres – next to the Parson's. I mean to dig and grow 'Taters. Where 'ave you chose yours?"

Harry: "I ain't chose no Land. I shan't grow no 'Taters. I shall take *your* 'Taters!"

Yet in the autumn of 1885, when Lord Carnarvon was Viceroy, *Punch* developed a strong distrust of the conciliatory policy of the Conservatives. In one cartoon he shows Captain Moonlight masked and armed at an open door, the bar of the Crimes Act having been removed. In October he wrote, "when Tyranny alone is free where is the safety – save for slaves." In another cartoon he showed the National League as the Irish Vampire, hovering over Hibernia in her uneasy sleep, and bade her awake and banish the hideous monster that was sapping her strength. *Mr. Punch's* "Political Address," issued shortly before the resignation of the Salisbury Cabinet, claimed that he was the only real Independent Candidate, the nominee of no party, section, or sect; bound to no programme, but "all for the four P's – Principle, Progress, Patriotism and Peace" – in fine, "whichever Party he returned to office, *Mr. Punch*, the non-partisan Member for Everywhere, will be in power." The new cry of "Three Acres and a Cow" raised at the close of 1885 left him cold, witness Du Maurier's "Sauce for the Goose." The verses in the same number on "New Words and

Old Songs" imply that it was a mere vote-catching device, and at the same time mock at the cadging tactics of the Knights and Dames of the Primrose League founded in 1884.

Home Rule Rejected

On the resignation of the Salisbury Cabinet, Mr. Gladstone returned to power with Mr. Morley as Chief Secretary for Ireland. The story of his conversion to Home Rule, his failure to convert his colleagues, the split in the Cabinet and the introduction and rejection of the Home Rule Bill of 1886 is well told in the series of cartoons which begin with "At the Cross Roads" in February. There Gladstone is shown hesitating between Land Purchase and Home Rule, while Chamberlain as the cowboy advises the former. In "The Thanes fly from me" we see Gladstone as Macbeth asking Morley (Seyton) to give him his armour: "This push will cheer me ever or disseat me now." The Home Rule Bill is typified as the "Divided Skirt." Gladstone as the Grand Old Man Milliner is trying in vain to reconcile Britannia to her new dress. The sequel is shown in the "Actæon" cartoon in which Gladstone is pulled down by his own hounds – Chamberlain, Hartington, Goschen – and in the adaptation of Meissonier's "Retreat from Moscow," where Gladstone figures as the defeated Napoleon. It is rather curious, by the way, to note that during the debates *Punch*, in his "Essence of Parliament," describes Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Labouchere as the "two drolls of the House" at Question time.

Grand Old Man-Milliner (*persuasively*): "Fits beautifully, Madam! A little alteration here and there!"

Mrs. Britannia: "It's very uncomfortable, and I'm sure it isn't becoming. I shall never get along with it as it is!!"

On the merits of Home Rule *Punch* is rather non-committal, and speaks with more than one voice. The secession of the Liberal Unionists impressed him greatly; but he was bitterly antagonistic to the Ulster extremists, witness this epigram printed in May: —

Lucus a non Lucendo

Loyal? Nay, Ulster, you, for very shame
Should cede your long monopoly of that name.
Loyal – to whom – to what? To power, to pelf,
To place, to privilege, in a word, to *self*.
They who assume, absorb, control, enjoy all,
Must find it vastly pleasant to be "loyal."

Lord Randolph Churchill's famous jingle: "Ulster will fight. Ulster will be right," inspired a prophetic forecast of the result of such action, in which Ulster does fight and is defeated: —

The battle had been severe, but it was over at last. Belfast was taken. Derry was in ruins. Everywhere the Orange faction had been outnumbered and worsted. The reverse was crushing and complete. "We shall now," said the General commanding the National forces, "be suffered, perhaps, to hold our Parliament on College Green in peace." He turned to a batch of captured officers as he spoke. They were a motley crew. Among them figured several wearing the Queen's uniform, while here and there stood some distinguished sympathizer with the beaten cause, who had thrown in his lot to support rebellion against Queen and Empire. Among these latter a scion of a Ducal House and former well-known Member of the House of Commons, was weeping over a broken drumhead. The General singled him out, and beckoned him to approach. He drew near, surlily:

"Well, my Lord," continued the Commander, in a tone of banter. "How about your prophecy? Ulster will fight. Ulster will be right. Ulster has fought. Ha! Ha!"

"And she has been wrong!" was the submissive and humble reply.

Lord Randolph at the Treasury

This squib was written before the rejection of the Home Rule Bill, a result which *Punch*, or the writer, probably did not anticipate. The accuracy of the forecast, however, remains still to be tested.

The Elections went against the Government, and Lord Salisbury was returned to power, with Lord Randolph as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. The verses which accompany and expand the cartoon of "The Grand Young Man" with the shade of Dizzy looking on, almost deviate into geniality. *Punch* fancies that Randolph, in spite of his defects of taste and manners, is "more than a mere mime," but, in contrasting his career with that of Lord Beaconsfield, points out that he was born in the purple and that his rise to power was easier and quicker. This comparatively friendly mood soon gave way to the old distrust, and by October, in "Swag, or the political Jack Sheppard," we see Lord Randolph, anxious to eclipse Dizzy as a Tory Turpin and "disher" of the Whigs, rifling a chest labelled "Liberal Measures," while Mr. Gladstone peers into the room at the back. *Punch's* distrust was partly justified by Lord Randolph's impetuous resignation in December. What might have been a great career was wrecked by an impatient temper. Immense ability, industry, courage and reforming zeal were there, and it was hardly fair to represent him as a modern Curtius leaping into the pit of Popularity. The Treasury was not the only Government Office in which reform was thwarted by obstruction and mismanagement. *Punch* attacked the War Office in the autumn of 1886 for setting its face "not merely against change, but against experiments pointing to change," and scouting all inventors as nuisances. He simultaneously proposed the foundation of an official organ of the Admiralty to be called "Dowb," the burlesque prospectus of which obliquely satirizes the abuse of perquisites, bad stores, muddled finance, futile commissions of inquiry and general incompetence in high places. Home politics engrossed attention throughout the year, but *Punch* did not fail to note the gathering clouds in the Balkans, when Prince Alexander of Battenberg, the hero of Slivnitsa, a gallant and picturesque figure, had abdicated the throne of Bulgaria, Russian jealousy having rendered his position untenable. In the cartoon of "The Vanishing Lady," the Tsar is shown as a juggler using the cloak of diplomacy to extinguish the freedom of the country he had helped to emancipate. The same year which witnessed the disappearance from the political scene of Prince Alexander was marked by the birth of Alfonso XIII of Spain, and *Punch* offered his ceremonial greeting to one of the few sovereigns who survived the monarchical *débâcle* of the Great War of 1914.

The Victorian age reached its grand climacteric in 1887, the year of the Queen's Golden Jubilee and the gathering of the Kings and Captains. Of the celebrations we speak elsewhere. *Punch*, no longer anti-Papist, linked them with those at the Vatican – in honour of Leo XIII, who had been ordained priest in 1837 – in his lines on "Two Jubilees": —

St. Peter's and St. James's face to face
Exchanging with a more than courtly grace
Their mutual gifts and greetings!

A sight to stir the bigot; but the wise
Regard with cheerful and complacent eyes
This pleasantest of meetings.

And so on with praise of the Good Queen and Holy Father, *Punch*, as a "true freeman unfettered by servile fear or hate's poor purblind heat," being free to celebrate them both.

It was also the Centenary year of the United States, welcomed by *Punch* in John Bull's song on Miss Columbia's Hundredth birthday to the air of "I'm getting a big boy now." Mr. Gladstone was invited to the celebrations but did not cross the Atlantic. John Bull abounds in professions of good-will, but there is a slight sting in the last chorus: —

You are getting a great girl now,
May you prosper, and keep out of row;
Shun Bunkum and bawl
All that's shoddy and small,
For you're getting a *great* girl now.

The Salisbury Cabinet was strengthened by the inclusion of Mr. Goschen as Chancellor of the Exchequer — Mr. Goschen whom Lord Randolph "forgot," and whom *Punch* styled the "Emergency man," a phrase now also forgotten, but then applied to the volunteers who assisted boycotted farmers and loyalists in Ireland. Mr. Balfour was at the Irish Office, the scene of his greatest administrative successes, and the Crimes Act and the Land Act were the two principal measures of the Session. In those days *The Times* was the great champion of the Unionist policy, and in the summer of 1887 is shown prodding on Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour, armed with Crimes Act blunderbusses, in their attack on the Land League wild boar. The Land League was "proclaimed" in August; and already the controversy had begun between Mr. Parnell and *The Times* over the former's alleged participation in the responsibility for the Phoenix Park murders. The question was raised in a series of articles on "Parnellism and Crime"; but the charges were not made specific until the following year. John Bright's secession from the Gladstonian Liberals had been a serious blow, and his contributions to the Unionist armoury were so vigorous and pointed, that it is rather strange to find *Punch* assailing him in March, 1887, for his pacificist tendencies: —

The white flag, John, *may* bid all battle cease,
Not the white feather! In defence of right,
Despite your dogmas, men perforce must fight
With swords as well as words: be it their care
With either, to heed honour, and fight fair.
You would "speak daggers" only; be it so;
But a word-stab may be a felon blow.

John Bright certainly spoke daggers against those who, in his own phrase, kept the rebellion pot always on the boil.

Germany's Momentous Year

The Earl of Iddesleigh, better known as Sir Stafford Northcote, died in January. There is an unmistakable reference to Lord Randolph Churchill's treatment of his one-time leader in the verses in which *Punch* paid homage to a statesman "worn yet selfless, disparaged and dispraised," yet a "pattern of proud but gentle chivalry": —

So the arena's coarser heroes mocked
This antique fighter. And his place was rather
Where Arthur's knights in generous tourney shocked
Than where swashbucklers meet or histrions gather:
Yet — yet his death has touched the land with gloom;
All England honours Chivalry — at his tomb.

Here the reference to Lord Randolph is inferential though unmistakable. But an opportunity for having a dig at him is never missed. When the Bulgarian throne was offered to Prince Ferdinand, and his cautious and diplomatic tactics resulted in long delays, *Punch* in pure malice suggested that the crown should be offered to Lord Randolph. He may be forgiven, however, in view of the remarkably accurate estimate which he formed of the slyness, timidity and meanness of "Ferdinand the Fox," and the alternations of servility and insolence in his attitude towards Russia. Bismarck again comes in for honorific notice this year in the guise of Sintram, accompanied and menaced by Socialism (the Little Master), but confidently riding along on his steed Majority. But 1888 was a momentous year for Germany – the year in which two Kaisers died and a third succeeded to the heritage of the Hohenzollerns. The old Emperor Wilhelm, the "*Greise Kaiser*," died on March 9; within a hundred days his son, the "*Weise Kaiser*," had fallen to the fatal malady which had sapped his splendid physique, to be succeeded in turn by the "*Reise Kaiser*," the nickname bestowed on Wilhelm II for his passion for movement and travel. At the moment of his accession *Punch* was not inclined to be critical. The cartoon of "The Vigil" in June of that year expresses no misgivings, but only sympathy for one called to bear so heavy a burden. And this view is amplified in the verses in which the lessons of the past are used to fortify the hopes of the future: —

THE VIGIL

"Verse-moi dans le cœur, du fond de ce tombeau
Quelque chose de grand, de sublime et de beau!"

Hernani, Act iv, Scene 2.

The prayer of Charles, that rose amidst the gloom
Of the dead Charlemagne's majestic tomb,
Might fitly find an echo on the lips
Of the young Prince, whose pathway death's eclipse
Hath twice enshadowed in so brief a space.
Grandsire and Sire! Stout slip of a strong race,
Valiant old age and vigorous manhood fail,
And leave youth, high with hope, with anguish pale,
In vigil at their tomb! Watch on, and kneel,
Those clenched hands crossed upon the sheathed steel.
Not lightly such inheritance should fall.
Hear you not through the gloom the glorious call
Of Valour, Duty, Freedom?

... And youth must face
What snowy age and stalwart manhood found
A weight of sorrow, though with splendour crowned.
Young Hohenzollern, soldierly of soul,
Heaven fix your heart on a yet nobler goal
Than sword may hew its way to. Those you mourn
Heroes of the Great War when France was torn
With Teuton shot, knew that the sword alone
May rear, but shall not long support a throne.

William has passed, bowing his silver crest,
Like an old Sea King going to his rest;
Frederick, in fullest prime, with failing breath,
But an heroic heart, has stooped to death:
Here, at their tomb, another Emperor keeps
His vigil, whilst Germania bows and weeps.
Heaven hold that sword unsheathed in that young hand,
And crown with power and peace the Fatherland!

Only a fortnight before the death of the old Emperor, Bismarck's Army Bill had awakened *Punch's* misgivings. He reluctantly admired the strength of the lion combined with the shrewdness of the fox; and put into Bismarck's mouth the sonorous couplet: —

I speak of Peace, while covert enmity
Under the smile of safety wounds the world.

(*Founded on the first part of an old Fable of Dædalus and Icarus, the Sequel of which Mr. Punch trusts may never apply.*)

But by September it was the young Kaiser, not Bismarck, who invited "A Word in Season." The counsel was prompted by a speech in which he declared, "It is the pride of the Hohenzollerns to reign at once over the noblest, the most intellectual and most cultured of nations," a sentiment mild when compared with later utterances, yet sufficiently thrasonic to earn a rebuke for indulging in demagogic flattery, coupled with the advice to read Lord Wolseley's article in the *Fortnightly* on Marlborough, Wellington and Napoleon, and to emulate the reticence of Moltke. In less than a month the inevitable cleavage between the Kaiser and his Chancellor is foreshadowed in the splendid cartoon reproduced, where Bismarck as Dædalus warns Wilhelm as Icarus, in a paraphrase of Ovid: —

My son, observe the middle path to fly,
And fear to sink too low, or rise too high.
Here the sun melts, there vapours damp your force,
Between the two extremes direct your course.

Nor on the Bear, nor on Boötes gaze,
Nor on sword-arm'd Orion's dangerous rays;
But follow me, thy guide, with watchful sight,
And as I steer, direct thy cautious flight.

Metamorphoses, Book VIII, Fable iii.

For the establishment of the Triple Alliance *Punch* held Bismarck responsible. The three high contracting Powers become the "Sisters Three," Italy as Atropos, Austria as Lachesis, and Germany as Clotho. The policy is expounded in "a Bismarckian version of an old classical myth." Bismarck claims to be working for peace so long as he is the cloud compeller. While he is in power it will be all well with Germany. Of Austria he is less certain, owing to the precariousness of her crown, but he counts confidently on Italy, and ends on an optimistic note, dwelling on the pacific aims of this new political pact. It is hard to tell whether this is irony on the part of *Punch* or a genuine approval of the Triple Alliance. But there is no doubt of his mistrust of Germany's ulterior motives in undertaking to co-operate with England in suppressing the Slave Trade in Africa — a mistrust expressed in the quatrain: —

When Fox with Lion hunts,
One would be sorry
To say who gains, until
They've shared the quarry.

Boulanger's Bid for Dictatorship

The sequel justified the suspicion, and less than a year later *Punch* published a companion cartoon in which the Lion, coming round the corner, finds the Fox has pulled down the notice "Down with Slavery" and is about to put up a Proclamation in which "Up" takes the place of "Down."

Bismarck's hostility to the Empress Frederick was notorious. In her husband's brief reign there was a question of their daughter, Princess Victoria, marrying Prince Alexander, ex-sovereign of Bulgaria. *Punch* represented Bismarck forbidding the banns, and putting an extinguisher labelled "Policy" on Cupid. It was stated that Bismarck threatened to resign if the marriage plan were proceeded with; *Punch*, the sentimentalist, believed that love would find out a way, and it did, but in a different direction. The Prince married, but the lady was not of royal or even noble birth, and as Count Hartenau he remained in obscurity and died while still a young man.

France also had her troubles in 1888, for this was the year of Boulanger, the *brav' Général*, who captivated the mob for a while, seemed at one moment to be within an ace of overthrowing the Republic and establishing a stratocracy, but collapsed ignobly in the testing hour. *Punch* recognized the danger in his cartoon of France ruefully balancing the Cap of Liberty on her finger. But even in *L'Audace*, where Boulanger is shown climbing up a steep cliff, with "Deputy" at the bottom, "President" and "Dictator" at the top, and the Imperial Eagle peering over the summit — we are made to feel that the climber is not equal to the task. The conditions are exactly reproduced in the companion picture, "Many a Slip," only that Boulanger is shown rolling down the precipice.

New South Wales celebrated her Centenary on January 26, 1888, and *Punch* added his tribute in a happily-worded greeting under the familiar heading, "Advance, Australia!": —

A hundred years! At Time's old pace
The merest day's march, little changing;
But now the measure's new, the race
Fares even faster, forward ranging.
What cycle of Cathay e'er saw
Your Century's wondrous transformation?
From wandering waifs to wards of Law!
From nomads to a mighty nation!
Belated dreamers moan and wail;
What scenes for croakers of that kidney,
Since first the *Sirius* furled her sail
Where now is Sydney!

A hundred years! Let Fancy fly —
She has a flight that nothing hinders,
Not e'en reaction's raven cry —
Back to the days of Matthew Flinders,
Stout slip of Anglo-Saxon stock
Who gave the new-found land its nomen.

Faith, memory-fired, may proudly mock
At dismal doubt, at owlsh omen.
Five sister-colonies spread now
Where then the wandering black-fellow
Alone enjoyed day's golden glow,
Night's moonlight mellow.

"The Island-Continent! Hooray!"
Punch drinks your health in honest liquor
On this your great Centennial day,
Whose advent makes his blood flow quicker.
We know what you can do, dear boys
In City-founding – and in Cricket.
A fig for flattery! – it cloyes;
Frank truth, true friendship – that's the ticket!
Land of rare climate, stalwart men,
And pretty girls, and queer mammalia,
All England cries, through *Punch's* pen,
"Advance, Australia!"

The same year witnessed the starting of the Australian navy. "Naturally the biggest island in the world has the biggest coast-line, and so needs the biggest fleet." The lead was taken by Victoria. *Punch* saw nothing but healthy rivalry between the different colonies as the outcome of the movement, but looked to Federation as the true means to prevent the different Australian Colonies from being at "Southern Cross-purposes" when they all had their navies. The trouble in the Soudan prompts a warning from the Shade of Gordon: "If you mean to send help, do it thoroughly and *do it at once*," but anxiety was allayed by the success of General Grenfell at Suakin, an example of prompt action worthy of the attention of "long-halting statesmen."

Parnell and "The Times"

The most important measure of the Session at Westminster was the Local Government Bill establishing County Councils. *Punch* made considerable capital out of Mr. Chamberlain's *rapprochement* to the Tory interests. At a meeting of the National Society, Archbishop Benson had referred amid cheers to the words of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain at the opening of a School Board in Birmingham, and his acknowledgment of the fact that Voluntary Schools must have their place in the education of the people recognized. Mr. Chamberlain's views on the Liquor question had shown a similar concession to the demands of the brewing trade. So *Punch* represents the "Artful Joe" walking arm-in-arm with the Archbishop and "Bung," and observing, "What a lot of nice friends I'm making." Mr. Chamberlain is already acknowledged to be "incomparably the best debater in the House"; *Punch* rendered full justice to his ability, but his chief cartoonist, Tenniel, though still capable of splendid work, never managed to seize and reproduce the alert vivacity of Mr. Chamberlain's features. The progress of the controversy between Mr. Parnell and *The Times* impelled *Punch* as an *amicus curiæ* to suggest that one or other of the disputants should wake up the Public Prosecutor in preference to the appointment of a Special Commission. The latter method of procedure, however, was adopted. The course of the inquiry was followed by *Punch* in a series of articles, and when Parnell was exculpated on the chief count by the breakdown of *The Times* witness Pigott, who confessed to forgery, fled the country and committed suicide, *Punch* exhibited the Clock-face doing penance in a white sheet with the lines, "His honour rooted in dishonour stood, etc." But when the Report of the Commission was finally published, *Punch* found it a veritable

chameleon, which disappointed both sides, because most of those interested wore party-coloured spectacles or else were colour-blind.

England was visited in 1889 by two of the most perturbing personalities in European politics, the Kaiser Wilhelm II and General Boulanger. *Punch*, however, resolutely and, as it turned out, rightly refused to take the *brav' Général* seriously, though he found in him plenty of food for disparaging satire as a shoddy hero on his prancing steed, as a "General Boum" in real life (recalling the grotesque figure in *La Grande Duchesse*), and as an uninvited guest, whose unwelcome arrival John Bull took as an occasion for going off to the French Exhibition. In a burlesque cartoon on France's embarrassments in choosing the right form of Government, *Punch* exhibited President Carnot, the Comte de Paris, Prince Jerome Bonaparte ("Plon-Plon") and General Boulanger dancing a grotesque *pas de quatre* before the French Electorate. But Boulanger was already ended, though his death, by his own hand, did not take place till the autumn of 1891. His histrionic equipment was perfect, and the French, though the most logical of people, are often carried away by their theatrical sense. He had served with some distinction in the army, and he was a fine figure on a horse. But he lacked the inflexible will, the iron resolution and the ruthlessness which make Cæsars and Napoleons; and *Punch's* epitaph is a closely-packed summary of the forces and influences which conspired to his undoing: —

So high he floated, that he seemed to climb;
The bladder blown by chance was burst by time.
Falsely-earned fame fools bolstered at the urns;
The mob which reared the god the idol burns.
To cling one moment nigh to power's crest,
Then, earthward flung, sink to oblivion's rest
Self-sought, 'midst careless acquiescence, seems
Strange fate, e'en for a thing of schemes and dreams;
But Cæsar's simulacrum, seen by day,
Scarce envious Casca's self would stoop to slay,
And mounting mediocrity, once o'erthrown,
Need fear – or hope – no dagger save its own.

The Kaiser's visit to attend the Naval Review at Spithead is treated in a somewhat jocular and cavalier spirit in the cartoon, "Visiting Grandmamma": —

Grandma Victoria: "Now, Willie dear, you've plenty of *soldiers* at home;
look at these pretty *ships*— I'm sure you'll be pleased with *them*!"

Mistrust of the Kaiser

The Kaiser is shown with a toy spade making sand castles for his soldiers. Yet these soldiers were giving ground for anxiety – witness the cartoon in January on the armed peace of Europe with Peace holding out the olive in one hand, with the other on a sword hilt. The inevitable verses allude to the "truculent Kaiser" and evince mistrust of one who comes in such equivocal guise. *Punch* credited Bismarck with exerting a restraining influence on the warlike activities of the Triple Alliance. He showed him in the spring playing Orpheus to this Cerberus, and lulling it to sleep. But the Kaiser inspired no such confidence, and at the close of the year he is shown posing as a peacemaker but preparing for war – fondling the dove on his hand, while behind is the eagle, with bayonets for feathers, feeding on the Army estimates.

Another sovereign whom *Punch* failed to read with the same penetration was King Leopold II of the Belgians. On the occasion of the International Anti-Slavery Congress at Brussels in November, 1889, *Punch*, while very properly applauding the occasion as tending to the overthrow

of "the demon of the shackle and the scourge," acclaimed Leopold II as a "magnanimous King." Cecil Rhodes, some years later, after an interview with the same monarch, said that he felt just as if he had been spending the morning in the company of the Devil.

Punch, like other critics, was happier in dealing with the dead than the living, and the death of John Bright in March inspired a generous though discriminating tribute to the memory and achievements of "Mercy's sworn militant, great Paladin of Peace": —

For Peace, and Freedom, and the People's right,
Based on unshaken Law, he stood and fought;
If not with widest purview, yet with sight
Single, sagacious, unobscured by aught
Of selfish passion or ambitious thought;
Seeing day's promise in the darkest night,
Hope for the weak 'midst menaces of Might:
Careless of clamour as of chance-blown dust,
Stern somewhat, scornful oft, and with the stark
Downright directness of a Roundhead's stroke,
Who drew a Heaven-dedicated sword
Against the foes of Freedom's sacred ark,
The friends of the oppressor's galling yoke,
All fierce assailants of the Army of the Lord.

These memorial verses, however, if I may say so without incurring the charge of unfilial disrespect – suffer throughout this period from prolixity. The writer says excellently, but diffusely, in ninety lines what is summed up in the majestic quatrain of Scott which stands at their head: —

Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!

Dropping the Pilot

Mr. Gladstone's golden-wedding day in July furnished the theme for friendly and affectionate congratulations to a couple who stood for "Darby and Joan" *in excelsis*. Mr. Gladstone's domestic happiness was unclouded, but he was subjected to a painful ordeal in 1890 by the disclosures of the Parnell-O'Shea divorce case and the split in the Irish Party which followed. *Punch* supported Gladstone in his breach with the Irish leader. He is shown in one cartoon refusing to give his hand to Parnell: —

The hand of Douglas is his own
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp.

Gladstone is acquitted of "mere Pharisaic scorn." But an element bordering on the ridiculous enters into the succeeding cartoon of Gladstone and Morley as the Babes in the Wood, while Parnell and Healy as the wicked uncles are seen fighting in the background. The further developments of the struggle are shown in an adaptation of Meissonier's famous "La Rixe," in which Parnell is held back by Dillon and O'Brien from Healy, who is restrained by Justin McCarthy. Parnell's sun was

setting in gloom and storm, but a greater than Parnell was passing from the stage of high politics in 1890. For this was the year of the dismissal of Bismarck by the Kaiser, commemorated in the issue of March 29 by Tenniel's famous "Dropping the Pilot" cartoon. *Punch* saw no good in the change; he indulges in ominous speculations. Was Bismarck animated by faith or fear of the future in quitting his post? Would the new Pilot strike on sunken shoals or "wish on the wild main, the old Pilot back again"? The Kaiser's gifts are seen to be no solace for the wound of dismissal. As a matter of fact, Bismarck never used the ducal title of Lauenburg conferred on him. In little more than a month the Kaiser is shown as the *Enfant Terrible* of Europe, "rocking the boat," while France, Italy, Austria and Spain all appeal to him to be more careful and not tempt fate. The Kaiser's dabbling in industrial problems, in the hope of propping his rule by concessions to Socialism, meets with no sympathy. But a more serious ground for discontent arose over the cession of Heligoland. *Punch* waxes indignantly sarcastic over Lord Salisbury's deal in East Africa by which Germany gained Heligoland as a bonus. It was "given away with a pound of tea"; Salisbury's weakness was worse than Gladstone's scuttle and surrender, and *Punch* ruefully recalls the verses he printed nineteen years earlier: —

TIME THE AVENGER!

On June 24, 1871, *Mr. Punch* sang, *à propos* of the Germans desiring to purchase Heligoland:

Though to rule the waves, we may believe they aspire,
If their Navy grows great, we must let it;
But if one British island they think to acquire,
Bless their hearts, don't they wish they may get it?

And they *have* got it!

The Surrender of Helgoland

But the fashionable world went on its way unheeding. Du Maurier satirized this indifference in a picture in which one lady asks another: "*Where* is this Heligoland they're all talking so much about?" and her friend replies, "Oh, I don't know, dear. It's one of the places lately discovered by Mr. Stanley."

Russia, it may be added, also incurred *Punch's* censure in 1890, the legalized persecution of Jews forming the theme of a prophetic cartoon in August, in which the shade of Pharaoh warns the Tsar, as he stands with a drawn sword and his foot on a prostrate Hebrew: "Forbear! That weapon always wounds the hand that wields it."

In 1891 the new "orientations" of the European Powers attract a good deal of notice. The Franco-Russian *entente* is symbolized by the Bear making France dance to the tune of the Russian loan. *Punch's* distrust of Russia — semi-Asiatic and half-Tartar — dated from the 'forties. The tightening of the Franco-Russian Entente in 1891 gave him no pleasure. He quotes with manifest approval the comment of a daily paper on the infatuation of France: —

The success of a Russian Loan is not dearly purchased by a little effusion, which, after all, commits Russia to nothing. French sentiment is always worth cultivating in that way, because unlike the British variety, it has a distinct influence upon investments.

The cartoon of President Carnot embracing, and being hugged by, the Bear was founded on an episode at Aix-les-Bains where he kissed a little girl in Russian dress who gave him a bouquet, saying: "J'embrasse la Russie." *Punch's* verses represent Carnot as fully conscious of his *blague*, yet with an uneasy consciousness that the Bear is going to squeeze him. Russia's religious intolerance again comes in for strong condemnation. The Tsar is shown wielding the knout on an aged Jew while the Emperor of China greets a Christian priest. This contrast was based on the issue of a decree in which the Chinese Government condemned anti-Christian excesses. In another cartoon the Tsar bids his minions remove another aged Jew on the familiar ground that Jews were always to the fore in Nihilist plots. The European Powers, it should be added, were not satisfied by China's official tolerance. The treatment of foreigners had provoked a collective protest, from which Russia abstained. So when John Bull, as a sailor, asks Russia to take a hand in controlling the Chinese Dragon, Russia replies: "Well, I don't know – you see, he's a sort of relation of mine!"

The admiration which *Punch* had so often if reluctantly expressed for Bismarck in office yielded to something like disgust at his undignified bitterness in retirement, above all at his use of the "reptile press" as a means of attacking the Imperial policy and Caprivi, his successor as Chancellor. This feeling animates the "Coriolanus" cartoon in February, where Bismarck is shown with the *Hamburger Nachrichten* in his hand. The death of Moltke a couple of months later is duly recorded in a versified tribute making all the usual points – on his taciturnity, composure, foresight and strategy. With his death Bismarck became the lonely survivor of "the Titanic three, Who led the Eagles on to Victory." Moltke died full of years and honours. It was otherwise with Parnell who at forty-five fell,

not as leaders love to fall,
In battle's forefront, loved and mourned by all;
But fiercely fighting, as for his own hand,
With the scant remnant of a broken band;
His chieftainship, well-earned in many a fray,
Rent from him – by himself!
None did betray
This sinister strong fighter to his foes;
He fell by his own action, as he rose.
He had fought all – himself he could not fight,
Nor rise to the clear air of patient right.

The Passing of Parnell

Punch notes his coldness, his impassive persistence as an agitator, but says nothing of the ill-concealed contempt he showed for his followers, and the entire lack of geniality, *bonhomie*, and humour, which partly explained the mercilessness with which he was pursued once his power was shaken. As he had never won or tried to win their affection, he could not expect to find magnanimity in mean souls.

The wheels of the Parliamentary chariot drove heavily over the Land Purchase Bill. *Punch* showed Mr. Balfour leading the poor tired little Bill through a maze of amendments. *A propos* of its complicated nature and endless, obscure sub-sections, which aroused much hostile criticism in *The Times*, Mr. Balfour is made to say: —

The Times, too, may gird, and declare 'tis absurd not to know *one's own Labyrinth* better;
The Times is my friend, but a trifle too fond of the goad and the scourge and the fetter.

This, of course, was in the days when *The Times* was ultra-Unionist. However, the Bill finally passed through its various stages, and Mr. W. H. Smith exhibits it with the fruits of the Session in

June, 1891, as a gigantic strawberry. The choice of this particular fruit as a symbol was dictated by the fact that both he and Lord Salisbury had exhibited strawberries at the Horticultural Show.

The relations of Canada with England and the United States provoked much discussion in 1891. *Punch* expressed confidence in Canada's loyalty, and simultaneously published a burlesque "Canadian Calendar (to be hoped not prophetic)," foretelling complete absorption in the United States. It begins with Reciprocity with the U.S.A., and goes on with the dying out of trade with and emigration from the old country, the increase of improvident Irish, the request of Canada to be annexed to America, and finally her decline into a tenth-rate Yankee state. On the death of the Canadian premier, Sir John Macdonald, "old To-morrow" as he was nicknamed from his habit of procrastination, *Punch* overlooked the thrasonical magniloquence criticized in an earlier poem, and only dwelt on his long services to the Dominion.

Earlier in the year *Punch* had typified the Federation of the Australian Colonies in a boating cartoon, the British Lion from the bank applauding a racing eight, manned by cubs and coxed by a kangaroo, and bidding them swing together.

On the death of the old Duke of Devonshire at the close of 1891, and the accession of Lord Hartington to the title, Mr. Chamberlain became leader of the Liberal-Unionists in the Commons. Mr. Chamberlain, in spite of the *rapprochement* already noted, was still looked upon in some quarters as a somewhat dangerous Radical, and in January, 1892, *Punch* represented the clock-faced *Times* lecturing him on his responsibilities. Mr. Balfour succeeded Mr. W. H. Smith on the death of that unselfish, honest and capable statesman, as Leader of the House of Commons. The shades of Dizzy and Pam are friendly in the cartoon which records the promotion; slightly anxious on the score of Mr. Balfour's youth – he was then forty-four – but on the whole inclined to think that he will do. Parliament was dissolved in June, the Liberals were returned at the Elections, and the new House met on the now ominous date of August 4.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

"Scuttle" and "Grab"

In the 'seventies *Punch*, as we have seen, was decidedly non-interventionist. By the middle 'eighties he found it harder to preserve a middle course between the extremes of Jingoism and Pacificism, though he bestows impartial ridicule on both "Scuttle and Grab" in his burlesque forecast of the alternate foreign policies of the ultra-Imperialists and the ultra-Radicals. This was published early in 1885, when the Liberals were in power, and though deliberately fantastical and even farcical, shows how the wildest anticipations are sometimes verified by fact. Four periods are chosen. In 1890 the Grab Party inaugurate a forward policy all round by spending fifty millions upon the Army and Fleet, and are turned out by John Bull when it is found that their schemes involve: —

The seizure of sixteen islands, conquest of five native races, absorption of fifty thousand square miles of – useless – new territory, seven small wars, two large ones, four massacres, and an Income-tax of five shillings in the pound.

The Scuttle Party is installed in power in 1895 with a big majority and bigger promises: —

Finishes off all wars by caving in all round, retiring everywhere and relinquishing everything. Cuts down Army, and resolves to sell half the Ironclad Fleet as old metal. Power which buys it immediately utilizes it against us. Another Fleet has to be ordered at once at fancy prices in response to Press clamour. Scuttle Party, in cleft stick, halts between two opinions; in pursuit of peace is found

fighting all over the world, and after frantic efforts at economy, runs up Income-tax to six shillings in the pound. John Bull turns out Scuttle Party.

Then we jump to A.D. 2000, but even then the wildest stretch of *Punch's* imagination does not exceed the establishment of conscription and the raising of the Army to a million men. Finally in his last forecast *Punch* is reduced to solving the problem by an insurrection under a popular soap-boiler, the seizure of the leaders of the two parties, and the banishing of both "Scuttle" and "Grab" from the political dictionary.

With the return of the Conservatives to power, we find that *Punch*, so far from rebuking the Government for their expenditure on bloated armaments, develops into something like an alarmist on the subject of national preparedness and the folly of "cheap defences." The inefficiency of the Army and Navy is a constant theme from 1887 onwards. The bursting of big naval guns, the badness of munitions and designs for battleships are dealt with in bitter satirical verses: while the damaging report of the Parliamentary Committee on Army equipment and stores prompts a series of advertisements of the "Benevolent Bayonet," the "Blazing Breech-loader," the "Comic Cartridge," and so on. Dishonest contractors and incompetent officials are attacked as "the Vultures of Trade" and "the Vermin of Office and Mart." The persistent discouragement of volunteers by the military authorities was an old grievance of *Punch's*, and it crops up in this year in connexion with the removal of the camp from Wimbledon by order of "George Ranger." Indeed, the bitterness of *Punch's* attack on the Duke of Cambridge revives the memories of the 'forties, when a duke, royal or otherwise, was his favourite cockshy: —

Snubbing the Volunteers

Some prate of patriotism, and some of cheap defence,
But to the high official mind that's all absurd pretence;
For of all the joys of snubbing, there's none to it so dear,
As to snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub the British Volunteer!

A patriotic Laureate may bid the Rifles form,
And Citizens may look to them for safety in War's storm;
But Secretaries, Dooks, and such at this delight to jeer,
And to snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub the British Volunteer!

A semi-swell he may be, but he may be a mere clerk,
And he's an interloper, and to snub him is a lark.
Sometimes he licks the Regulars, and so our duty's clear,
'Tis to snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub the British Volunteer!

He hankers for an increase in his Capitation Grant,
It's like his precious impudence, and have the lift he shan't.
What, make it easier for him to run us close? No fear!
We'll snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub the British Volunteer!

He has a fad for Wimbledon, but that is just a whim,
And as eviction's all the go, we'll try it upon *him*.
He's not an Irish tenant, so no one will interfere,
When once more we snub, snub, snub, snub, snub the British Volunteer!

His targets and his tents and things are nuisances all round,
As Jerry-Builders, Dooks, and other Toffs have lately found,
Compared with bricks and mortar and big landlords he's small beer,
So we'll snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub the British Volunteer!

The Common's vastly handy, there's no doubt, to chaps in town,
And crowds of Cockneys to the butts can quickly hurry down;
But what are *all* Town's Cockneys to one solitary Peer?
No; let us snub, snub, snub, snub, snub, snub the British Volunteer!

Your Citizen who wants to play at soldiers need not look
To have his little way as though he were a Royal Dook;
With building-leases – sacred things! – he must not interfere,
So let us snub, snub, snub, snub, snub the British Volunteer!

If he *must* shoot his annual shoot somewhere, why, let him go
To Pirbright or to Salisbury Plain, or e'en to Jericho.
But out from his loved Wimbledon he'll surely have to clear,
A final snub, snub, snub, snub, snub to the British Volunteer!

Punch was not generous or just in representing the Duke of Cambridge as a mere obstructive; and the sequel has not verified his forecast. Wimbledon Common remains a great playground of the people, and the annual meetings of the National Rifle Association, held at Wimbledon from 1860 to 1888, have not suffered in prestige or value since the move to Bisley in 1890.

References to the inadequate state of the national defences reach their highest frequency in 1888. We have the duel between Lord Randolph Churchill preaching retrenchment and Lord Charles Beresford advocating expenditure on an increased Navy. This is followed up by *Punch's* "Alarmist Alphabet" dedicated to our naval and military experts, to whose warnings our rulers attach no particular importance: —

A's the Alarm that the Country's defenceless.
B's the Belief such assertions are senseless.
C's the Commission that sits with regard to them;
D's our Defences – the one topic barred to them!
E's the Expense – it's supposed we shall grudge it!
F is the Fear of increasing the Budget.
G stands for Guns, which we thought we had got.
H is the Howl when we hear we have *not*.
I's the Inquiry, abuses to right meant;
J is the Judgment (a crushing indictment!);
K is the Knot of red tape someone ties on it;
L's Limbo – where no one will ever set eyes on it!
M is the Murmur, too quickly forgotten.
N is our Navy, which some say is rotten.
O's the Official who bungles with *bonhomie*.
P's Party-Government – all for Economy.
Q is the Question engrossing our Statesmen.
R is Retrenchment, which so fascinates men.

S stands for Services, starved (out of Policy).
T is the Time when – too late! – we our folly see.
U is the Uproar of Struggle Titanic;
V is the Vote we shall pass in a panic.
W's War – with the Capture of London.
X our Xplosions of fury, when undone.
Y is the Yoke we shall have to get used to.
Z is the Zero our Empire's reduced to!

The Race of Armaments

Simultaneously Britannia figures in a cartoon as the "Unprotected Female" surrounded by a litter of burst guns, broken contracts, broken blades, unfinished ships, etc. Then we find *Punch* suddenly appearing at Downing Street at "the first meeting of the Inner Cabinet," and shattering the complacent satisfaction of the Premier and the War Secretary by a peremptory and menacing demand for speeding-up in the supply of rifles and more energetic recruiting. In July, under the heading of "*Punch's* Parallels," the tercentenary of the Armada is celebrated in a satiric perversion of the famous game of bowls into "a nice little game of Ducks and Drakes – with the public money," in which Lord George Hamilton, the First Lord of the Admiralty, is attacked as a lethargic aristocrat. Another cartoon shows Moltke rebuking the Duke of Cambridge for persistently discouraging the volunteer movement; while the enforced expense of life in the regular army is condemned in "The Pleasant Way of Glory." Commenting on the swamping of the subaltern's pay by compulsory but unnecessary outlay, *Punch* remarks that "the life of the British officer, as thus revealed, seems to resolve itself into a prolonged struggle to keep up a false position on insufficient means"; and he regrets that Lord Wolseley seemed to acquiesce in the evil instead of encouraging British officers to be more frugal. Such criticisms are not unfamiliar even to-day, for the old traditions die hard. On the general question of national and especially naval defence, *Punch* was not by any means a voice crying in the wilderness. Public opinion had been worked up by other powerful advocates, amongst whom *Punch* rightly mentions Mr. W. T. Stead. The debate on the Address in the session of 1889 was prolonged and acrimonious. Early in March, however, Lord George Hamilton moved a resolution, on which the Naval Defence Bill was founded, authorizing an expenditure of £21,500,000 on the Navy. The measure, of course, met with some opposition from various quarters, but public opinion was manifestly in its favour, and it received the Royal Assent before the end of May.

Throughout this campaign it is interesting to note how the personality of the German Emperor obtrudes itself as a disquieting factor in the international race in armaments. At the close of 1891 a lady with alleged abnormal "magnetic" power was giving performances at the Alhambra, and *Punch* adapts the incident in a cartoon suggested by the Kaiser's *dictum*— inscribed in the Visitors' Book of the City Council at Munich —*Suprema Lex Regis Voluntas*. The accompanying verses on "The Little Germania Magnate" are derisive, not to say abusive, with their references to "Behemoth Billy," "Panjandrum-plus-Cæsar," "Thrasso" and "Vulcan-Apollo." *Punch* was evidently inclined to regard the German Emperor as one of those "impossible people" who, as *The Times* had suggested in a happy phrase, ought to "retire into fiction." Unfortunately he remained a fact, and was not to be killed by *Punch's* mouth.

MEN AND MASTERS: WORK AND WAGES

In the preceding volume I endeavoured to trace and account for the waning of *Punch's* reforming zeal and democratic ardour, and to illustrate his gradual movement from Left to Right Centre in the 'fifties, 'sixties, and early 'seventies. Many abuses had been remedied, the barriers of class privilege had been broken down, the cleavage between the "Two Nations" was less glaring, national prosperity had increased, the ladder of learning had been set up by Forster's Education Act. Free Trade and Gladstonian finance had eased the burden of the working man and the taxpayer. England was not a Utopia, but she had travelled far from the days of the Hungry 'Forties. In December, 1883, the late Sir Robert Giffen, one of the most trustworthy and deservedly respected of the much abused tribe of statisticians, published a comparative table of the consumption of the agricultural labourer in 1840 and 1881. *Punch's* comment takes the form of an imaginary letter from a farm hand under the heading of "Food and Figures": —

"Sir, Maister *Punch*,

"Look 'ee here, Sir. Squire Giffen, a-spoutin' tother night about I and we country folk, stuck to it that we wur better fed nowadays than we wur forty-one year ago; and them as 'eard 'im say that there, they up and swore as how we wur a grumblin', cantankerous, discontented, set o' chaps as didn't knaw naught of our own jolly good luck. Now look 'ee 'ere, Maister *Punch*; 'ere be Squire Giffen's figures. Says he that forty-one year ago, that be in 1840, I eat this 'ere in the first column, say in about a couple o' weeks, and that now I gets through this 'ere, wot he's set down in the second, in the same matter o' time."

Food and Figures

The table follows, and then Hodge continues: —

"Now addin' all that there up, that be for 1840, about 69 lbs. of food for I; while now he says, says he, 'Hodge, you old pig, you swallows 373 lbs. — that be six times as much — just as easy in the same time, and you grumbles at it too!' Now look 'ee 'ere, Maister *Punch*, if I does that there — and figures is figures — well ain't it plain that a feed up like that must give I such a fit o' blues from indigestion, as sets I hankerin' about franchise and land stealin', and such like things o' which I knows and cares just naught, and gets I called by a set o' chaps, as wants nothin' more than to make summat out o' me, yours all of a puzzle,

"Discontented Hodge."

Intelligent Working Man: "Arbitration! Ca' *that* arbitration! Why, *they've given it against us!*"

"Appetite comes with eating"; and here we have a concrete and "luciferous" example of the somewhat grudging approval which made *Punch* acknowledge improved conditions, while at the same time he expressed his misgivings at the leverage which the improvement furnished to agitation and unrest. In the 'forties *Punch* had recognized that the legitimate grievances of the underfed masses were a real danger. He now recognized, or at any rate implied, that when well-fed they might become equally dangerous under the guidance of extremists. He still believed that there was a great fund of inert anti-revolutionary sentiment amongst the rank and file of the people, but long before the days of "direct action," was alive to the possibilities inherent in the oligarchical rule of Trade Unionism. He saw that a well-organized minority in a key industry might dislocate the whole fabric of production, and when in 1877 the miners attempted to restrict output in order to keep up the price of coal and the rate of wages, addressed the following remonstrance to Mr. Macdonald, the mining M.P.: —

THE ARGUMENT A MINORI

So you suggest that they our coals who quarry
Should shorten shifts to raise black diamonds' price?
But, if so, why should other workers tarry,
Each in his craft, to follow your advice?
Till soon, hauled o'er the coals, like spark in stubble,
Over-production's doctrine goes ahead,
And all trades work half time, and come down double
For beef and beer, for house, and clothes, and bread!

Towards the close of the 'seventies industrial distress was so general that in January, 1879, *Punch* abandoned his critical attitude and appealed for united effort and a cessation of party strife to drive the wolf from the door. The "New Charity" that he recommended was a voluntary curtailment of the luxuries of the rich – balls, entertainments, dinners, and theatre parties, the purchase of jewels, wines, etc. – in order to help in relieving distress. This involved a surrender of his old argument in favour of the production of luxuries on the ground that they provided lucrative employment. At the same time, the terrorism applied to non-Unionists by the "Rebecca" gangs in Durham moved him to vigorous protest, and in the verses on "blacklegs" in April he writes: —

Blackleg *versus* Blackguard be it!
Let's see which shall have their way!

Spirit of Anarchy: "What! No work! Come and enlist with me – I'll find work for you!!"

Henry George and Socialism

Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, which attained a wide circulation in 1883, comes in for a good deal of hostile criticism. It was an epoch-making book; and though, as water to wine when compared to the strong drink of modern anti-capitalistic literature, it was thought worthy of serious attention by *Punch*. In his cartoon in January, 1884, Red Riding Hood is confronted by the Wolf of Socialism, with Henry George's book peeping out of his pocket. *Punch*, who reminds us that Mr. Labouchere called the author "George the Fifth," admits that gross inequalities existed, but saw no remedy in Henry George's policy, which he regarded as wholesale robbery, and in "St. George and the Dragon" ranked the American author along with Proudhon, the author of the saying "Property is Theft." Yet a few weeks later he rebukes the Duke of Albany, who, in a speech at Liverpool, had recommended that the poor should be taught cookery. *Punch* was a great believer in cookery, but held that your hare must be caught first: —

Prince, you spoke a word in season
'Gainst uncleanly plates and slops,
But the workman cries with reason
"Teach me first to catch my chops."

In 1886 the number of the unemployed rose to a formidable figure. There was rioting in Pall Mall and Piccadilly on February 8th after a meeting in Trafalgar Square, and *Punch*, under the heading, "Sneaking Sedition," indulged in a violent tirade against the "firebrand fanatics," Messrs. Hyndman, John Burns, and Champion. It is headed by a picture in which *Punch* is gleefully

stringing up three puppets whose faces are portraits of the three "blatant trumpeters of sedition who prated a mixed mob to passion heat, and then discreetly withdrew whilst that passion found vent in wrecking and ruffianism." The writer denies with an exuberance of fiery rhetoric that they represented the unemployed, or anything but "fanatic hatred and shallow conceit – that is to say, themselves." They were "cowardly Catilines of the gutter," recruiting sergeants of the "Army of Anarchy," "Sedition-spouters," who egged on "the drunken, violent *un*working-Man" to outrage. *Punch* appealed to all honest working men to repudiate these so-called but misrepresentative leaders, and "sweep these social democrats for ever from the land." It is a tremendous tirade, but disfigured by a great deal of sheer abuse, and the cause of law and order was not assisted thereby. Sedition cannot be quelled by strong language, and *Punch* admitted that honest wage-earners were exploited by Capitalists, Monopolists, and Middlemen; that all must compassionate the workless working man, and that all should help him by friendly aid at the moment and hereafter by well-considered reform. In the same number a strong appeal is made to the opulent to help the Mansion House Fund for Unemployed, and not to be scared by frothy street sedition. There had been wild talk at the Trafalgar Square meeting about gallows and lamp-posts for Ministers and Members of Parliament, and *Punch*, who on occasion was a true prophet, may be pardoned for his failure to foresee a time when John Burns would be denounced as a crusted bureaucrat and Mr. Hyndman publish an enthusiastic eulogy of the Clemenceau whose motto was "*Je fais la guerre*."

One of the Real "Unemployed": "How am I to make *my* voice heard in this blackguard row!"

Unemployed and Unemployables

Mr. P.: "Don't lose your head, my man! Who'd suffer most *if you killed it?*"

The contrast between the unemployed and the unemployables is repeatedly emphasized in these years. Works were closed down because the hands took themselves off to join a procession of unemployed. Wasters refused work, preferring hymn-singing in the streets and levying doles from credulous householders. A cartoon in 1887 shows one of the "real unemployed" exclaiming: "How am I to make my voice heard in this blackguard row?" Socialism is seen "Sowing Tares" – after Millais's picture. Anarchy as the tempter prompts unemployment to plunder, looting, and riot – the wrong way. But *Punch* was not content with chastising sedition-mongers, and in another cartoon rebuked callous complacency as a real danger in a time of serious distress. The contrasts of splendour and discontent were curiously illustrated in these years. In the spring of 1886 there was a "scene" at the Opera when the scene shifters struck work in the middle of the performance, and appeared on the stage begging for money. In 1887, the year of the Queen's Jubilee, special constables were sworn in, and Mr. Gladstone as the "Grand Old Janus" is shown with one face applauding a constable "downing" an English rough, while the other frowns on an R.I.C. man standing over a rebellious Irishman. It was in the same year that the growth and popularity of street processions moved *Punch* to protest against the invasion of the Parks by public meetings, which drove away quiet people who used them for recreation from fear of King Mob and the rabble rout. The procession habit has long since come to stay, though it is only of recent years that the presence of children has become a feature in these demonstrations. As for the Hyde Park stump orators, the types genially satirized in one of the *Voces Populi* series in 1889 include the Elderly Faddist, the Irish Patriot, the Reciter, and the Physical Force Socialist. The Reciter, who dates back to the time when the Latin satirist spoke of him as a nuisance in the dog-days, has disappeared from the Parks, though he flourishes in Georgian coteries. The other types remain with us, together with some new varieties. But there is little new under the sun. In 1887 the Annual Register mentions the exploit of a political agitator who chained himself to the railings in a conspicuous position in Central London, thus depriving the militant "suffragettes" of the credit of introducing this method of protest.

Praise for Cardinal Manning

Procrustes: "Now, then, you fellows; I mean to fit you all to my little Bed!"

Chorus: "Oh, Lor-r!"

["It is impossible to establish universal uniformity of hours without inflicting very serious injury to workers." (*Motion at the recent Trades Congress.*)

In the great dock strike of 1889 *Punch*, on the whole, showed a disposition to side with the men. In his first cartoon in September the working man appeals to the employer to think less of his luxuries, more of Labour's needs. A week later *Punch* appeals to the working man not to kill the guinea-fowl (Trade), that lays the golden eggs, by striking. In October, employer and employee are shown at the game of Beggar-my-Neighbour, the master playing Lock-out against Strike. *Punch* pleads for give-and-take. *Both* will lose by the game they are playing. The same argument is further developed a few months later in another cartoon in which the foreign competitor is the *tertius gaudens*. The foreign Fox goes off with Trade, while the two dogs, Capital and Labour, are asleep. To return to the dock strike, we may note that Cardinal Manning's intervention was warmly applauded. *Punch* thought the Cardinal ought to have been made a Privy Councillor and Lord Mayor Whitehead a baronet for their services as conciliators. Praise for a Cardinal and a Lord Mayor is indeed a wonderful change from the *Punch* of forty years earlier. The settlement of that "deed of darkness," the gas strike in 1889, prompted the cartoon showing the indignation of Bill Sikes and the Artful Dodger over the frustration of their plans. Industrial troubles were rife in 1890. The Labour May Day, already instituted, inspires a set of verses after Tennyson, in which an enthusiastic operative sings,

"Toil's to be Queen of the May, brother, Labour is Queen o' this May!"

The introduction of an eight hours' day, already vigorously agitated for, set *Punch* thinking on what would happen if the principle were logically applied all round – to the Courts, restaurants, theatres and the medical profession. He returned to the subject in the following year, and came to much the same conclusion – that it would turn out a new bed of Procrustes, on the ground that the universal uniformity of hours of work could not be established without inflicting serious injury on the workers. Socialism still continued to preoccupy *Punch* in 1890. This time it is depicted as a snake attacking an eagle in mid-air, rather a strange inversion of natural history. The eagle is *Trade*, the wings are *Labour* and *Capital*. The prosaic critic will ask how the snake got there except on the wings of a soaring imagination. John Burns is still a favourite *bête noire*, and is severely rebuked for his dictatorial and aggressive speeches at the Trade Union Congress and his action in connexion with industrial trouble on the Clyde, the ghost of Robert Burns being invoked to chastise his namesake in an adaptation of "The Dumfries Volunteer." At the Congress John Burns had said that he was "in the unfortunate position of having probably to go to Parliament at the next election, but he would rather go to prison half a dozen times than to Parliament once... He must know on what terms he must do the dirty work of going to Parliament." This was not a happy utterance, though it hardly merited *Punch's* bludgeoning. Burns was "perhaps Boanerges spelt little": he "laid about him like mules who can kick hard"; "the mustard had gone to his nose," etc. But in view of the way in which Mr. Burns sank without a ripple from public notice in August, 1914, there is point in the caution: —

Be warned in good time – why there isn't a man, Sir,
Or at most one or two, whom the universe misses;
You strut for a moment, and then, like poor *Anser*,
You vanish, uncared for, with splutter and hisses.

The Coal Strike of 1890

To modern readers, however, the most instructive passages dealing with industrial unrest in 1890 relate to the Coal Strike. In March of that year *Punch* published a prophetic journal of events, looming possibly somewhere ahead, of life in London after being without coal for sixteen weeks. It is interesting to compare this forecast with the realities of 1921. According to the prophet, people have burned their banisters and bed furniture; a syndicate of noblemen start boring for coal in Belgrave Square, but are stopped by the sanitary inspector. The wood pavement is pulled up and riots have broken out. The Archbishop of Canterbury preaches on the Plague of Darkness in the Abbey by the light of a farthing candle, which goes out; etc. Even if the recent stoppage had lasted sixteen instead of thirteen weeks, it is more than doubtful if *Punch's* prophecies would have been fulfilled. At best they are an exercise in burlesque, and lacking in circumstantial imagination. *Punch* might have foreseen the scenic possibilities of a long coal stoppage and its clarifying effect on the atmosphere. And with his belief in the solid sense of the people he ought to have refrained from the suggestion of riot. But he may be pardoned for failing to foresee how oil would come to our rescue. At the close of the same month *Punch* addresses a versified remonstrance to the miners. He admits that pay should be liberal for dangerous underground work, but deprecates the use of the strike weapon as ruinous to trade and other industries by the laying up of ships and the closing of factories and railways. So, just two years later, in a cartoon on "Going on Play," he condemns the miners' strike, which aimed openly at creating an artificial scarcity, and thereby kept up wages. A poor clerk is seen expostulating with a working man: "It's all very well, but what's play to you is death to us." In the omnibus strike of 1891 *Punch* was decidedly sympathetic towards the overworked drivers and conductors, just as he backed up the hairdressers in the same year when they agitated for an early closing day and better and healthier conditions. The verses on the Democratic Village of the Future, a paradise of sanitation in which there would be no more "bobbing to their betters," and the rule of Squire and parson would cease, are largely ironical, and the Socialist appropriation of May Day inspires a long warning to this "new May Day Medusa" – the International – in a "Hymn of Honest Labour" in May, 1892.

Bidding for the Labour Vote

Irony predominates, again, in the cynical verses of a year earlier satirizing the tendency of all parties to bid for the Labour vote: —

STRIKING TIMES

New Version of an Old Street Ballad (By a Labouring Elector)

Cheer up, cheer up, you sons of toil, and listen to my song,
The times should much amuse you; you are up, and going strong.
The Working Men of England at length begin to see
That their parsnips for to butter now the Parties all agree.

Chorus

It's high time that the Working Men should have it their own way,
And their prospect of obtaining it grows brighter every day!

It isn't "Agitators" now, but Parties and M.P.'s,
Who swear we ought to have our way, and do as we darn please.
Upon my word it's proper fun! A man should love his neighbour,
Yet Whigs hate Tories, Tories Whigs; but oh! they all love Labour!

Chorus – It's high time, etc

There's artful Joey Chamberlain, he looks as hard as nails,
But when he wants to butter us, the Dorset never fails;
He lays it on so soft and slab, not to say thick and messy,
He couldn't flummerify us more were each of us a Jesse!

Chorus – It's high time, etc

Then roystering Random takes his turn; his treacle's pretty thick;
He gives the Tories the straight tip – and don't they take it – quick?
And now, by Jove, it's comical! – where will the fashion end? —
There's Parnell ups and poses as the genuine Labourer's Friend!

Chorus – It's high time, etc

Comrades, it makes me chortle. The Election's drawing nigh,
And Eight Hours' Bills, or anything, they'll promise for to try.
They'll spout and start Commissions; but, O mighty Labouring Host,
Mind your eye, and keep it on them, or they'll have you all on toast!

Chorus

It's high time that the Working Men should have it their own way,
They'll strain their throats – you mind your votes, and you may find
it pay!

We have now seen *Punch* more as the critic than the friend of organized Labour, and it will be remembered that even in his most democratic days he evinced a deep-rooted distrust of delegates and Union officials. But there is another side to the picture, in which the old championship of the poor and oppressed is as vigorous and vocal as ever. If *Punch* was more mistrustful of Trade Unionism, he was at least as unsparing as in his early days in pillorying examples of the greed and tyranny of masters and employers who misused their opportunities of exploiting unorganized or partially organized labour. In the notes made for this section during this period the very first relates to the sinking of the *La Plata* and the burning of the *Cospatrick*, two emigrant ships, in 1875, and

the indignation felt when it was found that the cargo of the latter vessel was highly inflammable and the boats inadequate in number. The scandal moved *Punch* to rewrite Dibdin, with compliments to Mr. Plimsoll for his campaign against coffin ships, which had not yet been carried to its successful legislative conclusion. He also published, in January, 1875, a mock inquiry – after the manner of Dickens's *Bardell v. Pickwick* trial – by shipowners into the loss of the emigrant ship *Crossbones*. The Court exculpates the offenders after finding that the cargo – containing all sorts of combustible and inflammable materials – was of the most harmless description, adding as a rider that the boats should in future be always launched keel upwards. The old abuse of the "climbing boys" still reared its unsightly head; Lord Shaftesbury, in the debate on his Chimney Sweepers' Bill, in May, 1875, quoted the remark of a master sweep: "In learning a child you can't be soft with him; you must use violence," and *Punch* enlarged on this text in his best manner. No appeal on behalf of children left him unmoved. When subscriptions were invited in 1878 to lay out a children's playground near St. Peter's, London Docks, he suggests that the fortunate children of the West End should help to give this playground to their less favoured brothers and sisters of the East. As a lover of children, *Punch* was quick to recognize those who had laboured on their behalf. In the Christmas number of 1879

George Smith of Coalville

he tells the life story of George Smith, of Coalville, who began life as a poor lad in the brickfields; worked his way up to the post of foreman and manager; and then devoted his life to calling attention to the cruel overwork and ill-treatment of the children whose labour he had once shared. In spite of neglect, opposition, and obloquy, he secured the passing of an Act which brought these hopeless little outcasts under the eye of Inspectors, limited their hours of labour, and secured them some measure of teaching. Though his action gave grievous offence and he lost his job, he set to work to render a similar service to the children of the bargees, and was the main agent in passing a law for the registration and inspection of canal boats. In these labours he sacrificed not only his time, but his means, and *Punch* appealed to his readers to contribute to the support of "this practical preacher of good will to man, this friend of the friendless, this helper of those who, till he came, had none to help them."

Board-School Master: "Now then, boys, we must get to work again!"

Advanced Scholar: "Please, Sir – mayn't we have somethin' to relieve the craving of 'unger fust?"

In 1881 the hard time of boys in attendance on weighing machines, said to be on duty for thirteen or fourteen hours a day, aroused *Punch's* sympathy and ire. Invention, however, rather than philanthropy, furnished a remedy in the "automatics."

In the same year *Punch's* appeal for the fund to provide poor children with country holidays, embodied in "The Children's Cry," enabled him to forward £280 to the promoters. In 1885 the "almost formidable success" achieved by the experiment of Poor Children's Play-Rooms, in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, delighted his heart. In 1888, *Punch*, in "Cramming *versus* 'Clemming'" emphasizes the need of providing free meals for poor children. At the very end of the period under review in this volume I have come across a notice of a book purporting to show up the cruelties practised on young people and animals in training them for acrobatic performances. The book was poor as literature, but if true called for searching inquiry. Children have, we may safely assume, been long safeguarded from the mishandling alleged to have been possible in 1892; but at the moment of writing these lines – August 11, 1921 – an inquiry is being held into the treatment of animals by showmen and conjurers.

Nor was *Punch* less concerned with the conditions of women workers. In his "Dream of Fair Women" suggested by factory inspectors' reports in 1875, he points to lack of combination among women as the incentive to slave-driving on the part of "foggers." He prefaces a set of verses in October with a passage from a Report on the Black Country: —

The women are said to take the place of fathers as well as husbands, while the men are idle and drunken... At Bromsgrove I heard also of the growing custom of idle, lazy young lads looking out for skilled industrious wives, in order to obtain an easy life.

Men, Women and Dogs

It was, as *Punch* puts it, an inversion of the old legend of Penthesilea and the Amazons. Women were unsexed by labour and serfdom. As for the men: —

*You loaf, train your whippets, and guzzle and gorge,
While they sweat at the anvil, and puddle and forge.*

So at the time of distress in the mining districts in 1875 the miners are accused of using charitable relief for the welfare of their dogs rather than of their families. "How is it," asks a benevolent directress, "you've brought two cans to-day, Geordie?" And a miner on strike replies: "The yain's for my mither, marm, and t'uther for the greyhound."

Farmer's Daughter: "I say, Jem, fancy! Mother said to me to-day I was to help in the Dairy, and might help in the Milking! Because she did when she was a Girl! I said I'd go for a Gov'ness first!"

There is little mention of the hardships of life on the land, though labourers' wages were still very low; but the rise of the farmer class to "gentility" is noted in 1885 in the picture of the farmer's daughter seated at the piano and declaring that she would rather go as a governess than help in the dairy. *Punch's* sympathies were more readily enlisted on behalf of shop and saloon girls. The movement began in Bristol in 1876, where a number of ladies issued a circular to employers asking that chairs should be provided for shop girls; the plan was adopted in Manchester, and, following the lead of Lancashire, *Punch* repeatedly urges the plea for more considerate treatment. The matter was "beyond a joke," and *Punch* recommended ladies to patronize shops where they were allowed, and boycott others. The subject was taken up by the *Lancet*, and the movement spread to Scotland, where a group of ladies made a personal tour of inspection in Edinburgh to see which shops provided seats. One of *Punch's* pictures in this year shows a considerate customer handing a chair over the counter to a tired shop-girl, and a set of verses describes a girl driven into sin by need of rest. As he put it in his plea for "More Seats and Shorter Hours," "A country where humanity interposes on behalf of an over-driven cab-horse will surely not go on suffering hard-working, weak and defenceless girls to be driven to death with impunity." There was only one other place in which seats are not allowed. "That is the House of Commons, but there the torture is only inflicted on one-half of the Members." We hear little nowadays of the hardships of shop-girls, but the seating accommodation of the House of Commons is even more inadequate than in 1880. *Punch*, however, discussed Sir John Lubbock's Shop Hours Bill in 1887 with an impartiality that borders on inconsistency, showing the other side of the question and the popular preference in poor districts for shopping in the evening, districts in which "St. Lubbock" was looked upon as a well-meaning but fussy philanthropist.

"The Cry of the Clerk"

As an individualist, a lover of independence, and an opponent of monopoly, *Punch* was in a difficult position. Some, at any rate, of the monster shops led the way in the humane and considerate treatment of their assistants. But the freezing out of the small shopkeeper struck him as an undoubted hardship, and in 1886 he published a prophetic article describing an interview in the "dim and distant future" between a Stranger and the last shopkeeper in London. It is an allegory of the tyranny of capitalism and monopoly, of the cult of bigness and universality, the triumph of ubiquitous caterers. That "dim and distant future" has not yet arrived, and after thirty-five years the small shopkeeper is still going almost as strong as in the days when *Punch* uttered

his dismal prophecy. But his most impassioned plea in the 'eighties was not uttered on behalf of the working man or woman, or the small shopkeeper. It was reserved for the victims of State parsimony, underpaid clerks and Government officials. The campaign on behalf of these new *protégés* of his opened with "The Cry of the Clerk," a long wail, charged with sentiment, uttered by an overworked and underpaid drudge: —

I don't growl at the working man, be his virtue strict or morality lax;
He'd strike if they gave him my weekly wage, and they never ask *him*
for the Income-tax!

They take his little ones out to tea in a curtained van when the fields
are green,

But never a flower, or field or fern in their leafy homes have my
children seen.

The case is different, so they say, for I'm respectable — save the mark!
He works with the sweat of his manly brow, and I with my body and
brain — poor Clerk!

Why did I marry? In mercy's name, in the form of my brother was
I not born?

Are wife and child to be given to him, and love to be taken from me
with scorn?

It is not for them that I plead, for theirs are the only voices that break
my sorrow,

That lighten my pathway, make me pause 'twixt the sad to-day and
the grim to-morrow.

The Sun and the Sea are not given to me, nor joys like yours as you
flit together

Away to the woods and the downs, and over the endless acres of
purple heather.

But I've love, thank Heaven! and mercy, too; 'tis for justice only I bid
you hark

To the tale of a penniless man like me — to the wounded cry of a
London Clerk!

Fair but Considerate Customer: "Pray sit down. You look so tired. I've been riding all the afternoon in a carriage, and don't require a chair."

The verses lack the desperate poignancy of Hood's "Song of the Shirt," but they made their mark and were quoted in their entirety in *The Times*. Subsequent articles and verses especially single out the telegraph clerks as the victims of State slave-driving. *Punch* declares that there was no rest for the telegraph "operator," and describes a letter of appointment from the Government to one of this class as being really a death warrant, offering £65 a year with the prospect of rising to £160 after twenty years' service. Early in 1881 he writes under the heading, "Wiredrawn Salaries": —

The giggling girls, precocious boys, and half-starved clerks, who form the Telegraphic Staff of that money-grubbing department of Government — the Post Office — have petitioned for a slight increase of pay, and have been officially snubbed for their pains. They have petitioned for eight years, and for eight years they have received no answer. The Manchester clerks were too wise to petition. They struck, and their demands were at once attended to.

New Views of the Strike Weapon

This is not very polite to the ladies, but the comment is significant, since it shows that *Punch* was, on occasion, ready to abandon his old view of the inefficacy of the strike weapon. In June of the same year he announced that "The worms have turned": —

The chief art of Government is to do nothing with an air of doing much. The best administrators are those who have thoroughly mastered the axiom that zeal is a crime, and who are clever at sitting upon troublesome questions. Unfortunately there are questions that will not be sat upon, and the grievance of the Telegraph Clerks is one of them. The Government have "considered" this grievance so long and so dreamily, that at last the discontented Clerks have threatened to strike. They may not at present have the organization and the command of funds of the "working man," who is always on the verge of striking, but these will come in the fullness of time. The Government have roused a spirit of self-reliance in these overworked and underpaid servants of a money-grubbing department, which no tardy concessions can destroy. The patronizing, not to say fatherly articles in some of the newspapers will encourage this spirit, for under the tone of warning is an ill-concealed fear that skilful telegraphists are not to be obtained from the fields and gutters. How much better it would have been to have "considered" less and acted more, and have yielded gracefully.

The Government were not, however, the only offenders whose parsimony excited *Punch's* indignation. In 1878, when the wages of the railwaymen on the Midland were reduced, he prophesied increased inefficiency and more accidents. Railway servants were, in his opinion, overworked and underpaid. Twelve years later, in the autumn of 1890, Major Marindin, in his report on the collision at Eastleigh, found that an engine-driver and stoker had failed to keep a proper look-out, but noted that they had been on duty for sixteen and a half hours. *Punch's* comment took the form of the cartoon of "Death and his brother Sleep" on the engine. The overloaded country postman had excited *Punch's* compassion in 1885, and in the same year the outrageously long hours — sixteen a day and seven days a week — imposed on tram drivers and conductors had come in for severe censure in an article which also mentions the sweating of East End tailors' apprentices. It was this scandal, and the campaign which it provoked, that led to the appointment of a Royal Commission with Lord Dunraven as Chairman. *Punch* joined in the controversy with a whole series of articles, cartoons, and verses. His first contribution was headed with a picture of a fat fur-coated contractor raking sovereigns out of the "sweating furnace," and took for its text Lord Dunraven's statement that "as regards hours of labour, earnings, and sanitary surroundings, the condition of these workers is more deplorable than that of any body of working men in any portion of the civilized or uncivilized world." A set of ironical advertisements followed of clothes made by sweated labour, including "The Happy Duchess Jacket — straight from a fever-stricken home," and "The Churchyard Overcoat," the product of slave-labour in the East End. Then we have "The modern Venus attired by the Three Dis-Graces" — a stalwart fashionable lady waited on by three starveling sempstresses; a mock Ode on the Triumph of Capital, full of ironic eulogy of Mammon; and, most remarkable of all, a long sardonic poem, published in September, 1888, under the heading, "Israel and Egypt; or Turning the Tables," which is at once an indictment of, and an apology for, the Jew Sweaters.

Punch prefaces the poem with two extracts: —

"The Children of Israel multiplied so as to excite the jealous fears of the Egyptians... They were therefore organized into gangs under taskmasters, as we see in the vivid pictures of the monuments, to work upon the public edifices. 'And the Egyptians made the Children of Israel to serve with rigour. And they made

their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick and in all manner of service in the field." — Smith's *Ancient History*.

"The Sweater is probably a Jew, and, if so, he has the gift of organization, and an extraordinary power of subordinating everything — humanity, it may be, included — to the great end of getting on... The conditions of life in East London ruin the Christian labourer, and leave the Jewish labourer unharmed." — *The Spectator on Sweaters and Jews*.

Jews and Gentiles

The verses compare the treatment of the Israelites under Pharaoh with the modern sweating of the Gentile by the Jew middleman: —

Yes, the Gentile once "sweated" the Jew,
But the Hebrew has now turned the tables; Dunraven will tell you
that's true.

Swell (*at West-End Tailor's, to the Foreman*): "Ah — look here, Snipson, I've been reading all about this Sweating System, don'tcherno! — and as I find that the Things I pay you Eight Guineas for — ah — you get made by the Sweaters for about — ah — Two-and-Six — I've made up my mind — ah — to do the thing well, without screwing you down. So — ah — just take my order *for a Seven-and-Sixpenny Dress Suit*."

The moral is summed up in the last four lines: —

And, behold, though the Sun-God is silent, the Son of the Sun-God
asleep,
Still merciless Mammon is master, the slaves of the Gold-God still
weep;
Be his ministers Hebrew or Gentile, his worship is cruelty still;
Still the worker must sweat 'neath the scourge that the stores of the
tyrant may fill.

Lord Dunraven withdrew from the Commission, and *Punch* congratulated him on his retirement, though it "seemed caused by a fad," when the Report was published in 1890. The recommendations were inadequate, in *Punch's* view. He spoke contemptuously of applying the "rose-water cure" and whitewashing the sweater, whom he depicts as a monster vampire. Socialism, as we have seen, was a serpent of the boa constrictor type. The tendency to big combines was typified by an octopus, labelled Monopoly, controlling cotton, iron, coal, salt and copper, and threatening a distressful lady (Commerce) perilously navigating a frail canoe.

Bumbledom was not dead, but its activities were less blatant. *Punch* gibbets the stinginess of the Lambeth Workhouse when in 1875 the Guardians decided that Christmas pudding was too rich in good things and recommended a plainer variety. Fourteen years later, under the sarcastic heading, "Luxury for Paupers," we encounter the following elegant extract from the *Standard* of December 5, 1889: —

"At the Chester Board of Guardians yesterday, a discussion took place as to whether, in view of the Christmas dinner, it would be advisable to allow the inmates to have knives to cut their meat. It was explained that at present the paupers had to tear the meat to pieces with their fingers and teeth... The Rev. O. Rawson proposed that they should buy knives and forks... Mr. Charmley, farmer,

opposed the proposal... The motion to hire knives and forks on Christmas Day only was put, and carried by thirteen votes to ten."

Manchester under the Microscope

The negligence and delay in administering Parish relief moved *Punch* in 1876 to declare that sick paupers were worse treated than sick cows or horses. As an illustration of "The way we die now," there are further exposures of cruelty in lunatic asylums, and the hard-heartedness of Guardians in harrying "bundles of rags." But these revelations are fewer than in former years, and dwell more on mismanagement and extravagance than actual inhumanity. Thus the report of the committee of inquiry into the administration of the Metropolitan Asylums Board in 1885 revealed gross waste and extravagant consumption of wine and stimulants, not by the patients, but by the officials. *Punch* was "so long accustomed to hear of the wondrous doings of 'Manchester the Great' and the grand example she set to the rest of the Kingdom in all that constituted good and pure government and sound finance," that he could not repress a certain malicious satisfaction at the result of the audit of the accounts of her Corporation by the "Citizens' auditor," published in the autumn of 1884. The first instalment, reviewed in October, is an entertaining document winding up with an allusion to the pantomime of the *Forty Thieves*, fully justified by the further revelations summarized by *Punch* a month later: —

MANCHESTER'S PLUCKY AUDITOR

This bold Gentleman continues his amusing revelations to the apparent delight of the ratepayers, and the disgust of the bumptious Corporation. We can only make room for one or two extracts. This is the bill for a dinner, at the Queen's Hotel, for the Members of the Baths and Wash-houses Committee, at which it will be seen that they drank punch, sherry, hock, champagne, claret, port, gin, whiskey, brandy, *liqueurs*, and mild ale: —

"To Twenty-one dinners, caviare, turtle, etc., 15s. each, £15 15s. 0d.; sherry, 16s.; hock, 50s.; punch, 7s. 6d.; champagne, 138s. 6d.; claret, 50s.; port, 25s.; mild ale, 1s.; liqueur, 20s.; coffee, 10s. 6d.; cigars, 64s. 6d.; soda, 22s. 6d.; gin, 2s. 6d.; whiskey, 15s.; brandy, 27s. 6d.; service, 21s.

"In addition to the above, the Committee had sent up to the Baths the day before the opening, one dozen bottles of whiskey, 48s.; one dozen gin, 36s.; half-a-dozen brandy, 84s.; half-a-dozen port, 48s.; half-a-dozen sherry, 48s.; two dozen soda, 4s. 6d.; one dozen lemonade, 4s. 6d.; one dozen potass, 4s. 6d.; two boxes cigars, 22s. 6d. each; and half-a-dozen bottles of St. Julien, 36s.; making a total of £52 2s. paid to the proprietors of the Queen's Hotel."

He adds that strenuous efforts have been made to find out the Gentleman who called for Mild Ale, and, when got, consumed a shilling's-worth of it.

If there were many such auditors, audits would form a most amusing portion of our comic literature.

In these circumstances *Punch* expressed a natural joy that Municipal Reform was tackled at last in Sir William Harcourt's Bill, while in his "Bitter Cry of Alderman and Bumble" he showed these two worthies bursting into tears over the iniquities of "Werdant 'Arcourt."

The housing problem comes up early in 1877 *à propos* of the late Sir B. W. Richardson's hygienic theories. *Punch* admits that he was probably on the right track, but waxes sarcastic at the expense of crotchety alarmists, and his own suggestions are more whimsical than helpful. It was not until 1883 that he began to take the problem seriously. I deal in another section with the fashionable craze for "slumming," which *Punch* ridiculed as insincere and absurd. But there is genuine indignation in his verses on a judge's remarks at Manchester, and on the report of an

inquest, at which it came out that a whole family occupied one bed on the floor; in the poem (after Hood) on the Real Haunted House, comparing slum dwellers with rural labourers; in the cartoon, "Mammon's Rents," on the text, "Dives, the owner of property condemned as unfit for habitation, is getting from 50 to 60 per cent. on his money"; and in "The Slum-dweller's Saturday Night" (after Burns), where *Punch* drives home his old point of the futility of foreign missions when we had all this unreclaimed slum savagery at home. The personal investigations of slum areas undertaken by Sir Charles Dilke, then President of the Local Government Board, traced the evil to the greed of grasping landlords.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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