

DOYLE
RICHARD

MANNERS &
CUSTOMS OF
YE ENGLYSHE

Richard Doyle
Manners & Cvstoms
of ye Englyshe

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Manners & Cvstoms of ye Englyshe / Drawn from ye Qvick:*

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Richard Doyle Manners & Customs of ye Englyshe / Drawn from ye Qvick

YE CONTRIBUTOR HYS PREFACE

Suppose the great-grandfather of anybody could step down from his picture-frame and stalk abroad, his descendant would be eager to hear his opinion of the world we live in. Most of us would like to know what the men of the *Past* would say of the *Present*. If some old philosopher, for instance Socrates, exchanging robes for modern clothes, lest he should be followed by the boys and taken up by the police, could revisit this earth, walk our streets, see our sights, behold the scenes of our political and social life, and, contemplating this bustling age through the medium of his own quiet mind, set down his observations respecting us and our usages, he would write a work, no doubt, very interesting to her Majesty's subjects.

It would answer the purpose of a skilful literary enchanter to "unsphere the spirit of Plato," or that of Pythagoras, Aristotle, or any other distinguished sage of antiquity, and send it out on

its rambles with a commission to take, and report, its views of things in general. But such necromancy would have tasked even the Warlock of the North, would puzzle the wizard of any point of the compass, and, it is probable, could be cleverly achieved by no adept inferior to the ingenious Mr. Shakspeare.

However, there flourished in a somewhat later day a philosopher, for such he was after his fashion, a virtuoso, antiquary, and *F.R.S.*, whose ghost an inconsiderable person may perhaps attempt to raise without being accused of pretending to be too much of a conjuror. He appears to have been a *Peripatetic*, at least until he could keep a coach, but on the subjects of dress, dining, and some others, his opinions favour strongly of *Epicurism*. A little more than a hundred and eighty years ago he employed his leisure in going about everywhere, peeping into everything, seeing all that he could, and chronicling his experiences daily. In his *Diary*, which happily has come down to our times, the historical facts are highly valuable, the comments mostly sensible, the style is very odd, and the autobiography extremely ludicrous. I have adventured reverently to evoke this worshipful gentleman, that, resuming his old vocation as a journalist, he might comment on the "*Manners and Customs of ye Englyshe*," in the name of Mr. Pips. I hope his shadow, if not his spirit, may be recognised in the following pages.

PERCIVAL LEIGH.

A CIDERE CELLARE DURING A COMICK SONGE

Saturday, March 10, 1849.

To Drury Lane this Evening, to see the Horsemanship, which did divert me mightily; but had rather it had been at Astley's, which is the fitter Place for it. After that, to Supper at the Cider Cellars in Maiden Lane, wherein was much Company, great and small, and did call for Kidneys and Stout, then a small Glass of *Aqua-Vitæ* and Water, and thereto a Cigar. While we supped, the Singers did entertain us with Glees and Comical Ditties; but Lack, to hear with how little Wit the young Sparks about Town are tickled! But the Thing that did most take me was to see and hear one Ross sing the Song of Sam Hall the Chimney-Sweep, going to be hanged: for he had begrimed his Muzzle to look unshaven, and in rusty black Clothes, with a battered old Hat on his Crown and a short Pipe in his Mouth, did sit upon the Platform, leaning over the Back of a Chair: so making believe that he was on his way to Tyburn. And then he did sing to a dismal Psalm-Tune, how that his Name was Sam Hall, and that he had been a great Thief, and was now about to pay for all with his Life; and thereupon he swore an Oath which did make me somewhat shiver, though divers laugh. Then, in so many Verses, how his Master had badly taught him and now he must hang for

it; how he should ride up Holborn Hill in a Cart, and the Sheriffs would come, and then the Parson, and preach to him, and after them would come the Hangman; and at the End of each Verse he did repeat his Oath. Last of all, how that he should go up to the Gallows; and desired the Prayers of his Audience, and ended by cursing them all round. Methinks it had been a Sermon to a Rogue to hear him, and I wish it may have done good to some of the Company. Yet was his cursing very horrible, albeit to not a few it seemed a high Joke; but I do doubt that they understood the Song and did only relish the Oaths. Strange to think what a Hit this Song of Sam Hall hath made, and how it hath taken the Town, and how popular it is not only among Tavern Haunters and Frequenters of Night Houses, but also with the Gentry and Aristocracy who do vote it a Thing that ought to be heard though a blackguard, and look in at the Cider Cellars Night by Night after Dinner at their Clubs to hear it sung. After Sam Hall, to pay for my Supper, which cost me 2s. 2d., besides 4d. to the Waiter; and then Home in a Cab, it being late, and I fearing to anger my Wife, which cost me 2s. more; but I grudged not the Money, having been much diverted, and so to Bed.

AN "AT HOME." YE POLKA

Wednesday, March 21st, 1849.

To-night to an Evening Party with my Wife, to Sir Hilary Jinks's, whereunto we had been bidden to come at 10 of the Clock; for Sir Hilary and her Ladyship have taken to keeping rare Hours. Thereat was a goodly Company of about an hundred, and the Women all very fine, my Wife in her last Year's Gown, which I am tired of, and do hate to see. But did not tell her that, knowing she would have said how soon I might rid me of that Objection. We did fall to dancing Quadrilles, wherein I made one, and had for my Partner a pretty little black Damsel, whom after the Dance was ended, did hand to a Sofa, and thereon sit me by her Side; but seeing my Wife looking hard at us, did presently make my Bow, and go away. And, my Wife seated by the Wall, to walk about the Room, and speak with such as I thought like to tell me Something worth hearing, but told me Nothing I cared to hear, they all shunning to talk, and in their white Ties, and Waistcoats, and Kid Gloves, starch, and constrained, and ill at Ease, which was ridiculous. Then to look on while some did dance the Polka, which did please me not much, for had beheld it better danced at the *Casino*, and do think it more suitable to such a Place than to a Drawing Room. The Young Fellows did take their Partners by the Waist, and these did lean upon the other's Shoulders, and with

one Arm stretched out, and holding Hand in Hand, they did spin round the Room together. But, Lack! to see the kicking up of Heels and stamping of them on the Ground, which did mightily remind me of *Jim Crow*. In Truth, I am told that the Polka is but a Peasant's Hop, from Hungary, and to think now of Persons of Quality cutting such Capers! Sir Hilary to his Taste; but a Minuet for me at Home, with Gentlewomen, and a Polka with Milkmaids at a Maying or Show Girls in a Booth. Meanwhile the Servants did hand round Glasses of Negus, which was poor Stuff; and those who listed to Supper when they chose, in a side Room, off wretched Sandwiches of the Size of the Triangles of Euclid his *Geometry*, which did think shabby. Expected Chicken and Lobster Salad, with Champagne, and Oysters and Ale and Stout, but disappointed. Home in a Cab, at Two in the Morning, much wearied and little pleased; and on our Way Home, spying a Tavern open, did go and get me a Pint of Beer, and the same to my Wife; for we were both athirst, and she in an ill Humour about the Beauty I had danced with, and I because of the bad Supper; and so very ill-contented to Bed.

YE FASHONABLE WORLD E TAYKNGE ITS EXERCYSE IN HYDE PARKE

Tuesday, March 27th, 1849.

This Day to the Ring in Hyde Park for a Walk to get me an Appetite, and look at the fine Folks and People of Fashion riding in their carriages, which it do much delight me to behold. But, good Lack! what a strange Notion of the Pleasure of a Drive; with the Carriages in a close Line jammed all together, and sometimes coming to a dead Stop like the Omnibuses in Fleet Street of an Afternoon, and seldom moving on faster than Mourning Coaches at a Funeral. Did see many mighty pretty young Ladies; and one sitting in a Landau with a Coronet on the Panel, upon whom I did smile, but perceiving that she did turn up her Nose at me, I did look glum; howbeit, another comely Damsel that I smiled at did blush and simper, which gave me Joy. It was as good as a Play to watch the young Guardsmen, with their Tufts and Mustaches, riding straight-legged, and them and the other Bucks taking off their Hats and kissing their Hands to the charming Belles as they passed them by. But it was rarer still to behold a Snob that strove to do the same Sort of Thing, and did get laughed at for his Pains. Then what Sport to observe the

fat Coachmen, in their Wigs, something like Bishops', sitting on their Boxes, and the Footmen behind with their parti-coloured Liveries of drab and green, and red and yellow Plush, and gold-laced Hats, Shoulderknots and Cockades, bearing their Canes, and their Noses to the Sky, holding their Heads as high as Peacocks for Pride in their Frippery and plump Calves! These Fellows are as fine as Court Cards, and full as Ridiculous, and they do divert me in the Extreme: only their bepowdered Pates do offend me, for I think the Fashion an uncleanly one; and after all, I wonder how their Masters and Mistresses can delight in dressing them out so much like Mountebanks. Did note divers Noble Lords and Gentlemen of the House of Commons whom I did know either by Sight or from the Caricatures in the Shop-Windows. From four to five o'Clock around the Ring and up and down by the Serpentine to make my observations. Methought how jolly these fine People must be, and how happy they looked compared to a Beggar Boy whom I did spy squatting on the Grass: yet no Doubt many of them have Troubles enough, and some may be even short of Cash to pay for their Vanities. After that, to the Corner, by the Powder Magazine, nigh to Kensington Gardens, to see the Company alight from their Carriages, and take an Inventory of the Ladies' Dresses, whereof to furnish an Account to my Wife. Then away home at half-past Five, and so to Dinner off a Shoulder of Mutton and Onion-Sauce, which my Wife doth make exceeding well, and my Dinner did content me much; and thereupon I did promise my Wife a new Bonnet, the

Like whereof I had seen on a Countess in the Park, and so both in great Good Humour, and very loving all the Evening.

A DRAWYNGE ROOM DAY. SAYNTE JAMES HYS STREETE

Thursday, March 29th, 1849.

To see the Nobility and Gentry, and other great Company, go to the Queen's Drawing-Room, with a Friend to St. James's Street, where did stand in Front of Boodle's Club-House in the Rain, which was heavy, and spoiled my Paris Hat, cost me twelve Shillings. But the Sight of the Show almost worth the Damage; for the Red and Blue Uniforms of the Army and Navy Officers with their Orders on their Breasts, and their Cocked Hats and Plumes in their Laps, and the Ladies of Quality in their Silks and Satins of all Manner of Colours, and their Hair crowned with Ostrich Feathers, and sparkling with Pearls and Diamonds, did much delight me to behold. But I wish I could have had as good a View of the Gentlefolks within the Carriages as I had of the Lackeys outside, who, with their supercilious Airs, and their Jackanapes Garb, did divert me more than ever. I do continually marvel at the enormous Calves of those Varlets, for which one might almost think they were reared, like a sort of Cattle. Indeed, I should have believed that their Stockings were stuffed, if I had not seen one of them wince when a Horse chanced to lay hold of his Leg. It did more and more amaze me to observe how high they carried their Noses, especially as most of them had

Posies in their bosoms; whereas they looked as though, instead, there were some unsavoury Odour beneath their Nostrils. But much as the Servants resembled Zanies and Harlequins, yet did some of their Masters look not much better; being dressed in a Court Suit, which methinks do make a Gentleman seem a sort of embroidered Quaker. I do greatly wonder why the ugliest Apparel of any Date in English History should be pitched upon for the Court Dress. But the splendid Carriages painted with Coats of Arms, and the stately caparisoned Horses, did make a rare Show; and among them mighty droll to mark the Hack Cabs not suffered to enter at the Palace Gate; so the Fares had to alight and walk on foot the Rest of the Way to the Drawing-Room: and so into the Presence of Her Majesty in dirty Boots: which was not seemly; but many of them are Half Pay Officers, and other poor Subjects, who could afford no better than a Cab. Pleased to see the Police with their Truncheons, keeping Order among the Vagabonds, till one did tell me to move on, which did vex me. Then there were the Guards, in full Uniform on Horseback, with their Helmets on their Heads and their Swords drawn, about one under each Lamp Post, mounting Guard, and I believe this is the heaviest Part of their Duty. What with the blazing Uniforms and glittering Jewels, my Eyes were dazzled and my Head did somewhat ache; moreover, some pretty Faces put my Heart in a Flutter, which did not think fit to mention to my Wife. Methinks how fine it would be to ride in State to Court, if it were not so chargeable, and I should much delight in the Honour and Glory

of the Thing, but not like the Expense. A Drawing-Room doth altogether eclipse the Lord Mayor's Show; although it do seem but a Toy and gilt Gingerbread Affair, and an empty, childish Display, like the Babies' Game of King and Queen; but then it hath certainly this Advantage, that it do much good to Trade.

SMYTHFIELD CATTLE MARKET

Monday, April 9th, 1849.

Up betimes, it being scarcely Light, to Smithfield, to see the Cattle Market, which I do think a great Disgrace to the City, being so nasty, filthy, and dangerous a Place in the very Heart of London. I did observe the Manner of driving the Beasts together, used by the Drovers, which did disgust me. To force the Oxen into their Places, they have stout Cudgels, pointed with iron Goads or Prods, wherewith they thrust the Creatures in the flesh of their Hind Quarters, or with the Cudgel belabour them on the Hock. These means failing, they do seize the Animal's Tail and give it a sudden Wrench with a Turn of the Wrist, whereby they snap the Tail-bone, and so twist and wring the spinal Cord till he pushes forward as far as they would have him. Some, not getting Room for the Beasts in the Pens, do drive them into Circles called Ring Droves, with their hind Parts outwards, and their Heads forced as close as may be together: this done by beating them with all their Might about the Head and Eyes, and between the Horns, which they do call petting them. Then to see how they crowd the Sheep into the Pens by dogging them as their Word is, which means baiting them with Dogs that do tear the Sheeps' Eyes, Ears, and Cheeks, until they worry such Numbers in, that not one can budge an

Inch. All this Cruelty is caused by the Market not being big enough: for which Reason they are obliged to force the unlucky Brutes into the smallest possible Space. What with the Oaths and Curses of the Drovers and Butchers and the Barking of their Dogs and the Cries of the Animals in Torture, I do think I never heard a more horrid Din in my Life. The Hearing was as bad as the Seeing, and both as bad as could be, except the Smell, which was worse than either. But to be sure it was good Sport to see here and there a fat Grazier overthrown by a Pig running between his Legs, and so upsetting him in the Mire. It were well if it were never worse; but with mad Oxen driven from the Market through Streets full of People, it continually happens that some Person is tossed and gored, and one of these Days it will be an Alderman, and then Smithfield will be put an End to. No doubt it would have been done away with long ago, but for the Tolls and Dues which the Corporation do derive from the Market. This is why they do keep up a Nuisance which did well nigh poison me; though one of them at a Meeting did declare that he thought Smithfield salubrious, and did send his Children to walk there for Change of Air, which if it were for the better, methinks that Gentleman's Dwelling-House should be a sweet Abode. All but the Citizens do say that Parliament ought to abolish this Nuisance; but it is thought that my Lord John dare not stir in the Matter, because he is Member for the City. To Breakfast to an Early Coffee House, having lost my Pocket Handkerchief, cost me 5s., doubtless by the Pickpockets,

of whom Smithfield, besides its other Recommendations, is a great Resort. But content, not having had an Ox's Horn in my Stomach, and having seen all I wanted, and do not wish to see any more.

A FEW FRIENDS TO TEA, AND A LYTTLE MUSYCK

Tuesday, April 17, 1849.

To Mr. Jiggins's, where my Wife and I were invited to Tea and a little Musique, but we had much Musique and little Tea, though the Musique was like the Tea in Quality, and I do prefer a stronger Kind of Musique as well as Liquor. Yet it was pleasing enough to the Ear to hear the fashionable Ballads, and the Airs from all the New Italian Operas sung by the young Ladies; which, though they expressed Nothing but common-place Love and Sentiment, yet were a pretty Sing-Song. But to see the young Fellows whilst a Beauty was singing crowd round her, and bend over her Shoulders, and almost scramble to turn over the Leaves of her Musique Book! Besides the Singing, there was Playing of the Piano Forte, with the Accompaniment of a Fiddle and Bass Violl, the Piano being played by a stout fat Lady with a Dumpling Face; but for all her being so fat it did amaze me to see how nimbly she did fillip the Keys. They did call this Piece a Concerto, and I was told it was mighty brilliant; but when I asked what Fancy, Passion, or Description there was in it, no one could tell; and I verily thought the Brilliancy like that of a Paste Buckle. It had not even an Air to carry away and whistle, and would have pleased me just as well if I had stopped my Ears, for

I could discern Nothing in it but Musical Sleight of Hand. But good Lack! to think how, in these Days, Execution is Everything in Musique, and Composition little or Nothing: for almost no Account is made of the Master, and a preposterous Value put upon the Player, or artiste, as the Frenchified Phrase now is. After the Concerto, some Polkas and Waltzes, which did better please me; for they were a lively Jingle certainly, and not quite unmeaning. Strange, to find how rare a Thing good Musique is in Company; and by good Musique I mean such as do stir up the Soul, like the Flowers and Sunshine in Spring, or Storms and Tempests, or ghostly Imaginations, or the thought of great Deeds, or tender or terrible Passages in Poetry. My Wife do play some brave Pieces in this Kind, by Mynheer Van Beethoven, and I would rather hear her perform one of them, than all I did hear to-Night put together; and so I did tell her when we got Home, which did content her well. But every one to his Taste; and they who delight in the trivial Style of Musique to theirs, as I to mine, not doubting that the English, that have but just begun to be sensible to Musique at all, will be awake to the nobler Sort of it by-and-by. And, at any Rate, an Evening of insipid Musique and weak Tea is better than sitting toping and guzzling after Dinner.

YE NATIONAL SPORTE!!! OF STEEPLE CHASYNGE

Monday, April 23, 1849.

Down the Road to a Steeple Chase, which I had never seen before, and did much long to behold: for of all Things I do love Diversion and Merriment; and both Mr. Strappes and Sir William Spurkins did tell me there would be rare Sport. Got a Place in the Grand Stand, cost me half-a-Guinea, which was loth to part with, but thought I should have brave Entertainment for so much Money. Did find myself here in fine Company, Dukes, and Earls, and Lords and Ladies too, which did please me; but among them some Snobs, in Stable-cut-Clothes, with spotted Neckcloths and Fox-headed Breast-pins; though some of these were Lords too, who seemed to have been at Pains to look like Ostlers. To see the Crowd on Horseback and in Carriages, and those on Foot pushing and scrambling, and trampling each other to get a Sight of the Course, as if there had been going to be a Coronation, or a Man hanged! The Course, marked out with Flags, and having Hurdles, Posts, Fences, Rails, Hedges, Drains, Ditches, and Brooks in the Way; and this Sportsmen do call the Country, and say such a Country is a Teaser, and so I should think. By-and-by Jockies in their Saddles, but their word is Pig-skins, looking, in their gay Colours, like Tulips on Horseback,

which was a pretty Sight. Then a Bell rung to clear the Course, and the Horses with their Riders drawn up ready to start, and presently a Flag flourished for a Signal: and so they off. Good Luck, to see them galloping helter-skelter, like mad, through Rivers, and over Hedges and Ditches, and the whole Thing done in ten Minutes! Some did jump the Fences and Hedges, which they about me did term Raspers, clean over; but others not so lucky, and stuck in Brambles or on Stakes, or between double Rows of Posts, with a Quickset in the Middle, whereof the cant name is Bullfinchers. Others upset in Ditches; and one or two of them not able to get up again, and carried away upon some of the Hurdles; and when the Race was over, three Horses found lying with their Backs broken, and so shot. Sir William did inform me that it was a tidy Field, which I could not agree, with the Raspers and Palisades upon it, and the Horses spiked, or sprawling with their Riders on the Ground with broken Backs and Limbs. Nor did I understand the Fun of this Part of the Thing; wherefore I suppose I must be dull; for it do seem to be the chief Delight that People take in it. For, as if the Gates and Rails belonging to the Ground were not dangerous enough, they do set up others called made Fences, being stubborn Posts and Stakes twisted with Briars and Brambles, which do seem to be meant for Nothing but to be tumbled over, and in that Case to do as much Mischief, as may be, to Man and Beast. The Horses mostly ridden by Jockeys for Hire; but some by their Owners, who, methinks, do set a sufficient Value upon their own Existence

when they venture their Necks in riding a Steeple Chase; but I do blame them for risking the Life of a useful Horse.

YE COMMONS RESSOLVED INTO A COMMYTTE OF YE WHOLE HOUSE

Friday, April 27, 1849.

To the House of Commons, where an Irish Debate on the Rate-in-Aid Bill, which did make me drowsy. The House in Committee; the Irish Members moving all Sorts of frivolous Amendments, abusing the Government, and quarrelling among themselves. Sir H. Barron did accuse Mr. Reynolds of being ready to Vote away other People's Money because he had none of his own, and Mr. Reynolds did say that he never saw such Misery as on Sir H. Barron's Estate; whereupon Sir H. Barron up in a Rage, and did deny the Fact with vehement Gestures, flourishing his Fists gallantly. Then Mr. Reynolds did fall foul of Mr. Bateson, one that had been a Captain, for questioning the Chancellor of the Exchequer concerning young Reynolds's Place; and did make a Joke upon Mr. Bateson's Mustachios: whereat much laughter. But a small Joke do go a great Way in the House of Commons. Before the Debate, Lord John Russell marching up one of the side Galleries, and taking the Measure of the House through his Eye-Glass: a sharp delicate little Man, with a mild Voice, but do carry himself stately.

Methought his Observations amused him, for he smirked a little, and looked as if he knew the Customers he had to deal with. But to see him and the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer trying to persuade the Irish Members not to press their ridiculous Motions to a Division, wheedling and coaxing them, as smiling and civil as Haberdashers! The Bill to be reported to-morrow; and then the House to a little ordinary Business; and Mr. Horsman's Bill postponed, through the Irish cavilling and squabbling. Then a Debate on naming the Committee on Savings Banks; and made an Irish Question too; the Dispute how many Irish Members were to serve on the Committee: and the End, the Naming of the Committee delayed. This Way of doing Business in the House of Commons makes it no Wonder how little is done; and the chief Cause is the Irish Members haranguing upon Nothing and quarrelling about Straws, which do seem to me a childish and spiteful Attempt to give Trouble to Government. I did hope to hear a Speech from Sir Robert Peel, but was disappointed, which did vex me; but heard a few Words from Colonel Sibthorp, which made mighty Laughter, and were as sensible as any Thing I heard all the Evening: and the Colonel in a brave Waistcoat, with his droll Figure did divert me much. Last of all, a Settlement of the Smithfield Committee: and I do wonder this became not an Irish Matter too. The House adjourning at half-past One in the Morning; and to see the Number of Members lying asleep on the Gallery Benches! All this While Nothing whatever done of more

Importance than Parish Business at a Vestry. I off to Supper in the Haymarket on pickled Salmon and Stout, cost me 1s. 6d., and then Home and to Bed, past 2 o'Clock, and my Wife do say that the House of Commons keep worse Hours than any Tavern in Town.>

YE PUBLIC ITS EXCYTEMENTE ON YE APPEARANCE OF MISS LIND

Saturday, May 5, 1849.

To the Queen's House in the Haymarket to hear Jenny Lind, whom Everybody do call the Swedish Nightingale. Did go with a Pit Ticket, cost me 8s. 6d., which is a mighty Sum of Money to pay for only the Chance of a Seat. Went at 6 p.m., expecting a Crowd, and there a Mob of People already at the Doors, and some did say they had come as early as Five. Got as close as I could to the Pit Entrance, and the Throng increasing; and by-and-by Ladies in their Opera Dresses standing without their Bonnets in the Street. Many of them between the Carriage Wheels and under the Horses' Heads: and methinks I did never see more Carriages together in my Life. At last the Doors open; which I began to fear they never would, and I in with the Press, a most terrible Crush, and the Ladies screaming and their Dresses torn in the Scramble, wherefore I thought it a good Job that my Wife was not with me. With much ado into the Pit, the Way being stopped by a Snob in a green Jockey Coat and Bird's Eye Neckcloth, that the Checktakers would not suffer to pass. The Pit full in a Twinkling, and I fain to stand where I best

might, nigh to Fop's Alley: but presently a Lady fainting with the Heat and carried out, which I glad of; I mean that I got her Place. I did never behold so much Company in the House before; and every Box full of Beauties, and hung with yellow Satin Curtains, did show like a brave picture in a Gold Frame; which was very handsome to look round upon while the Musicians were tuning. The Fiddles tuned, and the Overture played, the Curtain up for the Opera; which was the *Sonnambula*; the Part of *Amina* acted by Jenny. The moment she came on the Stage, the Audience, Lords, Ladies, and all, upon their Legs, shouting, cheering, waving Hats and Handkerchiefs, and clapping of Hands in white Kid Gloves. But at last they silent, and let the Nightingale sing: and for certain she is a wonderful Singer. It did amaze me to hear how easy and sweetly she do trill and warble the most difficult Passages: and I perceive she hath a rare Ability of Voice. But what did no less astonish me was her Acting, it being as good as her singing; for she did seem to forget herself in her Part, instead of her Part in herself; which is the Mistake of most Opera Singers. To think that she should draw the whole Town in Crowds together to hear her sing a few pretty Sugar-plum Melodies and portray the Grief of a poor Peasant Wench cast off by her Lover! But she do put a Grace and Beauty of her own into the Character and Musique: which I take to be the Mark of a true Genius. She made to sing divers Songs twice over, and called upon the Stage at the End of the Act, and again when the Opera was finished; when, good Lack, to see the Nosegays and Posies flung in Heaps

upon the Stage! She must needs get a Mint of Money by her Singing; but she has spent a Deal of it in building Hospitals, and I do wish (Heaven forgive me!) I had all she has given away in Charity.

A PROSPECT OF EXETER HALL. SHOWYNGE A CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN DENOUNCYNGE YE POPE

Wednesday, May 9, 1849.

Went this Morning to Exeter Hall, where one of the May Meetings that do regularly take Place at this Time of the Season, and serve in Lieu of Concerts and Shows to a Sort of People that call themselves serious. This, one of the Meetings of a Protestant Association, which I had heard much of and did long to go to, expecting to hear some good Argument against the Roman Catholiques. But instead of Argument, I did hear Nothing but Abuse, which do always go in at one Ear and out at the other. No new Point brought forward to confute Popery; but only an Iteration of the Old Charges of Superstition and so forth, urged with no greater Power than mere Strength of Lungs. The Commotions on the Continent last Year laid much Stress on, and the Turmoils in Catholique and Quiet in Protestant States contrasted, as though there had been no Disturbance or Trouble in Prussia or Denmark, or any Tumult or Revolution in Belgium or Portugal. I did note two chief Speakers, whom, on their rising, the Assembly did applaud as if they had been

Actors, and to be sure, they ranted more frantically than I did ever see Hicks. Yet at Times they stooped to Drollery in the Height of their Passion, and one of them did make such Sport of the Roman Catholique Religion as would not have been suffered in the Adelphi Theatre. But I do find that some who would not be seen in a Play-House can enjoy their laugh at Exeter Hall. This Orator was a Clergyman of some Kind, for he was called Reverend in the Hand-bill, and dressed in a clerical Habit, but his Eyes and Face blazing with Wrath, did storm like a Madman against the Maynooth Grant and the Pope of Rome; and howled as fierce as a Hyæna. The other a Clergyman too, and looked as much like one, with his sneering angry Visage, and did vehemently harangue, crying bitterly out on some of my Lords and the Members of the Commons' House that had voted for Popish Endowment. His Oration a medley of Sarcasm, Invective, and Buffoonery, and wound up with a Flourish of Patriotism and Loyalty. The Speeches received with Applause and Laughter, but also with Interruptions and crying to turn Somebody out. The Speakers on a Platform, whereon they bounced backwards and forwards, having Rails in Front as if to hinder them from breaking loose on the Audience. Behind them a Crowd of dainty smooth Gentlemen in Black, with white Neckerchiefs, and to see how demure they looked, as if Butter would not melt in their Mouths! In the Body of the Hall a goodly Number of Heads, but by far the Most of them in Bonnets. The two chief Speeches lasted an Hour and a Half each, and the Chairman

leaving his Seat, I away, my Head aching through the Raving. Such Violence, methinks, do only prove that there are other Bigots besides Papists; and is the worst Means of enforcing any Truth; for they that speak in Anger and Passion are commonly concluded by indifferent People to be in the Wrong. The Society complaining of want of Funds, which I do not wonder at, for I fear me the Subscribers have but few Catholiques converted for their Money.

YE EXHYBITYON AT YE ROYAL ACADEMYE

Monday, May 21, 1849.

This Morning with my Wife to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, where 611 Paintings, besides Miniatures and other Drawings, and Pieces of Sculpture, making altogether 1341 Works of Art, and methought it would be strange if there were not some Masterpiece among so many. The Whole to be seen for the small Sum of 1s., and the Catalogue cost me 1s. more, but should have known all the old Hands as well without it. To see how easy it is to distinguish them by their Styles after two or three Years' Experience: as one by his Dogs, that might be expected to bark, or to talk rather, with their Looks and Ways like Human Creatures. Then another by his Colouring that do resemble a Mash of sweet Omelet with all the Colours of the Rainbow and many more; which methinks is a strange Fancy; but now he hath a Picture out of his trite Fashion; done after the Manner of the antique Masters, and a good Imitation. A third also by his unadorned Beauties with their glowing Eyes and Cheeks and plump swarthy flesh, and a fourth by his never-ending Perspectives, and Gulfs of Darkness, and Mountains of Blue. But this year I do mark fewer of these old Acquaintances, and more of the Works of younger Men, wherein there is less of

Knack and more of Freshness, which I do esteem a hopeful Sign. The Exhibition at large I judge to be a very excellent middling one, many Pictures good in their Kind, but that Kind in very few Cases high. The Silks and Satins mostly painted to Admiration, and the Figures copied carefully from the Model; but this do appear too plainly; and the Action generally too much like a Scene in a Play. In the historical Pictures the Characters dressed strictly in the Fashion of their Time, but in the best of them a Lack of Fancy and Imagination, though seeming original through a certain Quaintness that do smack of Church-Window Saints and illuminated Missals. The Landscapes better, and a most brave Morning on the Lake of Zurich by one that hath the right Stuff in him, and some sweet melancholy Shades and solemn Groves, and a Solitary Pool that did please me mightily, and my Wife do say that the Artist should be Commissioner of Woods and Forests. Some Pictures of common Life pretty enough, and a little Crowd before a pleasant sentimental one called the Duet. One or two droll ones, as the Slide, and Drawing for the Militia, did make me laugh; but to think how many Woodcuts as good as the best you can get in a little Miscellany published weekly, cost you 3d. Fewer silly Portraits of Gentlemen and Ladies than formerly, which is a Comfort. The Pictures fairly enough hung, and strange to see a dead Lion between Monsieur Guizot and Prince Metternich, as though to represent absolute Monarchy, and seemed meant for a Joke. Some Pictures in the Octagon Room, which could not tell whether they were good or no for

Want of Light, and the same with all the Sculptures in their Lumber Hole. This is how we treat Art in this Country, and with Paintings presented to the Nation buried in a Vault, but sorry Encouragement is given to Genius; and no Wonder that Artists do Pictures for Furniture to sell to the great and small Vulgar, and so produce the Kind of Works that make up the greater Part of the Exhibition.

A VIEW OF EPSOM DOWNES ON YE DERBYE DAYE

Wednesday, May 23, 1849. – Derby Day.

To Epsom Downs to the Great Derby Race. In a Barouche, with a Party, over Vauxhall Bridge, and by Clapham, carrying Hampers with Store of every Thing needful for a brave Lunch. The Windows and House Fronts crowded, and School-Boys mounted on Walls and Gates, and they and the Urchins in the Street shouting, as though we were going to the Races for their Amusement. But Lack! to see the pretty smart Damsels come out to gaze at us, or peeping behind Blinds and Curtains, all in high Glee, and good Humour do wonderfully heighten Beauty, as I do tell my Wife. The Road through Trees and Orchards, and the Sun shining through the young Leaves and on the Horse-Chestnut Blossoms, and the Flowers looking bright like the Lasses. So we on, till into the Ruck, which is the Jam of Carriages caused by the Stoppage at the Turnpike: and did banter each other and them about us. Across the Course to the Hill, the Admission cost us £1. Good Lack! what a Crowd of People collected to see which out of six-and-twenty Horses should run the fastest, and what a Medley of Vans, Omnibusses, and Taxed Carts on either Side of the Course with the People in Front of them, and the Grand Stand crowded with Heads, plenty as Blackberries,

and seeming like a huge Mass of them. A Throng of Carriages about us, whereon young handsome rakish-looking Gallants with Mustaches and Cigars. Here and there, in open Coaches, Ladies in lilac and blue Dresses, and pink Bonnets, and gay Ribbons, all Manner of Colours, looking, with the parti-coloured Flags over the Booths, mighty lively. Presently a Bell rung and the Course cleared, but then to see an unlucky Dog running to get out, and the Mob yelling at him, and the poor Dog in his Fright rushing straight on like mad! Then the Horses with the motley Jockies on them prancing up and down before the Grand Stand, to show their Paces to the Folks in the Betting Ring. At last, they taken to the Post, and so started with much Cheering, and came easy round Tattenham Corner; but presently away in good earnest, like Shot! The Chief Struggle between the *Flying Dutchman*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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