

Miscellaneous.

LONDON BRIDGE AT NIGHT.

Some months ago a paper appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, on a "Night in a Workhouse," which created a very great sensation. The author of that sketch, Mr. James Greenwood, has published a sketch of a visit to the recesses of London Bridge at night, which is worth perusal:

I came on the bridge from the city side, and just as the churches were chiming two o'clock I approached the first recess. It was empty, save for a pool of rainwater, in which the rays from the gas-lamps above twinkled. With much satisfaction I struck a cigar light on the dry under part of the granite seat, and once more set my face toward Southwark, more as a punishment for my foolishness in putting faith in Mr. Policeman than I expected to make any discovery.

But alas! in recess number two it was my ill-fortune to stumble on a cause of quaking for my wager, had I made it, for here, crouched in a corner, nose-and-knees, and with some rag of a dark color pulled over her head, so that she looked more like a nasty bundle than anything human, was a woman. She was on the seat; and curled up on the stone floor was a man, as could be judged by an old boot of full size with a rent in the side, and a row of adult and dirty toes, that protruded from beneath him, and was shone on by the gas. Otherwise it would have been difficult to have told what creature it was, its head being hidden in the woman's lap, and the dark shawl or cape, whatever it was, drooping over and covering him. Sixpence would have procured the unlucky pair a shelter and something of a bed to lie on; beside, it was well worth that small sum to see what sort of a creature the female was—young or old, and to ascertain the relationship existing between herself and the male creature huddling up to her. I touched the female with my umbrella where I guessed her shoulder was, and instantly she disengaged her head from the shawl, and by the same movement exposed the face of the man. The woman's was an old face—wrinkled, puckered and monkeyish; while the face of the man was almost youthful, but dirty and villainous-looking, and surmounted by a crop of red hair.

"You'll catch your death of cold lying out here in the rain," I said. "Why don't you find some shelter?"

"You be——!" exclaimed the young man, with a threatening scowl, as he replaced the wet shawl over his head. "I thought it was the perlice agin."

But the old woman was made of other stuff. Nudging the hulking ruffian to hold his tongue, said she in a whining tone, "And how'd we help laying out here, kind gentleman, wid never a ha'penny to pay a lodgin' and me gran'son just out of the faver, and me seventy-tre and pasht, God help me."

"And where are you going after you have rested—in the morning, I mean?"

"Hoppin' shore! We've friends to meet at the shtation soon as it's daylight, please God, there's a bit o' life left in us come the time, an' me seventy-tre and pasht, God help me, an' me gran'son—"

So I gave her the sixpence, and enjoined her to get over into the Borough, and procure a bed as soon as she could; and she promised me that she would, showering more blessings on me than the sixpence would pay for, even at the low rate of a farthing each. But she didn't move. I crossed the dark road to see if the recesses on that side were tenanted, and looked back, saw by the light of the lamps the old face and the young face gazing with delight; and presently two short pipes were produced and loaded and fired, and still, with his head reclining on his grandmother's lap, the surly young fellow composed himself for a comfortable smoke, on the strength, I suppose, of that unexpected sixpenny windfall.

In the next recess I discovered two men occupying opposite corners of the seat. They were not ragged, though they were roughly attired, and each had a sack over his shoulders; and they sat with their backs to the stone side and their arms folded, and their caps pulled well down over their ears, evidently resolved to "weather" it till morning. I thought they were both asleep, but as I halted one of them raised his head, and civilly asked if I had such a thing as a pipe of 'bacca "on me." It so happened that I had—two pipes, indeed, a fact that very much gratified the man in the other corner, who roused at hearing his mate's voice.

"I should have thought that you

might have found snigger quarters than these for lodgings," I remarked.

"Well, you see, mister, its handy for Billingsget."

"Likewise for the werfs," added his mate.

"But why not sleep in a bed? Beds are cheap enough hereabout."

"Won't run to it, mister. Come to pick up no more 'an a bob in the day, you ain't got much change left after you've bought a bit of grub and a bit of 'bacca. 'Sides, I'd sooner sleep here than in them there dirty three-penny cribs—wouldn't you, Whistler?"

"Thruppenny bug-walks, I calls 'em," responded Whistler. "I'd sooner lay down on the shore."

"Well, it's enough to kill you lying here."

"Not it; we sort of chaps take a deal of killin'—don't we, Whistler?"

"Use is everything," the person addressed sententiously replied; "I ain't slept in a bed these two ear; and what's more, I don't hanker arter it."

And so, with a bit more 'bacca and a good night, I left them.

The next recess was vacant. In the next was a young man decently dressed, as far as the uncertain light revealed, in a suit of black, his coat buttoned under his chin. His face was remarkably pale, but otherwise, had it been daytime, nothing extraordinary would have been observed in him as he sat on the stone seat nursing one of his legs and nervously grasping the instep of it with one hand, while the other supported his head. He looked like a person suddenly overtaken by illness of a sort just now prevailing.

"I beg pardon, sir," said I, "but you appear unwell."

He started and looked up with an offended air.

"I'm well enough, thanky," he said; "it's no affair of yours, I imagine, if I am not."

"It is every man's affair to offer the best help he can to another who seems in need of it; we shan't quarrel about that, I presume?"

"Shan't we? who says we shan't? Why do you pick me out to practice on with your infernal Methodist cant? Pr'aps you'd like to follow me and continue your sermon? Do, if you dare."

And so saying, with a stamp of mad defiance, the strange young gentleman sprang to his feet and strutted away in the rain.

I was near the Surrey side of the bridge by this time, and would have turned to retrace my steps, only that was the way the madman had taken, and he might suppose that I was pursuing him with my sermon; so I went on a little further, and presently came on a woman kneeling upon a seat, and with her arms folded on the top ledge and her face toward the river. Her dress was deplorably old and bedraggled, and her shoes a mere mass of black rags and broken leather. She was still enough to be asleep, but could scarcely be so from her position. After my encounter with the last lodger, I was somewhat doubtful whether I might venture to address this one, but as it happened, as I loitered past her, she turned and addressed me. Bloated, bleary-eyed, and with her black hair loose and dabbling on her forehead and cheek, she made the ugliest picture I had met that evening.

"Give us a penny to get a cup of coffee, my dear," said she. "I ain't got a dry thread on me, strike me blind if I have."

"How can you expect any other, if you are abroad a night like this?" said I, speaking kindly to the poor wretch. "What are you doing here? Where are you going?"

"To h—," replied she, with a laugh. "You might see that, I should think, without asking me."

"You are a foolish woman to talk so; come, take my advice and go home."

"You take my advice and jump over the monument," replied she, bitterly; "one's quite as easy as the other."

"Have you no home, then? Where do you sleep?"

"Just where I find myself. It's no matter where I sleep. Sleeping or waking, I'm a beauty! Are you going to stand a pen'orth of coffee?"

There was nothing else to do, so I gave her a shilling, and implored her to get in somewhere for shelter.

"Good luck to you," she exclaimed. "Just when you come up I was wishing all the men that ever lived in the devil's flames. I'll leave you out next time I curse 'em all, strike me blind if I don't."

And so she hurried away to the borough to get her pen'orth of hot coffee, and I made for home in a mood for thinking.

[From the *Journal of Commerce*.]

THE CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—When we see old men, who through a long life have established a character for wisdom, moderation, justice and benevolence, not only encouraging, by their presence, but giving the sanction of their names as leaders of a meeting where sentiments which outrage not only every precept and principle of Christianity, but every feeling of common humanity, are uttered and received with wild and vociferous applause; when we see men, professing to be disciples of the "Prince of peace," and claiming to be the authorized messengers and expounders of that gospel which promises "peace on earth and good will to men," breathing threatenings and slaughter, and in the name and by the authority of their commission exerting all their powers in the pulpit to work into frenzy the fiercest passions of our nature, may we not well conclude that "madness rules the hour," and may we not reasonably fear that the country is rushing blindly upon dangers of the most appalling character?

I fear, Mr. Editor, there is but little hope that anything I, or even you, can say, will be able to reach with effect, understandings blinded by passion and fierce with feelings of vengeance; yet it is our duty to make an effort to stay the tide that is sweeping over the land, and to warn these angry men of the dangers they are bringing upon the country.

If we cannot arrest the calamities that threaten we may at least put upon record that all reason has not "fled to brutish beasts," and that there may be still left enough of the spirit of Christianity to gather up the fragments and bind up the wounds after madness shall have run its course and worked out its own destruction.

However, we may strive to hide it from outsiders, or plan and labor to evade its force, sooner or later truth will vindicate itself, and the farther we depart from it the more cutting to us will be that vindication. It is the highest interest of man to know and obey the truth; it is therefore the part of wisdom not only to look it fully in the face when it presents itself to us, but to search diligently and carefully for it when it does not. Truth is often unpalatable because it strikes down some of our prejudices or our fancied interests, but it will do its work whether we heed it or not.

Everybody admits that in some respects the country is in a bad condition, and though we are glorifying ourselves upon our material resources, our present prosperity and the brilliancy of our prospects in the future, I do not believe there is a man in the country who allows himself to think but feels that we are surrounded by perils of a most fearful character. Yet men cry peace, peace, when in their hearts they know there is no peace; that they neither want nor intend to have peace, and they must know too that we are rushing furiously into one of the most terrible conflicts the world ever saw.

Mr. Editor, let us look at things as they are; it can do no harm; it may do some good. My statements shall be facts open to all; my conclusions will be my own; they may be erroneous; of that every man must judge for himself. Our national securities pay twice as much interest as those of Great Britain and ought to be worth twice as much; to say the least, they ought to command more. Why is it, then, that with larger resources than any country in the world, with a debt less than two-thirds that of Great Britain, our securities are hawked in the markets of the world at a price twenty per cent. less than that commanded by those of Great Britain? Why is it that to-day gold commands a premium of fifty per cent. in our country? Is it that the world is ignorant of our resources and our ability to pay? Is it that anybody believes that the restoration of the seceded States, even upon President Johnson's plan, (which in my opinion falls far short of what it ought to be) would diminish our resources, our ability, or our willingness to pay? No, sir! It is the pervading dread that we are rushing the country into a condition which, if it does not destroy, will render our resources unavailable. I apprehend that no reflecting man will doubt for a moment, that if to-day it were known that the President's plan of reconstruction were at the meeting of Congress to be with any considerable unanimity carried out, there would be an immediate and large advance in the price of our securities both at home and abroad, and a heavy decline in the price of gold. As it is, and with the prospect before us, it is my opinion that with

every election which proclaims that this settlement is more and more hopeless, there will come a decline in the price of our securities and an increase in that of gold. I am free to confess, Mr. Editor, that it is my opinion that if the Southern States were all restored to the Union, and with it were to come a state of good feeling better than we have had at any time for the last forty years; if all the wisdom and all the energies of the country were directed to the improvement of our social and material condition, it would require a long time and a hard struggle, requiring the most rigid economy in the government, and involving much of personal sacrifice and self-denial of the people, to bring our securities and our currency to a specie standard; but with a divided country, engaged in a fierce and bitter contest for power, a contest which is enlisting in its service feelings and passions more relentless than have ever before been exhibited in this country, I see nothing but ruin ahead.

Peace, speedy peace, is what we need and must have. We talk of peace, but there is no peace. We boast of having achieved a great victory; we may well exclaim with Pyrrhus, "Another such victory will ruin us." REASON.

MONT BLANC.—A party recently ascended this celebrated mountain. One of them thus describes the view from the summit:

The crown of Mt. Blanc is a gigantic dome of ice called La Calotte and our last and most fatiguing pull was over its slope to the summit. Fortunately for us, it was largely covered with snow; and not many steps were needed to insure our safety. It was intensely cold and a bitter stinging blast swept relentlessly over and seemingly through us. With such increasing lassitude we slowly drew ourselves forward. It was not without apprehension that I passed near the spot where thirteen days before Mr. Samuel Young had made the fatal misstep that caused his death. Since that time till now no party has succeeded in reaching the top, though two attempts have been made. It has been the solitary abode of cloud and storm, and darkness, and the winds of heaven had mournfully sung the requiem of the parted spirit. At ten o'clock I stood upon the topmost peak and the rich reward of my exertions lay outspread before me. Surely the world cannot show a more magnificent prospect than this. The sky was cloudless and the view in every direction seemed almost unlimited. All Switzerland lay like a map at our feet. We could look down upon her highest mountains. Monte Rosa, the Breithorn, the Mischabelhorn, the Jungfrau, the Matterhorn, the Finster Aarhorn and the other resplendent peaks of the Bernese Oiseland, I could overlook them all. Deeply framed among them were the myriad lakes of this glorious land, the lakes of Geneva and Lucerne, of Thun and Wallenstadt and a thousand others. Towards the south the eye ranged over Italy from the Gulf of Genoa and the dark blue of the Mediterranean to the green meadows and fertile plains of Lombardy and the Lago Maggiore. To the West extended the sunny vales of France, while towards the north and east I could see far beyond the thickly clustering mountains of the hills of Baden and the gloomy drapery of the Black Forest. At my feet the stupendous masses of snow sloped down to the valley of Chamonix, while to the right lay the village of Connaux on the Italian side. It seemed almost exactly beneath us so abrupt are the southern cliffs of the mountains.

SCARCITY OF JEWS IN IRELAND.—The *London Times* says that the census of 1861 revealed the remarkable fact, that in the whole southwest of Ireland there were but two Jews. One of these ancient people abode in Munster, and the other in Connaught, so that they sufficed between them for a population of nearly three millions. This piece of statistical intelligence may be valued, perhaps, for its curiosity, but it is really of greater worth. We fear it is instructive. Jews can find no occupation in a land of poverty, without manufactures, without trade, without any of those commercial advantages which provide them with employment. And the truth of this deduction is seen by a comparison of the northeastern provinces of Ireland with the southwestern. In the metropolitan districts of Leinster, 200 Jews were found, and a Jewish colony had settled about Belfast. These are the rising districts in Ireland—the counties in which remunerative industry is taking root, and prosperity gradually developing itself.