

# THE ASS AND THE VIOLINIST — A FABLE.

Within the fields, one summer day,  
A strong-lunged ass began to bray;  
The uplands echoed back his voice,  
To hear it made his heart rejoice.

"Ah, what a pity!" cried the ass,  
"That I should longer feed on grass;  
My lungs are strong, my voice is loud,  
At concerts I might draw a crowd;  
List to my music! how it fills  
The valleys sleeping 'mong the hills;  
'Twas sweet, I know, for, look! see what  
Grand ears for music I have got."

A great musician heard the din  
While passing with his violin;  
He stopped a while upon the way,  
And bade the old ass cease to bray.

"My long-eared friend," the fiddler said,  
"This neighborhood must wish you dead;  
For, worse than any sounding brass,  
Is your coarse braying, Mr. Ass,  
If you wish music, cease your din,  
And listen to my violin."

He rubbed the rosin on his bow;  
He tried his notes both high and low;  
Making a stone do for a chair,  
He played a grand, soul-stirring air.

Ere he had ceased his tune to play,  
The ass began again to bray;  
Nor violin, nor song of bird,  
Could for a moment then be heard.

At last the old ass dropped his head,  
And to the old musician said;  
"Music is sound, my friend, you see—  
Therefore all sound must music be;  
Of mine the world will be the proudest,  
Because, my friend, it is the loudest."

What more could the musician say?  
What further do but let him bray?  
He wandered off through twilight dim;  
Ass wisdom was too much for him.

## CONCLUSION.

How many men we daily pass,  
Who reason like this braying ass!  
They grow to men, from braggart boys,  
And think that brains must make a noise;  
They gain high seats in synagogues;  
No mystery their vision fogs;  
Where'er they lack for argument,  
They give their store of gas a vent,  
And wise men whisper, as they pass,  
There goes a self-conceited ass.

## DANGER AHEAD.

A SOLEMN WARNING TO ENGLAND'S  
RULING CLASSES—THE AGRICULTURAL  
LABORERS DESPERATE — GRAVE  
APPREHENSIONS OF THE RESULT OF  
THE SOCIAL STRUGGLE THIS WINTER.

We confess we look forward to the coming winter with grave apprehension. We may underrate the conservative force at work—that is always easy in a country like England—but everything seems to us to tend towards a social struggle in the counties, which must be disastrous, and may not be altogether peaceful. The agricultural laborers of the country, more than 600,000 adult males, just excited by new prospect of improved position and interested in a new activity, will be exposed to a new hardship, and irritated by a new form of pressure from above. Meat, bread, and potatoes will all alike be dear, and the farmers enriched and emboldened by their dearthness, are intending, in some counties at all events, to "try conclusions" with their laborers, and see if they cannot "read them a lesson" on the advantage of suffering quietly whatever it may suit employers to inflict. The prices demanded for getting in the harvest have irritated the farmers beyond measure, the speeches of the itinerant lecturers, often imprudent, and sometimes most reprehensible, excite them still further, and the sense that in future they will have to deal with strong corporations, instead of isolated and therefore powerless seekers of bread, drives them beyond all self control, a control which indeed, with dukes and bishops urging them on, they do not feel it necessary to retain. The kindly feeling, as they call it, in the counties—that is the half-contemptuous pity on one side and reverential deference on the other which has for centuries marked the semi-feudal relations of village labor—has already died away, and the farmers are determined that the men shall know what "contract" is like. They will not take the Bishop of Gloucester's advice, and duck the lecturers, because the laborers being ten to one, and being told by a bishop that physical violence is a proper weapon to employ, might duck the farmers, but they will jump at the counsel offered by Mr. Sotherton-Estcourt a man of blood and mark and parliamentary capacity, who advises the farmers of his three

parishes to treat all who join the union as "strangers," to withdraw all the perquisites of which so much is made, to take away the potato grounds, to raise the rent of the cottages, and to refuse to keep on men in winter, when work is not wanted. The advice is in the form of a warning to the laborers, "my friends and neighbors in Shipton, Newton, and Ashley," but as the laborers know that without union their only prospects are lives of monotonous toil on wages insufficient to provide meat, and ending in the work-house; as they see that they are abandoned by the upper classes, duke and bishop, member and magistrate, all alike threatening, scolding, and warning them; as they see that the half formed Union has already raised the usual rate of wages 1s. 6d. a week, Mr. Estcourt's advice will fall dead, except upon the farmers. They will endeavor this winter to put the unions down, and we shall have all over the country villages in which ten or fifteen farmers, angry, unreasonable, and well-fed, will stand face to face with a hundred or a hundred and fifty laborers, angry, unreasonable, and without food. The unions will be locked out in heaps, and when they apply to the parish will be told by the guardians that as they can have work at will by "merely" giving up the Union, they must take the work. As we do not in the least believe in the submissiveness of the British laborer when taken out of his customary groove—if he takes to the brickfield, to railway work, or to Australia, he becomes at once in a day the most brutally "independent" and personally insufferable of mankind—as we have a keen recollection of the way in which the introduction of machinery was resisted, when a country side would be in a glare night after night and insurances could not be effected, and as we believe the laborers in many districts to have been brooding and champing for some time past over wildly dangerous ideas, we look forward to the struggle with a sickening dread of the misery it must produce. The English laborer, once excited, is the most sour of men, obstinate, scornful, and for all his horror of bloodshed, which is real, and rises to a virtue, capable of being cruel, and he is excited now. The man has been, so to speak, morally whipped for six months. He has found no friend anywhere except in a press he can neither read nor understand. The Duke has deprived him of his allotment; the Bishop has recommended that his instructor should be ducked; the squire has threatened him with dismissal in winter; the magistrate has fined him for quitting work, which is just, and scolded him for listening to lectures, which is tyranny; the Mayor at Evesham has prohibited him from meeting on the green, and the lawyer—witness a recent case near Chelmsford—has told him that any one who advises and helps him to emigrate is a hopeless rascal. He has been denied the most ordinary privileges of freemen—the right of listening to lectures he approves, the right of emigrating from county to county, the right of combining to improve his condition, and this by men who, as he sees, listen to every lecture on their own side, who emigrate whenever they please to the ends of the earth, and who form open and strict combinations to keep him in his place. Not one of all those to whom he ought in county belief to look upon with reverence has frankly stood up on his behalf. No peer has gone further than Lord Ebury, who advocates a rise of wages, but declares that combination, which alone can place the laborer on an equality with his employer, destroys his "independence," independence exactly equivalent to the independence of a worm under a roller—a right to wring-ple at discretion. No bishop has come forward to say that Christ's Church knows nothing of grades or classes, or persons with acres, save in so far as it sympathizes most strongly with the humble and oppressed.

No county member has argued for the freedom of the non-electors whom he is supposed to represent. Above all, no statesman of either side has deemed the most serious social struggle of our day worth a speech or even a remark, has attempted to guide the people, or has so much as endeavored to explain to them the economic laws they are supposed, in some respects rightly supposed, to be defying. To the laborers, congregating in their beer houses and their cottages, talking over the "agitators' speeches, and the reports from the neighboring villages, and the bitter broadsheets the respectables do not see, it must seem as if they were abandoned by all the world, except their own order. For them it is "the poor," that endless and strictly-bound corporation, against the world. We perceive, from

the language of the *Guardian*, and we perceive it with a deep sense of relief, that a very considerable section of the clergy are disposed to take a moderate and conciliatory view of the movement; to justify the men, and to acknowledge that the feudal system, under which "men sweat for duty, not for meed," is dying out, and to deprecate that degrading kind of alms of which Mr. Estcourt—who would think a gift of a ten-pound note from a Duke a deliberate insult—is so fond; but we fear the clergy scarcely speak out as frankly as their newspaper does; that they are unwilling to annoy farmers, to whom they must look for help at the Boards of Guardians; that the temptation to preach resignation as the crowning virtue of Christianity overcomes their knowledge that resignation is not the virtue by which civilization is advanced. The laborers, in their own eyes, stand alone. We believe that this is a most dangerous position of affairs. Hopeless and hungry Englishmen are very formidable persons, and if the idea now prevailing of a lock-out of Union men in the winter is carried out, we shall have 150,000 Englishmen, a fourth of all our laborers, hopeless and hungry, and filled, besides, with a sense of the bitter injustice of all above them, who ask them to toil twelve hours a day for six days a week, and then denounce them as wicked for combining to make their labor as profitable as they can. It is high time that the statesmen among us, if we have any, who comprehend agricultural questions, should intervene, and endeavor, if it may be, to guide and control both parties, to suggest some terms of compromise, to soothe the bitterness of the farmers, and, above all, to inspire something of hope in the masses of the hinds. It is hope they want, if we are to have continued order in the counties, and we cannot imagine a higher end to which Mr. Gladstone's power of sympathetic oratory; or Lord Derby's hard, incisive sense; or Mr. Fortescue's minute knowledge of all that relates to agricultural tenure; or Mr. Forster's extraordinary faculty for sympathizing with men with whom he does not agree, could be more beneficially applied. Let Mr. Gladstone just inquire into the truth of the position of affairs in Herefordshire or Oxfordshire—the real truth, not the truth as squires or laborers see it—and he will speak out fast enough. We know perfectly well how hard it will be to speak, how great may be the influence of a rash sentence on the electors, how injurious unfounded hope must always be; but English laborers are as deserving of consideration as Irish peasants, though they do not extort it with the bullet, and it is time this reticence and absence of guidance should come to an end. Let the elections take care of themselves, and let the politicians of both sides—for on this subject Tories are as deeply concerned as Liberals—show us if they have any wise message to deliver. It is a strange proof of the unmarked dislocation which exists in our society that no trade could fall into confusion without attracting the attention of statesmen, except the most important of all. There was scarcely a member in England who did not deliver himself upon the cattle-plague; yet in the presence of an indefinitely greater danger, of a real and permanent schism between employers and employed, they are all silent, and appear determined either to remain so or to content themselves with soothing platitudes which, as they perfectly understand, guide nobody.—*London Spectator*, Aug. 24.

## THE CHEMIST'S STORY.

I am a chemist. Many, doubtless, would find it difficult to define what the duties of a chemist are, if asked. To such, I say a chemist is a collector of facts. It is the business of his life to aid in unmasking, for the benefit of mankind, the good and evil hanging even in the air we breathe, burrowing in the earth we tread, mingling with the food we eat, and swimming in the water we drink. Then again, the law waits on the chemist. A human being has passed suddenly away. Somebody thinks there has been foul play. The chemist examines the body of the supposed victim. The law listens, hat in hand, to science. The suspected party trembles in anticipation. The oracular lips of the chemist move; he names one out of the fearful list of poisons. It is either strychnine, prussic acid, or that deadly oil of bitter almonds. The law then puts on his hat, takes the decision into court, and hangs the prisoner. In short, the chemist must know the ways and the wherefores of everything in the phenomena of life, as far as a

feeble man can know. The composition of the ocean he must be familiar with, he must be able to name the gases of the air, and capable of resolving the human body itself into invisible vapors. I am the occupant of this responsible and important position in the medical college of P—.

It was about eleven o'clock on a stormy evening that I bade good night to my student, Tom Richards, at the door of my laboratory, at the south end of the college buildings.

"Good night, Professor," said Tom; "we are going to have a fall of hydrogen, oxygen, and a trace of saline."

Hydrogen and oxygen—in our nomenclature—is water.

"I hope," I said, in answer to Tom's playful words, "that it will not rain before I get home."

"Oh, no, it won't for an hour yet," said Tom.

"Then," I said, with a sigh, noticing that the mercury in my barometer was falling, a sign of a violent storm, "I shall certainly get wet."

Tom was very anxious to know what would keep me up after twelve o'clock, so I told him I was about to commence analyzing the stomach of a Mrs. Johnson, whose husband now lay in P— jail, just across the road from the college, on suspicion that he was the murderer. Tom said that I had worked hard enough that day and deserved the night to myself. He spoke the truth; still I had delayed examining the stomach so long, and the trial so near at hand, that I could not in conscience put off the examination farther; although I had heard several classes recite at the different public schools in the morning; had delivered a lecture in the college proper that afternoon, another in the laboratory that evening, besides attending to my several duties as police surgeon during the day.

Tom was passing out of the college yard through the gate, his head turned bidding me good night, when he brushed against a man standing with his face to the prison. The street lamp showed me that the man was in the police uniform.

Re-entering my laboratory, I took down a glass jar from the shelf and sat down before my sink to examine it. The jar, which contained Mrs. Johnson's stomach, was covered by a cloth duly tied with string, and properly sealed with my official seal in red wax. Breaking through the cloth, I lifted the stomach out with a dissecting hook and laid it on a white platter before me; then became busily employed in applying those tests to its contents by which we detect the presence of injurious substances.

An hour had passed since the departure of young Richard. I had carefully emptied the contents of the stomach into a number of bowls or basins. I had labored hard to discover traces of poison in all this, but had been unsuccessful. Joe Johnson, the suspected man, had been a student of mine a few years before. I thought him a good-hearted, intelligent fellow, only a little wild, and really began to hope that he might prove innocent; when among the macerated food, I came upon a small, infinitesimal, white grain.

By careful manipulation and the use of my magnifying glass, I managed to get this upon a piece of smoked glass, and examined it.

I was then certain that I had discovered arsenic, but to make assurance doubly sure I determined to apply a well known test for that poison. Accordingly I placed in the woman's stomach the usual acids, and then turned on the blowpipe flame, and presently there appeared the brilliant metallic mark, worthy of Cain's brow, which is the sign and signet of the poison fiend.

"Yes," I exclaimed as I saw the fatal blazon. "Joe Johnson is the murderer of his wife! With the evidence of that mark to back me, no power can save him from the rope."

"Do you really think so?" said a calm voice behind me.

I turned quickly, and discovered a tall, lank policeman, having red, weary eyes, standing at my office door and staring in. His body looked as if it had been rolled out between his hands, like a molasses candy stick. His nose was merely an elongated fleshy pug, and his forehead was decorated with two red streaks instead of eyebrows. He had no expression at all in his face, and his policeman's hat was so large that it threatened to settle down on his shoulders. His uniform reassured me; I addressed him with some impatience.

"My friend, I suppose I am wanted to attend an inquest, or what is your purpose?"

"No, doctor, the man ain't dead yet."