



THE WILKIE COLLINS SOCIETY

All The Year Round
Newly identified journalism
by Wilkie Collins
(I)

The Crusoe of the Snowy Desert
Hear the Postman
Managers and Music Halls

Introduction © Paul Lewis 2017

The Wilkie Collins Society
May 2017

Newly identified journalism by Wilkie Collins in *All The Year Round*

Introduction

The three pieces reproduced in this pamphlet are annotated ‘Wilkie Collins’ in the volumes of *All The Year Round* discovered in 2015 which identify the names of the contributors to Dickens’s periodical.¹ Prior to their discovery by Dr. Jeremy Parrott barely a third of the pieces in the periodical were firmly attributed. And no one had ever attributed these three to Wilkie.²

It is accepted that the annotations are contemporary and probably done for a luxury ‘Office Set’ of the periodical used by Dickens himself.³ A few errors in the annotations have been identified and one of the eight new pieces annotated with Wilkie’s name has been ruled out as his, partly due to his other commitments at the time.⁴ The annotations should be treated as very strong evidence of authorship but not absolute proof.

I have no doubt that the three pieces reproduced here are by Wilkie. They were all written during the time Wilkie was on a contract to work for *All The Year Round*. From the magazine’s first issue on 30 April 1859 to the end of July 1860 he was paid six guineas (£6-6s or £6.30) a week and from 31 July until January 1862 he was paid seven guineas a week plus a one eighth share of the profits. The weekly fee was paid in cash and the profit share, which came out of

¹ Private communication from Jeremy Parrott and I was kindly granted access to the 20 volumes in 2017.

² See Ella Ann Oppenlander, *Dickens’ All The Year Round: Descriptive Index and Contributor List*, New York, 1984 and *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* various dates.

³ Jeremy Parrott, ‘The Annotated Set of *All The Year Round*: Questions, Answers and Conjectures’, *The Dickensian*, No.498, Spring 2016, pp. 10-21; and ‘George Holsworth and Henry Walker: the Backroom Boys at *All The Year Round*’ *The Dickensian*, No.500 Winter 2016 pp. 247-259 – see.p.256.

⁴ Paul Lewis *All The Year Round: Newly identified contributions by Wilkie Collins*, Wilkie Collins Society, January 2017.

Dickens's own share, was paid by cheque and appears in Wilkie's bank account.⁵

During the times these pieces were written Wilkie was free from writing serial stories for *All The Year Round*. The first was written before he commenced writing *The Woman in White* in August 1859. The latter two were written after he had finished *The Woman in White* in July 1860 and before he commenced his next, *No Name*, on 7 August 1861.⁶

The Crusoe of the Snowy Desert⁷ is one of 12 pieces Wilkie is now known to have written for Volume I of *All The Year Round* (three of them were minor co-authored pieces).

It appeared as the final piece in the second number. Now we have the annotation this passage in a letter from Dickens to his sub-editor Wills takes on greater significance

Wilkie has a notion that if he could see what matter we have at the Printer's, he might find out for himself what kind of article would be most useful for No. 2. He will join us at the Office at about 2 tomorrow. Will you have your slips there.⁸

The piece is an account of courage and determination in North America taken from a recently published book.⁹ It was a familiar technique for Collins and its slightly abrupt end perhaps indicates it was designed to fill the last four columns or so of the second number.

Hear the Postman¹⁰ is one of four pieces we now know Wilkie wrote between the end of *The Woman in White* and the start of *No Name*. When he accepted his renewed contract in August 1860 he wrote to Dickens

⁵ Paul Lewis, *What Wilkie Earned from All The Year Round*, Wilkie Collins Society, August 2015.

⁶ *op.cit.* Paul Lewis, January 2017.

⁷ *All The Year Round*, 7 May 1859, vol. I, pp. 44-48.

⁸ CD to Wills 11 April 1859, Pilgrim vol. IX, p. 50.

⁹ Baldwin Möllhausen, *Diary of a Journey from the Mississippi to the Coasts of the Pacific* trans. Mrs. Percy Sinnett, Longman [Nov] 1858 vol. I, pp. 119-130, 142-152, 171ff.

¹⁰ *All The Year Round*, 13 July 1861, vol. V, pp. 366-368.

I am also, when not engaged on the serial story, to write articles (the copyright of which is conceded to me) for “All The Year Round”, as I can,¹¹

These four pieces are examples of Collins performing that duty.

Hear the Postman is another piece which has the hallmarks of being done for a purpose. At just three columns it could have been done to fill a gap. It is based on a news story about a public meeting of postmen to air their grievances for better pay.¹² Frequent petitions to Parliament by MPs had kept the story alive despite a ban on postmen (or letter-carriers as they were called) from speaking to the public about the dispute. Collins relied on the mail for his business as a writer. So sympathy for the postmen who were currently paid as little as a tenth of his wages is not surprising. It was the last of the four pieces published before he set to work on *No Name*.

Managers and Music Halls¹³ was the first piece in this inter-novel gap. The second and third – *Memoirs of an Adopted Son*¹⁴ and *The Caldron of Oil*¹⁵ – were both reprinted by Wilkie in his collection of essays *My Miscellanies* published in 1863.¹⁶

The article is a polemic against narrow-minded theatre manager who wanted to forbid music halls from opening on Sundays and in Easter Week when theatres had to be shut by law. Wilkie’s father William had observed Sunday strictly and once fell out with his artist neighbour Linnell after he caught him working on fruit trees in his garden.¹⁷ Wilkie had no such beliefs. We know that he liked

¹¹ [0364] WC to Charles Dickens, 7 August 1860.

¹² *The Times*, 21 June 1861, p.12 col.2.

¹³ *All The Year Round*, 23 March 1861, vol. IV, pp. 558-561.

¹⁴ *All The Year Round*, 20 April 1861, vol. V, pp. 90-96.

¹⁵ *All The Year Round*, 11 May 1861, vol. V, pp. 162-168.

¹⁶ Wilkie Collins, *My Miscellanies* Sampson Low, Son & Co. London 1863.

¹⁷ Alfred T Story, *The Life of John Linnell*, Richard Bentley and Son, London 1892, vol. I, p. 277.

not to work on Sunday¹⁸ but he did write almost 5% of his known letters on that day.¹⁹

The piece also involves an explanation of a complex legal point – something Wilkie did frequently in his fiction, often when showing its stupidity. The music halls were allowed to open on Sunday if they performed only music. But as soon as two performers addressed each other in dialogue the performance became a play and was banned. Theatre managers argued for a strict interpretation of this rule. Wilkie wanted it relaxed to increase competition.

Conclusion

The annotations are strong evidence of authorship. Wilkie's availability and the content both support the annotation fully in the case of these three pieces. They add more than 9000 words to Wilkie's known journalistic work.

Note on the text

These three pieces are taken from the original text exactly as published in *All The Year Round*. Victorian spelling and grammar are not altered and any errors are not corrected.

¹⁸ While writing *No Name* in Broadstairs he explained that he worked Monday to Saturday but "I make a holiday of every Sunday" ([3278] to Palgrave Simpson, 14 July 1862).

¹⁹ Personal analysis of entries in the database of 3304 letters by Wilkie Collins.

THE CRUSOE OF THE SNOWY DESERT.

LATE in the autumn of the year eighteen hundred and fifty-one, Mr. Baldwin Möllhausen, a Prussian traveller, pursuing his investigations in Northern America, had occasion to make a return journey across the Rocky Mountains to the Missouri. He started with one companion only, and with three horses and a mule, for riding and for carrying the baggage.

Scanty fodder, Indian treachery, and the fearful cold of those snowy regions, produced the first disasters of the travellers, by depriving them of the services of all four animals. Their last horse was killed by exposure to an icy gale, at a spot in the miserable wilderness called Sandy Hill Creek. Here, now that their last means of getting forward had failed them, they were compelled to stop, at a period of the year when every succeeding day might be expected to increase the horrors of the cold, and the chances of death by starvation in the prairie wastes.

They had a little Indian tent with them, and they set it up for shelter. They had also a small supply of bad buffalo meat, rice, and Indian corn. On this they existed miserably for a few days, until the Post from Port Kearney to the Flat River happened to pass them.

With all the will to rescue both the travellers, the Post did not possess the power. It was barely possible for the persons in charge of it—their own lives depending on their getting on rapidly, and husbanding their provisions—to make room for one man in their little vehicle drawn by six mules. The other man would have no help for it but to remain behind with the goods, alone in the wilderness, and to keep himself alive, if it was possible, in that dreadful position, until the Post could send horses back for him from the Catholic Mission, eighty or a hundred miles off.

In this emergency—an emergency of life or death if ever there was one yet—the travellers agreed on drawing lots to decide which man was to be rescued, and which man was to remain. The lot to remain fell on Mr. Möllhausen.

The Post resumed its journey at once, with the rescued traveller squeezed into the little carriage. Mr. Möllhausen watched the departure of the vehicle till it was out of sight, till he was left alone, the one living being in the white waste—

the Crusoe of the snowy desert. He had three chances, not of life, but of death. Death by cold; death by the murderous treachery of savages; death by the teeth of the wolves which prowled the wilderness by night. But he was a brave man, and he faced his imminent perils and his awful loneliness with a stout heart.

He was well supplied with arms and ammunition; and the first thing he did when the Post left him was to look to these. His next proceeding was to make use of the snow on the earth to keep out the snow from the heavens by raising a white wall, firmly stamped, all round his little tent. He then dragged up a supply of wood from the river near at hand, and piled it before his door. His fire-place was a hollow in the ground, in front of his bed of blankets and buffalo hides. The food he possessed to cook at it consisted of buffalo meat and rice. He had also some coffee. These provisions, on which his feeble chance of life depended, he carefully divided into fourteen days' rations, having first calculated that, in fourteen days at the furthest, he might look for help from the Mission. The sum of his preparations was now complete. He fed his fire, set on his food to cook, and crept into his blankets to wait for the coming of night—the first night alone in the desert.

After a time, the silence and the solitude weighed upon him so heavily, that he sought some kind of comfort and companionship in trying to talk to himself; but, in that forlorn situation, even the sound of his own voice made him shudder. The sun sank to its setting behind snow clouds; its last rays were trembling redly over the wilderness of white ground, when the howl of the wolves came down upon him on the icy wind. They were assembled in a ravine where the travellers' last horse had fallen dead, some days before. Nothing was left of the animal but his polished bones and the rings of his harness; and over these bare relics of their feast the ravenous creatures wrangled and yelled all night long. The deserted man, listening to them in his tent, tried to while away the unspeakable oppression of the dark hours by calculating their varying numbers from the greater or lesser volume of the howling sounds that reached him. Exhaustion overpowered his faculties, while he was still at this melancholy work. He slept, till hunger woke him the next day, when the sun was high again in the heavens.

He cut a notch in the pole of his tent to mark that one day was passed. It was then the sixteenth or eighteenth of November; and by Christmas he vainly believed that he would be safe at the Mission. That second day was very weary; and his strength was failing him already. When he dragged up the wood and water to his tent, his feet were lame, and he staggered like a drunken man.

Hopeless and hungry, he sat down on his bed, filled his pipe with willow-leaves, the best substitute for tobacco that he possessed, and smoked in the warmth of the fire, with his eyes on the boiling kettle into which he had thrown a little maize. He was still thus occupied, when the dreary view through the opening of his tent was suddenly changed by the appearance of living beings. Some horsemen were approaching him, driving laden horses before them. His weapons were at hand, and, with these ready, he awaited their advance. As they came nearer, he saw that they were Indians of a friendly tribe, returning from a beaver hunt. Within gun-shot they stopped; and one of them addressed him in English. They accepted his invitation to enter the tent; and, sitting there by his side, they entreated him, long and earnestly, to abandon the goods, to give up the vain hope of help from the Mission, and to save his life by casting his lot with theirs.

“The wolves,” said the man who had first spoken in English—a Delaware Indian—“the wolves will give you no rest, day or night; and if the men of the Pawnee tribe find you out, you will be robbed, murdered, and scalped. You have no hope of rescue. Bad horses would not live to get to you; and the whites of the Mission will not risk good horses and their own lives to save one man whom they will give up for lost. Come with us.”

But Mr. Möllhausen, unfortunately for himself, put faith in the Mission. He was, moreover bravely and honourably anxious to preserve the goods, only the smaller share of which happened to be his own property. Firmly persuaded that his fellow white men would not desert him, and that they would bring him easier means of travelling, in his disabled condition, than those which the Delawares could offer, he still held to his first resolution, and still said, “No.”

The Indian rose to leave him.

“The word of a white,” said the savage, “is more to you than the will and deed of a Red Skin. You have had your choice—may you not deceive yourself!”

With these words he shook Mr. Möllhausen by the hand, and he and his companions departed. They never once looked back at the traveller or his tent; but kept on their way rapidly towards the south, and left him a doomed man.

For the next eight days snow-storms raged incessantly, and threatened to bury him alive in his tent. Although he was, as yet, spared the pangs of hunger (the friendly Indians having increased his small stock of provisions by the leg of an antelope), his sufferings of other kinds were indescribable. He was so lame that he had to crawl on his hands and knees when he fetched his supply of water; his head swam; his memory failed him; and he dared not close his eyes by night for fear of the wolves. Maddened by hunger, they came nearer and nearer to him. Howling and yelling they circled round and round the tent, closer and closer, at the close of every day. One night he heard the snow outside crackling under their feet; the next, he saw the teeth of one of them appear through the leather side of his tent. He could only scare them away by firing at them in the darkness; but they returned to the attack in a few hours; and they left him no chance of sleep till the broad daylight drove them back to their lairs.

He was just strong enough on the ninth day to make the ninth notch in the pole of the tent. On the tenth he was powerless. His courage gave way; and he despaired, for the first time, of rescue. He had a medicine-chest with him, which he had already used, containing a small bottle of laudanum and a case of quinine. Without forming any distinct resolution, without well knowing what he did, he put the laudanum bottle to his lips and almost emptied it. A deep swoon followed the draught: he remembered taking it, and remembered nothing more.

When he came to himself again it was pitch dark, and his tent poles were rocking in a gale of wind. Thirst, and, in a lesser degree, hunger, were his awakening sensations. He satisfied the first with half-melted snow, and the second with raw buffalo-meat. When his fire (which had dwindled to a few glimmering sparks) was relighted, he roasted the meat; and recklessly devoured three days' rations at a meal. By the morning he was so much better (partly through the rest which the laudanum had given to his mind, partly through the sustenance which the excess of food had afforded to his body) that the preservation of his life became once more a matter of some interest to him. He tottered out, leaning on his rifle, to get a little exercise. In a few days he contrived to walk as far as the top of a low hill, from which he could look forth, all round, over the lonesome prospect.

By this time his provisions were at an end, and the last faint hope of rescue from the Mission had died out of his mind. It was a question, now, whether the man should devour the wolves, or the wolves the man. The man had his rifle, his ammunition, and his steady resolution to fight it out with solitude, cold, and

starvation, to the very last and the wolves dropped under his bullets, and fed him with their dry, sinewy flesh. He took the best part of the meat only, and left the rest. Every morning the carcass abandoned over night was missing. The wolves that were living devoured to the last morsel the wolves that were dead.

He grew accustomed to his wretched and revolting food, and to every other hardship of his forlorn situation—except the solitude of it. The unutterable oppression of his own loneliness hung upon his mind, a heavier and heavier weight with each succeeding day. A savage shyness at the idea of meeting with any living human creatures began to take possession of him. There were moments when he underwent the most fearful of all mortal trials—the conscious struggle to keep the control of his own senses. At such times, he sang, and whistled, and extended his walks to the utmost limits that his strength would allow; and so, by main force, as it were, held his own tottering reason still in its place.

Thus, the woful time—the dreary, lonely, hopeless hours—wore on till he had cut his sixteenth notch in the tent-pole. This was a memorable day in the history of the Crusoe of the snowy desert.

He had walked out to the top of the little hill to watch the sun's way downward in the wintry western heaven, and he was wearily looking about him, as usual, when he saw two human figures, specks as yet in the distance, approaching from the far north. The warning of the Delaware Indian came back to his memory, and reminded him that those two men were approaching from the district of the murderous Pawnees.

A moment's consideration decided him to await the coming of these strangers in a place of ambush which commanded a view of his tent. If they were Pawnees, he knew that the time had come when they or he must die.

He went back to the tent, armed himself with as many weapons as he could carry, took the percussion-caps off the rest, and hid them under his bed. Then he put wood on the fire, so as to let the smoke rise freely through the opening at the top of the tent, and thereby strengthen any suspicion in the minds of strangers that a living man was inside it; and he next fastened the second opening, which served for door, tying it on the inner side, as if he had shut himself up for the night. This done, he withdrew to the frozen river of Sandy Hill Creek, about a hundred and fifty paces off, walking backwards so as to

make his footmarks in the snow appear to be leading *to* the tent, instead of away from it. Arrived on the ice, off which the high winds had drifted the snow up on the banks, he took off his shoes for fear the nails in them might betray him by scratches on the smoothly-frozen surface, and then followed the stream over the ice, till he reached the winding which brought its course nearest to his tent. Here he climbed up the bank, between two snow-drifts, and hid himself among some withered bushes, where the twigs and stalks gave him a sight of the tent, and just room enough, besides, for the use of his weapons.

In this situation he watched and listened. Although the frost was so intense that his breath froze on his beard, and his left hand felt glued to the barrel of his levelled rifle, the fever of expectation in his mind prevented his feeling the cold. He watched, for what seemed to be an interminable time; and, at last, the heads of the two men rose in sight over the brow of a neighbouring hill. Their figures followed in another minute. All doubts were ended now—the last day in this world had dawned for him or for them—the men were Pawnees.

After holding counsel together on the hill, the savages threw back their buffalo skins, drew their full quivers before them, and strung their bows. They then separated. One walked to the top of the hill from which the deserted traveller had first caught sight of them, to trace the direction of his footsteps: the other examined the track between the water and the tent. Both appeared to be satisfied with their investigations; both met again before the tent, and communicated with one another by gestures, which expressed their conviction that the victim was asleep by his fire inside. In another moment they drew their bowstrings, placing themselves so that their double fire of arrows should meet at right angles in the tent.

The man whose life they were seeking never felt that life so dear to him as at the moment when he saw them shoot five arrows into the place where he slept. Still he watched and waited; for his existence now depended on his cunning and patience, on his not miscalculating, by an instant, the time to fire. He saw the savages pause and listen before they ventured into the tent. One of them then dropped his bow, grasped his tomahawk, and knelt to creep under the curtained opening; while the other stood over him with his arrow in the string ready to shoot. In this position, the skull of the kneeling Indian was brought within the white man's line of sight; and he cocked his rifle. Faint as the click was, he saw that it had caught their quick ears—for they both started and turned round. Observing that this movement made the kneeling man less likely to escape his

eye in the tent, he shifted his aim, and fired at the naked breast of the man with the bow. The sharp eye of the savage discovered his hidden enemy at the same instant, and he sprang aside. But it was too late—he was hit; and he fell with a scream that went through every nerve of Mr. Möllhausen's body. The other savage jumped to his feet; but the white man's weapon was the quicker of the two, and a discharge of buckshot hit him full in the face and neck. He dropped dead on the spot, by the side of the other man who was still groaning.

Although he knew that he had justifiably shot, in self-defence, two savages, whose murderous design on his own life had been betrayed before his eyes—although he was absolutely certain that if either one of the Pawnees had been permitted to escape, the whole tribe would have been at the tent by the next day—the brave traveller's nerve deserted him when he saw his two enemies on the ground, and when he thought of the terrible after-necessity of hiding what had been done. With a feeling of unutterable despair he mechanically reloaded his rifle, and approached the place. The groans of the Indian who had been shot in the breast moved his pity so strongly that they seemed to recal him to himself. First turning the dead Indian face downwards, to escape the horrifying sight of the mangled features, he approached his wounded enemy, and made signs that he would forgive him, help him, cover him with buffalo skins, take him into the tent, and there do all that was in the power of man to gain his good-will by preserving his life.

The savage lay writhing and bleeding with his teeth clenched, with his eyes glaring in deadly hatred through the long black hair that almost covered his face. But, after a while, the merciful white man saw that his gestures were understood. A sense of relief, even of joy, overflowed his heart at the prospect of saving the Indian, and of securing a companion in his fearful solitude. The wounded man signed to him to come nearer, and pointed with his left hand to his right hand and arm, which lay twisted under him. Without the slightest suspicion, Mr. Möllhausen knelt over him to place his arm in an easier position. At the same moment, the wretch's right hand flashed out from beneath him, armed with a knife, and struck twice at the unprotected breast of the man who was trying to save him. Mr. Möllhausen parried the blows with his right arm, drew his own knife with his left hand, and inflicted on the vindictive savage the death that he had twice deserved. The rattle sounded in the throat, and the muscles of the naked figure stretched themselves in the last convulsion. The lost traveller was alone again; alone in the frozen wilderness, with the bodies of the two dead men.

The night was at hand—the night came—a night never to be forgotten, never in any mortal language to be described. Down with the gathering darkness came the gathering wolves; and round and round the two corpses in front of the tent they circled and howled. All through that awful night the lost man lay listening to them in the pitch darkness, now cooling his wounded arm with snow, now firing his pistol to scare the wolves from their human prey.

With the first gleam of daylight he rose to rid himself of the horrible companionship of the bodies, and of all that betrayed their fate, before the next wandering Indians came near the spot, and before the wolves gathered again with the darkness. Hunger drove him to begin by taking their provision of dried buffalo-meat from under the dead men's leathern girdles. He then rolled up their remains, with whatever lay about them, in their buffalo robes, tied them round, dragged them, one after the other, to the hole in the ice where he got his water, and pushed them through it, to be carried away by the current of the river.

Even yet, the number of his necessary precautions was not complete. He had a large fire to make, next, on the spot where the two savages had dropped, with the double object of effacing all traces of their fall, and of destroying the faintest scent of blood before the wolves collected again. When the fire had dwindled to a heap of ashes, a new snow-storm smoothed out all marks of it. By the next morning not a sign was left to betray the deaths of the Indians—the smooth ground was as empty and as white as ever—and of all that had happened, on that memorable sixteenth day of the traveller's sojourn in the wilderness, nothing now remained but the terrible recollection of it.

The time wore on from that date, without an event to break the woeful monotony of it, until Christmas came. He was still alive in his solitude on Christmas-day. A stolid apathy towards the future had begun to get possession of him; his sense of the horror of his situation grew numbed and dull; the long solitude and the ceaseless cold seemed to be slowly freezing his mind, and making a new wilderness there, dreary and empty as the waste that encompassed him. His thoughts wandered with a certain sadness to the Christmas-trees and the children's festivals, at that blessed season, in his native Germany—but he was too far gone for any deep grief, or for any bitter pangs of despair. He kept Christmas-day with the only indulgence he could afford himself, a pipeful of the dry willow leaves; and, as night fell, he lay on his back by the fire, looking up through the hole in his tent at the frosty heavens, and fancying dimly that the

kind stars looked down on him, as they had often looked, in bygone days, at home.

The old year ended, and the new year came. His hold on life was slackening—and the end was not far off. It was daylight, early in the month of January. He was resting under his blankets—not asleep, and not awake. Suddenly the sound of approaching footsteps reached him on the still air. It was no dream—a salutation in the Indian language sounded in his ears a moment afterwards. He roused himself, and caught up his rifle. More words were spoken before he could get out of the tent. It was the English language this time. “You are badly off here, friend,” said a cheerful voice. Had the white men of the Post and the Mission remembered him at last? No. When the tent covering was raised, an Indian entered, and pushed his five-foot rifle in before him. A savage looking man, with five savage companions. The lost traveller advanced to meet them with his rifle ready. Happily, he was wrong this time. These savage wanderers of the prairie—these charitable heathens, whom the pitiless Christians at the Mission were established to convert—had come to do the good work which his white brethren had, to their eternal disgrace, neglected: they had come to save him.

The man who had spoken in English was a half-breed—a voluntary renegade from civilisation. His companions belonged, like himself, to the friendly tribe of Ottoo Indians. They had gone out with their squaws on a hunting expedition; and they had seen the smoke of the lost traveller’s fire two miles off. “You are hungry,” they said to him, producing their own food—”eat. You are ready to perish—come with us. You are sick—we will take care of you and clothe you.” These were the words of the Red Skins; and the friendly promises they implied were performed to the letter.

On the next day every member of the hunting party, including the women and the boys, assembled at the tent to remove the forsaken white man, and all that belonged to him, to their own camp. The goods, for the preservation of which he had risked his life, were packed up; the waggon, abandoned by his fellow-traveller and himself, at the beginning of their disasters, when their last horse died, was cleared of snow and made fit for use again; and even the tent was not left behind. It was too firmly frozen to the ground to be pulled up; so it was cut off just above the snow, and was thrown over the rest of the baggage. When the Indians had packed the waggon, their wives and their boys harnessed themselves to it, and dragged it away cheerfully to the camp. Mr. Möllhausen,

and the elder warriors followed. The Prussian traveller stopped, before he left the place for ever, to take a last look at the lonely scene of all his sufferings and all his perils. The spot where his tent had stood was still marked in the snowy waste by the ashes of his expiring fire. His eyes rested long on that last-left, touching trace of himself and his hardships—then wandered away to the little hill from which he used to look out on his solitude—to the bank of the river where he had lain in ambush for the Pawnees—to the hole in the ice through which he had thrust their bodies. He shuddered, as well he might, at the dreadful memories which the familiar objects around him called up. A moment more, and he was descending the hill, from the summit of which he had looked back, to follow the trail of his Indian friends—a moment more, and he had left his home in the desert for ever.

In less than five weeks from that time, he and his waggon-load of goods were safe, thanks to the Ottoo Indians, at a fur-trading station on the Missouri river; and he was eating good bread again, and drinking whisky-punch in the society of white men.

The particulars of this fearful narrative of suffering and peril have been abridged from an episode in Mr. Möllhausen's own record of his travelling adventures in North America during a second visit to that part of the world, when he was in the employment of the United States Government. The book (published in London by Messrs. LONGMAN and Co.) is written with great modesty and good sense; and contains some of the most curious revelations of manners and customs among the North American Indians which have yet been offered to the public. The author's experiences among the friendly Ottoes who rescued him may be singled out as especially interesting, or, more properly (from the singular nature of his position, at that period of his travels) as something quite unique.

First published in *All The Year Round*, 7 May 1859 vol. I pp. 44-48

Based on the book *Diary of a Journey from the Mississippi to the Coasts of the Pacific with a US Government Expedition*, trans. Mrs Percy Sinnett, Longman, London 1858.

four shillings of poor's rate against as many pence contributed by those who drive their labourers into the Norwich lanes, and throw the burdens of their occasional distress and sickness on the Norwich rates. Yet they take from the town all that can be taken. They thrive mainly by reason of the town, which opens to their corn and beef and milk an ample market. I say, sir," my friend continued, perhaps fancying himself in the House of Commons, "that the root of a thousand griefs that may be readily destroyed is to be found in this question of the inequality of rating for the relief of the poor. I do not wish to see any great national system under central government. But I am sure that men of the same county could maintain for this purpose of rating some machinery within their own control for the establishing of uniform assessment. The general issue of that would be, that, instead of a rate of fourpence, sixpence, or a shilling charged upon the rich, and of three, four, or eight shillings charged upon the poor, there would be an equal rate of eighteenpence, or two shillings."

"Oh, if you please, sir, will you come and speak to Thomas, sir? He's had a letter." So said a bright little parlour-maid, suddenly opening the study door.

"A letter! Well, what then?"

"He's crying, sir; I wasn't to come and tell you; but I ought." The little maid was energetic

has been suddenly forced into the full bloom of all his hopes. Susie is being petted by my friends' domestics, and is commonly supposed to be in training for the place of parlour-maid, which is expected in a few months to become vacant.

It is in the power of a good man to make this or that household happy. It is the higher privilege of a good law to increase happiness throughout a nation. Many a labourer who now comes from afar, already weary, to his work, many a Lazarus, half-fed by the pauperised community which yet yields up no small share of its bread to his support, will find rest, comfort, and hope in an act of justice that has yet to be accomplished. Call it an act for the more even distribution of the burden of the poor-rate and the consequent suppression of the cruelties arising from the law of Settlement and Poor Removal.

THE CRUSOE OF THE SNOWY DESERT.

LATE in the autumn of the year eighteen hundred and fifty-one, Mr. Baldwin Möllhausen, a Prussian traveller, pursuing his investigations in Northern America, had occasion to make a return journey across the Rocky Mountains to the Missouri. He started with one companion only, and with three horses and a mule, for riding and for carrying the baggage.

Annotation on vol. I p.44 of *All The Year Round* annotated set

some other coincidence might at any moment connect me, in his hearing, with my name. For this reason, I resolved to alight as soon as we touched the town, and put myself out of his hearing. This device I executed successfully. My little portmanteau was in the boot under my feet; I had but to turn a hinge to get it out; I threw it down before me, got down after it, and was left at the first lamp on the first stones of the town pavement. As to the convicts, they went their way with the coach, and I knew at what point they would be spirited off to the river. In my fancy, I saw the boat with its convict crew waiting for them at the slime-washed stairs,—again heard the gruff "Give way, you!" like an order to dogs—again saw the wicked Noah's Ark lying out in the black water.

I could not have said what I was afraid of, for my fear was altogether undefined and vague, but there was great fear upon me. As I walked on to the hotel, I felt that a dread, much exceeding the mere apprehension of a painful or disagreeable

or civilised man, who would have told me that Pumblechook was my earliest patron and the founder of my fortunes.

MANAGERS AND MUSIC-HALLS.

"WHEN they *do* agree on the stage, their unanimity is wonderful."

The managers of the London theatres have lately gathered together in a body, and have offered to the observation of the public a practical commentary on Sheridan's admirable text. On this occasion, the motive for unanimous agreement among these gentlemen has been furnished by a certain entertainment at the Canterbury Music-Hall, London, which bears a suspiciously close resemblance to the representation of a pantomime. Any performance of this sort—if it takes place out of a theatre—or any performance at all which involves the interchange of dialogue between actors (even when they are only two in number) is viewed by the whole body of the London managers as a dan-

Annotation on vol. IV p.558 of *All The Year Round* annotated set

Probably, it took about a dozen drowned men to fit him out completely; and that may have been the reason why the different articles of his dress were in various stages of decay.

We remained at the public-house until the tide turned, and then Magwitch was carried down to the galley and put on board. Herbert and Startop were to get to London by land, as soon as they could. We had a doleful parting, and when I took my place by Magwitch's side, I felt that that was my place henceforth while he lived.

For now, my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted wounded shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to be my benefactor, and who had felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously, towards me with great constancy through a series of years. I only saw in him a much better man than I had been to Joe.

His breathing became more difficult and painful as the night drew on, and often he could not repress a groan. I tried to rest him on the arm I could use, in any easy position; but it was dreadful to think that I could not be sorry at heart for his being badly hurt, since it was unquestionably best that he should die. That there were, still living, people enough who were able and willing to identify him, I could not doubt. That he would be leniently treated, I could not hope. He who had been presented in the worst light at his trial, who had since broken prison and been tried again, who had returned from transportation under a life sentence, and who had occasioned the death of the man who was the cause of his arrest.

As we returned towards the setting sun we had yesterday left behind us, and as the stream of our hopes seemed all running back, I told him how grieved I was to think that he had come home for my sake.

"Dear boy," he answered, "I'm quite content to take my chance. I've seen my boy, and he can be a gentleman without me."

No. I had thought about that, while we had been there side by side. No. Apart from any inclinations of my own, I understand Wemmick's hint now. I foresaw that, being convicted, his possessions would be forfeited to the Crown.

"Lookee here, dear boy," said he. "It's best as a gentleman should not be known to belong to me now. Only come to see me as if you come by chance alonger Wemmick. Sit where I can see you when I am sworn to, for the last o' many times, and I don't ask no more."

"I will never stir from your side," said I, "when I am suffered to be near you. Please God, I will be as true to you, as you have been to me!"

I felt his hand tremble as it held mine, and he turned his face away as he lay in the bottom of the boat, and I heard that old sound in his throat—softened now, like all the rest of him. It was a good thing that he had touched this

point, for it put into my mind what I might not otherwise have thought of until too late: That he need never know how his hopes of enriching me had perished.

HEAR THE POSTMAN!

YES; hear him by all means. He has a grievance to complain of; he has borne his injuries with remarkable patience; he is a servant of the public, whose accurate performance of his duties is of daily and hourly importance to all of us; and he now asks us civilly for a five minutes' hearing. Let us grant his request. If we must drive somebody into a corner, don't let it be the postman, for he works hard, and we should all feel some interest in him.

What does he want? What we all want—a little more money.

How much does he get now? He begins at eighteen or nineteen shillings a week; he may rise in the course of years, if he is lucky, to twenty-six shillings a week; and, if he has not walked himself off his legs, or starved himself in trying to provide for his wife and children on his existing salary, he may make his fortune, when he is an old man, by getting thirty shillings a week. The promotions through which he derives these rates of increase, are regulated purely by seniority; so that he may have to wait—and is in many cases now hopelessly waiting—until hundreds of older men die or leave the service, before he can even get his six-and-twenty shillings. As for the thirty shillings which reward the venerable struggles of the patriarch-postman, that distant competence lies, in the vast majority of cases, altogether beyond his horizon—the less he wastes his present time in looking after it, the better.

So much for the past. Now, what does he want for the future?

He wants a scale of wages which begins at twenty-three shillings and ends at forty shillings a week. He will undertake to spend fifteen years of his life in delivering your letters, before he gets that maximum sum. And he asks, plainly and respectfully, what you think of his demand. Considering the serious responsibilities which you commit to his pair of hands every day of your life, is forty shillings a week too much for him, after he has served you honestly for fifteen years?

Before we answer the question, perhaps we ought to hear what the Authorities have to say to it? By all means. Don't let the postmen have it all their own way. Hear the Authorities.

"You are dissatisfied with your present wages, my man? Just so! Now, this is an official matter. You must memorialise. First, try the Controller of the Circulation Department. Secondly, if you are not satisfied with him, try the Postmaster-General. Thirdly, if you are not satisfied with the Postmaster-General—wait till you are; for, beyond him, you go no further. If you venture to say one word about your grievances in the hearing of the public who employ you; if your official senses leave you altogether;

N. White Collins

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Those are the last words of the Authorities, expressed through the medium of an official notice; which notice the letter-carriers provoked by calling a public meeting for the temperate discussion of their claims, on Friday evening, June the twenty-first, in this present year.

Surely it was rash to call a public meeting, in opposition to the wishes of the Controller of the Circulation and the other Authorities? It is certainly rash for men to rush into extremes of their own accord. But if men are *driven* into extremes, rashness seems to be scarcely the right epithet to apply to their conduct. For the last two years—to go back no further than to the period when these Post-office grievances first attracted public attention—for the last two years, these unfortunate Postmen have been memorialising; petitioning; praying for interviews with a courteous Postmaster-General; obtaining interviews, with the result of an affable reception and nothing else; getting acknowledgments of their memorials, and nothing else; getting advice to be quiet and behave themselves; *being* quiet and behaving themselves, and getting nothing by that either. After two years of useless praying and petitioning, and eating and digesting humble pie with resigned official stomachs, these exceptionally patient men show at last that they are mortal, and open their complaining lips faintly in the public hearing. If this is rashness, what is discretion? Will the Controller of the Circulation and the Postmaster-General be so kind as to tell us?

But (the Controller may say, and doubtless does say) the whole principle of the thing is wrong. These ignorant men don't understand even the rudiments of political economy. Here are we, the Authorities, with the public purse in our charge. In the name of political economy, what are we to do for the public

advantage? Buy service in the cheapest market, of course! Here, on the other hand, are a pack of postmen who want more wages. Preposterous! Hosts of unemployed young men—embryo letter-carriers, with the tendon Achilles powerfully developed, and immense pedestrian possibilities in the calves of their legs—are ready to snap at eighteen shillings a week, or less for the matter of that, if we will only give them postmen's work to do. What necessarily follows? The market rate for postmen is eighteen shillings (or less)—we give the market rate—and let the present postmen go, if they want more.

This is a strong argument? Uncommonly strong as long as we keep it in the lower regions; but let us take it up-stairs, and it becomes as rickety as an octogenarian postman, on thirty shillings a week, at the end of the day's deliveries. What is the market value of the heads of the Post-office departments? There are hundreds of disengaged gentlemen in this country (not including Irish gentlemen) with dormant administrative capacities, who would cheerfully undertake their work, at half their salary. Do we limit that salary to the lowest sum which those unemployed gentlemen would be willing to receive?

No: we wisely remember that Sir Rowland Hill and the heads of Post-office departments have qualifications which are too important to be rewarded according to such a preposterous principle of economy as this. The decision which settled the amount of their salaries (and which did not regulate them at a farthing too much) sprang, and sprang properly, from a due sense of their individual responsibilities, and a fit conviction of their individual capacity for dealing with them. Far beneath higher officials, intellectually and socially, as the letter-carrier may be, he may surely claim that *his* individual responsibilities, too, may be considered as part, and a very important part, of the question of his wages. We are purchasing the use of his honesty and his diligence, as well as the use of his legs. Granting that the necessary legs are to be sold cheaper elsewhere—are we sure of getting the necessary honesty and diligence thrown into the bargain as well? It is true that we can be sure of no man until we have tried him—but taking servants generally, in relation to their employers, what practical incentives to diligence, what practical safeguards against dishonesty, are we all really driven to rely on? A good character? Rogues get a good character every day. Promises and protestations? Hypocrites deal in them every hour of their lives. No; we take men in the mass; we accept humanity for what it generally is; and we rely (in default of better holding-ground) on good wages. The better rate of remuneration does, in the long run, secure the better order of man; and the better order of man is wanted to take care of our letters. The

cheapest-attainable-Sir Rowland Hill, would, we all know very well, be no bargain for us; and—when you come to number your letter-carriers by the hundred; when you reflect on the serious public interests which they represent; and when you remember that Temptation oftenest fights the winning battle, with Poverty for a backer—the cheapest-attainable-postman is no such certain bargain either.

More arguments pro and con. might easily be stated; but, in its present aspect, the question presses for settlement. It has advanced beyond the stage of mere wrangling, and has narrowed its immediate claims to one plain inquiry, plainly spoken out. Do the postmen ask too much? Remember what is socially as well as economically due to their labours and their position; remember, though they have waited two years, that they are not following the wretched example set them by other workmen with higher wages than they receive—remember that these men are pleading, and not striking—and then say, is a salary of twenty-three shillings a week to begin with, and forty shillings a week after fifteen years' service, more than public servants ought to have from the public purse? The Authorities won't answer the question. After patient waiting, the letter-carriers now beg to inquire if public opinion will. There, for the present, the matter rests.

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MANAGERS AND MUSIC-HALLS.

“WHEN they *do* agree on the stage, their unanimity is wonderful.”

The managers of the London theatres have lately gathered together in a body, and have offered to the observation of the public a practical commentary on Sheridan's admirable text. On this occasion, the motive for unanimous agreement among these gentlemen has been furnished by a certain entertainment at the Canterbury Music-Hall, London, which bears a suspiciously close resemblance to the representation of a pantomime. Any performance of this sort—if it takes place out of a theatre—or any performance at all which involves the interchange of dialogue between actors (even when they are only two in number) is viewed by the whole body of the London managers as a dangerous infringement on dramatic rights which they consider to have been acquired exclusively to themselves. They have accordingly come forward to restrain the proprietor of a music-hall within the strict letter of the license conceded to him, which is a license for music and dancing only—the plain object of the proceeding being to prevent all proprietors of all music-halls from amusing their audiences by means bearing any dramatic resemblance to those which are habitually employed by managers of theatres.

With the immediate judicial decision pronounced on this case, we have no present concern. It is, we believe, understood on both sides, that no one decision will be allowed to settle the dispute, and that further legal proceedings are already impending. Our purpose in referring to the subject in these pages is to ascertain what the fair interests are in relation to it, not of the managers only, but of the public at large. A very important question of dramatic Free Trade is involved in this dispute; and London audiences—comprising in these railroad times people from all parts of the kingdom—are directly concerned in the turn which may be taken by its final settlement.

A large proportion of our readers may be probably in need of some preliminary explanation on the subject of music-halls, and of the quality of the performances which are exhibited in them. These places of public entertainment may be roughly described as the growth of the last ten years, both in London and in the large towns throughout England. They are, for the most part, spacious rooms, attached to large public-houses, but having special entrance-passages of their own. The prices of admission are generally sixpence for one kind of place, and

a shilling for another. Both sexes (except, we believe, at Evans's supper-room in Covent-garden, where men only are admitted) are allowed the right of entry—there are female, as well as male performers at the entertainments—and the audience have the privilege of ordering what they please to eat or drink, and of smoking as well, at any period of the evening's amusements, from their beginning about seven o'clock to their end a little before twelve.

Of the kind of entertainment provided for the public, under these curious conditions, and of the behaviour of the audiences during the performance, we can speak, in some degree, from personal experience. Not very long since, we visited one of the largest and most notorious of these places of amusement—Weston's Music Hall, in Holborn—on a night when the attendance happened to be unusually large, and when the resources of the establishment for preserving order were necessarily subjected to the severest possible test.

The size of the Hall may be conjectured, when it is stated that on the night of our visit, the numbers of the audience reached fifteen hundred. With scarcely a dozen exceptions, this large assembly was accommodated with seats on the floor of the building, and in a gallery which ran round three sides of it. The room was brightly lighted; tastefully decorated with mural painting; and surprisingly well ventilated, considering that the obstacle of tobacco-smoke was added to the ordinary obstacles interposed by crowded human beings and blazing gas-light to check the circulation of fresh air. At one end of the hall was a highly-raised stage, with theatrical foot-lights, but with no theatrical scenery; and, on this stage (entering from the back) appeared, sometimes singly, sometimes together, the male and female performers of the night—all, with the exception of the comic singers, in evening dress. It is not easy to describe the variety of the entertainments. There was a clever nigger vocalist with a blackened face, and nimble feet at a jig. There was another comic singer, preserving his natural complexion—a slim inexhaustible man, who accompanied himself (if the expression may be allowed) by a St. Vitus's Dance of incessant jumping, continued throughout his song, until the jumps were counted by the thousand: the performer being as marvellously in possession of his fair mortal allowance of breath at the end of the exhibition as at the beginning. There was instrumental music played by a full band of wind instruments. There was a little orchestra, besides, for accompaniments; there was a young lady who sang "serio-comic" songs; there were ladies and gentlemen who sang sentimental songs; there was a real Chinaman, who tossed real knives about his head and face, and caught them in all sorts of dangerous positions with a frightful dexterity—and who

afterwards additionally delighted the audience by thanking them for their applause in the purest "Canton-English." Lastly, there was an operatic selection from the second act of "Lucia di Lammermoor," comprising not solo-singing only, but concerted music and choruses, and executed in a manner which (considering the resources at the disposal of the establishment) conferred the highest credit on the ladies and gentlemen concerned in the performance, and on the musical director who superintended it. These entertainments, and others equally harmless, succeeded each other at the shortest intervals, throughout the evening; the audience refreshing itself the while with all varieties of drinks, and the male part of it smoking also with the supremest comfort and composure. At the most crowded period of the performances not the slightest disorder was apparent in any part of the room. The people were quietly and civilly conducted to their places by clean and attentive waiters; the proprietor was always present overlooking the proceedings. Not a single case of drunkenness appeared anywhere; no riotous voices interrupted the music. The hearty applause which greeted all the entertainments, comic and serious, never degenerated into disturbance of any kind. Many colder audiences might be found in this metropolis—but an assembly more orderly and more decorous than the assembly at the Holborn Music-Hall we have never seen gathered together at any place of public entertainment in any part of London.

Such is our experience of one of these music-halls, which may be taken as a fair sample of the rest. Canterbury Hall, which happens just now to be the special object of prosecution by theatrical managers, is simply another large concert-room, with a raised stage—possessing, however, it is only fair to add, an attraction peculiar to itself, in the shape of a gallery of pictures. In other respects, it may be at once conceded that if portions of the performances at Canterbury Hall represent an infringement on assumed theatrical privileges, portions of the performance at the Holborn Hall fall within the same category. The pantomime entertainment at one place may be, to all technical intents and purposes, matched by the operatic entertainment at the other. Both are exhibited on a stage; both are illuminated by foot-lights; both involve the interchange of dramatic dialogue—spoken in one case, sung in the other. If the managers of our two operas contemplate asserting their interests, as the managers of the other theatres have done, the performance from Lucia di Lammermoor, in Holborn, is as open to attack as the performance of pantomime which is the subject of complaint against Canterbury Hall. With scenery or without it, with costume or without it, the grand dramatic situation in Donizetti's opera, interpreted by solo singers, chorus, and orchestra, is a dramatic performance, and carries the

vocalists as well as the audience away with it. Our own ears informed us, on the evening of our experience, that Edgardo delivered his famous curse in trousers, as vigorously as if he had worn the boots of the period. The Lucia of the night could not have sung the lovely music of her part with greater earnestness and emphasis, if her father's halls had opened behind her, in immeasurable vista, on a piece of painted canvas—and Colonel Ashton was as pitiless a gentleman in an unimpeachable dress coat, as if he had worn the most outrageous parody on Highland costume which the stage wardrobes of operatic France or Italy could produce. If it simplifies the question now at issue—and it does surely, so far as the public discussion of the subject is concerned?—to confess at once that some of the entertainments at music-halls do in some degree trench on the ground already occupied by entertainments at theatres, we make the acknowledgment without hesitation. Legal quibbling apart, the resemblance complained of, does partially exist; and is, in the present state of the laws which regulate such matters, open to attack. Granting all this, however, one plain inquiry, so far as the public are concerned, still remains to be answered: Are the managers morally justified in claiming for themselves a monopoly in dramatic entertainment, and in proceeding against the proprietors of music-halls accordingly?

In their present situation, as we understand it, the managers have two grievances which they all complain of alike. The first of those grievances is, that theatres and music-halls are not impartially submitted to the same conditions of State control. The theatres are under the direction of the Lord Chamberlain; the music-halls are under the direction of an act of Parliament of George the Second, and the licensing magistrates. The Lord Chamberlain, acting as the official victim of old precedents, shuts up the theatres under his jurisdiction in Passion Week; and arbitrarily throws out of employment for that period, not the actors only, but thousands of poor people who live by ministering to the obscure necessities of the stage. On the other hand, the licensing magistrates, having no old precedents to fetter them, allow the music-halls to open their doors as freely in Passion Week as at any other time—the practical result being, that musical and dramatic performances, *with* smoking and drinking, are officially permitted, at exactly that period of the year when musical and dramatic performances *without* smoking and drinking, are officially prohibited. The absurdity and injustice of this proceeding are too manifest for comment. If it is wrong to allow any public amusements in Passion Week, shut the music-halls—if it is right, open the theatres. So far as this really serious grievance is concerned, our sympathies are heartily with the managers. Instead of gaining any advantage by

being placed under the courtly authority of the Lord Chamberlain, they are actually oppressed, in this particular, by a gross injustice; and they deserve all the help we can give them in subjecting that injustice to public exposure and public attack.

But the second grievance—which these gentlemen are now endeavouring to assert—the grievance which practically declares that they object to all dramatic competition, out of their own especial circle, is so preposterous in itself, and is so utterly opposed to the public spirit of the time, that we reject all belief in it, on grounds of the plainest common sense. The great social law of this age and this nation, is the law of competition. Why are managers of theatres not to submit to it, as well as other people? Some of these gentlemen, in all probability, occasionally see a penny daily paper. What would they have thought, if the proprietors of *The Times*, of *The Daily News*, and of the other morning journals, previously established, and selling at a higher price, had all met together, on the starting of penny papers, and had claimed protection from the public authorities, on the ground that cheap competition in the matter of purveying daily intelligence was an attack on their personal interests? Why, the very pastrycooks, who once had the monopoly of sixpenny ices, knew better than to make a public outcry on the establishment of the penny ice-shops! Nay, the predecessors of the managers themselves, not only recognised but asserted the privilege of free competition in a free country. Whose voices were raised loudest against dramatic monopoly, in the time of the two patent theatres? The voices of the proprietors of minor theatres, who then occupied a position towards Covent Garden and Drury Lane, in many respects similar to the position which the music-halls now occupy towards all the theatres in London. Here is the elder generation of managers shouting, on one side, for Free Trade—and there is the younger generation petitioning, on the other, for Protection! Was there ever such an anomaly? Who is to justify or explain it?

If there had been no other and better reason to restrain the managers from coming forward to assert an obsolete protectionist principle (under cover of asserting a strict interpretation of the law), surely the consideration of mere expediency might well have hindered them. *We* know that these gentlemen are acting on a strong conviction, however lamentably mistaken they may be. But the public has no time to draw fine distinctions: what will the public think of the attempted suppression of the pantomimic entertainment in Canterbury Hall, at the suit of the London managers? Will it not be said—”Here are several eminent gentlemen, occupying the highest places in their profession, and

administering the resources of our greatest theatrical establishments, all incomprehensibly jealous of the performances of a tavern-concert-room!” Such an imputation would, no doubt, be justly repudiated by the managers; but what plain inference is the world outside the green-room to draw from facts as they stand at present? Perhaps there is one other legitimate conclusion, which has certainly occurred to ourselves, and which the report of the trial in the newspaper may justify. When we saw the deservedly respected name of Mr. Benjamin Webster—who has done more (at the New Adelphi Theatre) to promote the public convenience than any other manager of his time—set up as the name of the plaintiff in a case which had for its ultimate object an interference with the public amusement, we certainly did consider that the spectacle of the wrong man in the wrong place had been somewhat inconsiderately offered to popular contemplation. And, let it be added, we were only the more confirmed in this view, when we remembered that the manager who had been selected to express, on behalf of his brethren, a deep-seated distrust of the rivalry of music-halls, was also the very manager whose theatre has been literally besieged by the public for the last hundred and fifty nights, and is likely to be besieged in the future for a hundred and fifty more. Surely it was a grave error to choose such a prosperous proprietor as Mr. Webster—a man who has shown a determination, to advance with the time—to point the protectionist moral and adorn the managerial tale!

To speak seriously, in conclusion, the managers have taken a false step. They have placed themselves in a persecuting as well as a prosecuting position; and they are most unwisely attempting to dispute a principle which the public opinion of the age has long since regarded as settled. We earnestly recommend them to reconsider their course of action—in their own interests. The hostile point of view from which they now regard the music-halls is short-sighted in the extreme. To return to our previous illustration. It is notorious that the cheap newspapers, instead of disputing the public encouragement with the newspapers at a higher price, have raised up an audience for themselves. It is notorious that the library circulation of good novels has rather increased than diminished, since the time when opposition novels have stirred the waters in the world of fiction, by pouring regularly from the press in cheap instalments at a penny a week. On the same principle, the music-halls have unquestionably raised up *their* new public; and, in doing so, will indirectly help to improve the prospects of the theatres, by increasing the number of people who look to public amusements as the occupation of their evening. If the managers don't see this—if they don't see that a per-centage of the music-hall audience (not a very large one probably,

but still a per-centage) is, in the ordinary course of things, certain to drift into theatres from a natural human love of change—they must at least admit that they already possess, in undisturbed monopoly, immense dramatic advantages over those other caterers for the public amusement, who are following them at a respectful distance. They have the use of means and appliances which no music-hall can possibly command, without being knocked down and built up again for the purpose. They have actors and actresses who stand, in a personal as well as in a pecuniary sense, out of music-hall reach. They have relations with English literature which no music-hall possesses, or dreams of possessing; and they have a refined, intelligent, and wealthy public to appeal to, from which the music-halls are separated by the great social gulf which we all know there is no crossing. Here, without prosecutions, disputes, and vexatiously strict interpretations of the letter of the law, is vantage-ground enough for any theatre which is properly administered; vantage-ground which the fiercest music-hall rivalry cannot cut away.

As for the public interest in this question, the discussion of which we have modestly left to the last, the direction that it takes is so obvious as hardly to need pointing out. The more competition there is, the more certainly the public will be the gainers. Let the spur of the music-halls—if any such spur there be—stimulate the theatres to higher and higher exertions by all manner of means: the drama will be the better for it; the actors will study their art the more for it; the audiences will be the larger for it; the managers will be the richer for it. The success of *The Colleen Bawn*, at the Adelphi; the success of that excellent artist Mr. Fechter, at the Princess's; and the success of the admirable pantomime at Drury Lane; all three achieved in the same theatrical year, are facts to form an opinion on; facts which justify the conclusion that a great dramatic attraction is as much above all small rivalries in our day, as ever it was in that golden theatrical age when music-halls were not heard of in the land! We trust the managers may yet be induced to reconsider the motives on which they have too hastily acted. We trust they may yet see that it is their interest, as we are sure it is always their inclination, to follow the old proverbial rule which enjoins us all to Live and let live.

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