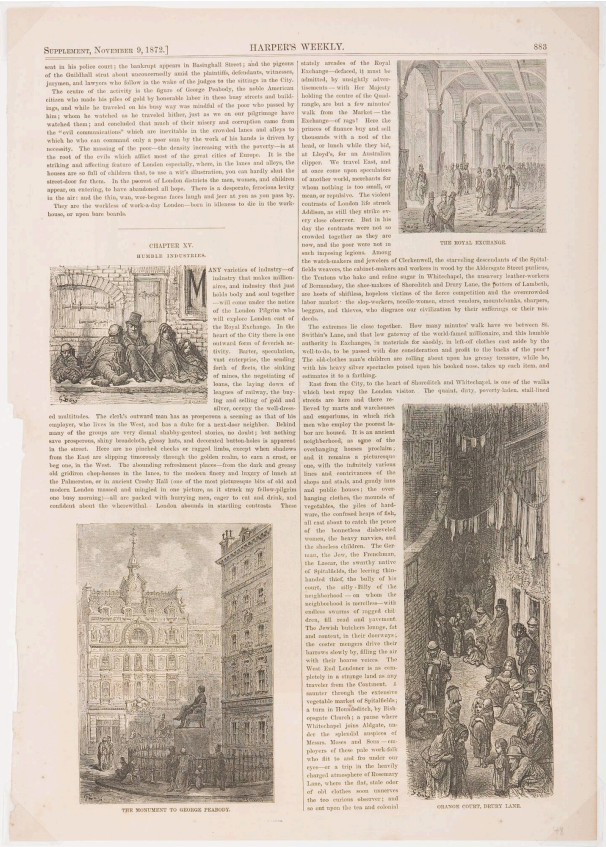
Basic Detail Report



SUPPLEMENT, NOVEMBER 9, 1872.] HARPER'S WEEKLY. 883

seat in his police court; the bankrupt appears in Basinghall Street; and the pigeons of the Guildhall street about unceremonily amid the plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses, jurymen, and lawyers who follow in the wake of the judges to the sittings in the City.

The centre of the activity is the figure of George Peabody, the noble American citizen who made his piles of gold by honorable labor in these busy streets and buildings, and while he traveled on his busy way was mindful of the poor who passed by him; when he watched as he traveled hither, just as we on our pilgrimage have watched them; and concluded that much of their misery and corruption came from the "evil communications" which are inevitable in the crowded lanes and alleys to which he who can command only a poor sum by the work of his hands is driven by necessity. The meeting of the poor—the density increasing with the poverty—is at the root of the evils which afflict most of the great cities of Europe. It is the striking and affecting feature of London especially, where, in the lanes and alleys, the houses are so full of children that, to use a wit's illustration, you can hardly shut the street-door for them. In the poorest of London districts the men, women, and children appear, on entering, to have abandoned all hope. There is a desperate, ferocious levity in the air: and the thin, wan, woe-begone faces laugh and jeer at you as you pass by.

They are the workless of work-a-day London—born in idleness to die in the workhouse, or upon bare boards.

CHAPTER XV.

HUMBLE INDUSTRIES.

MANY varieties of industry—of industry that makes millionaires, and industry that just holds body and soul together—will come under the notice of the London Pilgrim who will explore London east of the Royal Exchange. In the heart of the City there is one outward form of feverish activity. Barter, speculation, vast enterprise, the sending forth of fleets, the sinking of mines, the negotiating of loans, the laying down of leagues of railway, the buying and selling of gold and silver, occupy the well-dressed multitudes. The clerk's outward man has as prosperous a seeming as that of his employer, who lives in the West, and has a duke for a next-door neighbor. Behind many of the groups are very dismal shabby-genteel stories, no doubt; but nothing save prosperous, shiny broadcloth, glossy hats, and decorated button-holes is apparent in the street. Here are no pinched cheeks or ragged limbs, except when shadows from the East are slipping timorously through the golden realm, to earn a crust, or beg one, in the West. The abounding refreshment places—from the dark and grimy old grotesque chop-houses in the lanes, to the modern finery and luxury of lunch at the Palmerston, or in ancient Crosby Hall (one of the most picturesque bits of old and modern London massed and mingled in one picture, as it struck my fellow-pilgrim one busy morning)—all are packed with hurrying men, eager to eat and drink, and confident about the wherewithal. London abounds in startling contrasts. These stately arcades of the Royal Exchange—defaced, it must be admitted, by unsightly advertisements—with Her Majesty holding the centre of the Quadrangle, are but a few minutes' walk from the Market—the Exchange—of rags! Here the princes of finance buy and sell thousands with a nod of the head, or lunch while they bid, at Lloyd's, for an Australian clipper. We travel East, and at once come upon speculators of another world, merchants for whom nothing is too small, or mean, or repulsive. The violent contrasts of London life struck Addison, as still they strike every close observer. But in his day the contrasts were not so crowded together as they are now, and the poor were not in such imposing legions. Among the watch-makers and jewelers of Clerkenwell, the starveling descendants of the Spitalfields weavers, the cabinet-makers and workers in wood by the Aldersgate Street purlieus, the Teutons who bake and refine sugar in Whitechapel, the unsavory leather-workers of Bermondsey, the shoe-makers of Shoreditch and Drury Lane, the brewers of Lambeth, are hosts of shiftless, hopeless victims of the fierce competition and the overcrowded labor market: the slop-workers, needle-women, street vendors, mountebanks, sharpers, beggars, and thieves, who disgrace our civilization by their sufferings or their misdeeds.

The extremes lie close together. How many minutes' walk have we between St. Swithin's Lane, and that low gateway of the world-famed millionaire, and this humble authority in Exchanges, in materials for sandy, in left-off clothes cast aside by the well-to-do, to be passed with due consideration and profit to the backs of the poor? The old-clothes man's children are rolling about upon his greasy treasures, while he, with his heavy silver spectacles poised upon his hooked nose, takes up each item, and estimates it to a farthing.

East from the City, to the heart of Shoreditch and Whitechapel, is one of the walks which best repay the London visitor. The quaint, dirty, poverty-laden, stall-lined streets are here and there relieved by marts and warehouses and emporiums, in which rich men who employ the poorest labor are housed. It is an ancient neighborhood, an agent of the overhanging houses proclaim; and it remains a picturesque one, with the infinitely various lines and contrivances of the shops and stalls and greedy inns and public houses; the overhanging clothes, the mounds of vegetables, the piles of hardware, the confused heaps of fish, all cast about to catch the prices of the homeless disheveled women, the heavy narrow, and the shoeless children. The German, the Jew, the Frenchman, the Lascar, the swarthy native of Spitalfields, the leering thin-handed thief, the bully of his court, the silly Billy of the neighborhood—on whom the neighborhood is merciless—with endless swarms of ragged children, fill road and pavement. The Jewish butchers lounge, fat and content, in their doorways; the coster mongers drive their barrows slowly by, filling the air with their hoarse voices. The West End Londoner is as completely in a strange land as any traveler from the Continent. A saunter through the extensive vegetable market of Spitalfields, a turn in Hanbury Street, by Christ Church; a pause where Whitechapel joins Aldgate, under the splendid auspices of Messrs. Moses and Sons—employers of those pale work-girls who flit in and fro under our eyes—or a trip in the heavily charged atmosphere of Rosemary Lane, where the flat, stale odor of old clothes seem conserves the too curious observer; and so out upon the tea and colonial

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

THE MONUMENT TO GEORGE PEABODY.

ORANGE COURT, DRURY LANE.

No title, from "London: A Pilgrimage"

Date

November 9, 1872

Primary Maker

Gustave Doré

Medium

Electrotype from wood engraving and text on paper

Dimensions

Sheet: 15 1/2 × 11 in. (39.4 × 27.9 cm) Image (a): 2 5/8 × 2 7/8 in. (6.7 × 7.3 cm) Image (b): 3 1/4 × 2 3/4 in. (8.3 × 7 cm) Image (c): 5 1/4 × 3 5/8 in. (13.3 × 9.2 cm) Image (d): 7 3/8 × 2 3/4 in. (18.7 × 7 cm)

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