

'PUNCH' AND THE GREAT EXHIBITION

PUNCH and the GREAT EXHIBITION

by

HARRY J. YOUNG, M.A. (St. Andrews)

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AUTHOR: Harry John Young, M.A. (University of St. Andrews)

SUPERVISOR: Professor G. Petrie

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INTRODUCTION

In comparatively recent years, the work of J.H. Buckley and Walter E. Houghton, for example, has altered our outlook on the Victorian period generally. The attitude of historians such as Lytton Strachey is no longer acceptable; one cannot regard the sixty-three years of Victoria's reign as a uniform period of stuffed-shirts, prudery and an inordinate and pathological love of mourning clothes.

It is now customary to see a considerable development within the period, from the years immediately after the first Reform Bill in 1832, through the great social changes of the mid-century, to the later Victorian period where at least some of the "Victorian" clichés still retain some authenticity.

In the field of literature it is no longer possible to raise a laugh, as Strachey suggested, by the mere mention of Tennyson's name. The works of the Laureate that pleased his contemporaries may still be laughed at, but the modern Tennyson scholar sees more in "The Lady of Shallott", "Mariana", or "Ulysses" than his Victorian counterpart, who adored "Enoch Arden" or "The Miller's Daughter". Hillis Miller and Dorothy Van Ghent have revealed a deeper psychological perception in Dickens, and the image of the slap-happy storyteller is losing ground. While Pickwick Papers is still superbly funny, intelligent readers turn to Great Expectations or Little Dorrit to find Dickens the thoughtful artist.

The Victorian period, then, has been, as it were, opened up and the way to a more intimate knowledge of the Victorians and their way of life has been made clear. It will be the purpose of this investigation to make use of what has already been done and penetrate further into the thoughts, and ideas, and feelings of some Victorians. This investigation will be limited to the year 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, and to the magazine Punch.

The study of Punch provides a key to the culture of the period because it appeared frequently enough to be involved with the intimacies of day to day living but not so frequently as to be bogged down in incomprehensible detail. This thesis then will examine briefly the status and influence of the magazine and, in more detail, the ideals and beliefs for which it stood, from the year of its foundation - 1841 - to the year of the Great Exhibition - 1851.

The reasons for such limitations are by no means arbitrary. The character and aims of Punch are such that the magazine both reveals and represents the ideas and feelings of the middle-class gentleman with literary interests, slightly Radical political interests, and a real concern for his fellow-man. While the Great Exhibition - and Punch's coverage of it - provides a very convenient focal point for examining the culture of the time.

The point must be made however, that this study is not a

study of Victorian ideas as such. The Victorian concept of Progress or Victorian esthetics, for example, can only be dealt with to the extent that Punch deals with them. A thesis of this sort could not hope to cover such a vast amount of material, and in any case, good, general studies of the period are available.

The real value of this investigation is two-fold. First of all it reveals the extent to which Punch represents the viewpoint of the average, thinking, middle-class Englishman. Secondly, this thesis shows that Punch is a valuable part of the culture and background from which the fiction of the period derives. In other words, Punch is part of the context in which Dickens or Thackeray wrote.

Many of the key figures involved with Punch were also friends of Dickens - Thackeray, Jerrold, Lemon, Paxton, Leech. Through Dickens, the Punch men knew Bulwer-Lytton, Macready, Hablot K. Browne (Phiz), Maclise, Wilkie Collins and even, from the older generation of literati, Walter Savage Landor and Leigh Hunt. Thus Punch is in close contact with the literature of the time and many of Punch's subjects, ideas or themes, can be found in, for example, Dickens.

Both Dickens and Punch are anti-American; and largely for the same reasons. They felt that the Americans were brash and hypocritical in allowing slavery to continue in the "Land of the Free". In Great Expectations, Dickens points out that

society is an organic whole, while in some of the earlier novels, he suggests, though he changes his opinion in the later novels, that social problems of poverty and crime may be solved by the benevolence and charity of individuals such as Pickwick, Brownlow or the Cherryble brothers. Punch feels the same way. It believes that social classes must realise their inter-dependence, and live together in brotherhood. But Punch is more patently ambivalent than Dickens in that it feels compassion for the working-classes, but still hopes that they will somehow turn into middle-class gentlemen one day.

Many themes in Bleak House can also be found in Punch. The obvious need for Chancery Reform appears in Leech's "Shipwrecked Ministers" cartoon. Punch complains of the pollution of London's parks and rivers, while Dickens describes the horror of Tom-all-Alone's spreading through the city. Even minor points, such as the institution of a police force, catch the interest of the thinking public as well as that of the artist. Punch is amused by the "1800 police eyes" which will keep watch over the Crystal Palace, while Dickens is fascinated by a new 'type' - the detective. Both Dickens and Mr. Punch, as Englishmen, are disturbed at the authority of the police to pry into the castle of an Englishman's home, but at the same time they are grateful for the law and order that makes England superior to France. So Punch as a source of material for the writers of the time, becomes a valuable key to understanding the context in which

they wrote.

What is also of the greatest importance is that Punch is not objective. It is possible to learn from the Times or the Illustrated London News, exactly what happened where and why, but Mr. Punch, as a basically conservative but honest humanitarian, provides his readers with an opinion or a reaction to events. Punch is not concerned with detailed, factual reporting, but rather with how people felt about what happened. And the emotional view of Mr. Punch is that of the intelligent English gentleman. As Ruskin expressed it in his essay on "The Art of England":

He Mr. Punch is a polite Whig, with a sentimental respect for the Crown, and a practical respect for property. He...violently and virulently castigates assault upon property, in any kind, and holds up for the general idea of perfection, to be aimed at by all the children of heaven and earth, the British Hunting Squire, the British Colonel, and the British Sailor.

Mr. Punch then, is indubitably a member of the Establishment, but one whose sympathies are wide-ranging, and whose honesty is unquestionable.

It is therefore, the purpose of this thesis to examine Punch's status and influence more closely. By focussing on the Great Exhibition, it will be possible to arrive at some conclusions about how Punch, and the body of opinion which it represented, reacted to some of the major events and issues of 1851.

CHAPTER 1

In order to appreciate Punch's unique contribution to mid-Victorian journalism, and see its value as a key to understanding some of the major social and political issues of the period, it will be necessary to discuss, in this chapter, how Punch came into being in 1841 and how it developed in its first ten years. The founding and early history of Punch has been studied and written about many times, and for this reason, as well as that of the limited space and scope of this thesis, only a brief summary can be given here. The main sources of Punch's history are R.G.G. Price's A History of "Punch" and M.H. Spielmann's The History of "Punch" though "The True Story of Punch" by Joseph Hatton, which appeared serially in London Society (1875-6), is also useful and interesting.

Since Punch has lasted for such a long time--nearly 130 years--and since it became very quickly, and still is, something of a national institution, much prestige attaches to the founders. Consequently there has been considerable controversy over who actually conceived the idea of the magazine and made the idea a reality. Precisely who did what is not important here but those who were involved right at the beginning of Punch were Douglas Jerrold, Thackeray, Henry Mayhew, Mark Lemon, Stirling Coyne, Joseph Last and Ebenezer Landells.

There were any number of comic papers in 1841. Many were

founded, ran for a few issues, some for a few years, and then folded: often they were the weapons of factions and parties: they were scurrilous, abusive and hot-tempered, and were very frequently indecent. Many of the Punch crew had had some experience with comic papers. Jerrold had started Punch in London in 1832 but it did not last. In 1835, Jerrold, Mayhew and Thackeray discussed a London imitation of Philipon's Charivari, which was successful in Paris. Figaro in London was started by Gilbert Abbot a Beckett in 1831; Seymour, the original illustrator of Pickwick Papers drew for it and Mayhew succeeded a Beckett as proprietor; but it too failed.

According to Richard Price's History of Punch, Landells, the engraver, Last, the printer and Henry Mayhew, best-known now for his London Labour and the London Poor published in 1851, met late in 1840 or early in 1841 to discuss yet another comic weekly. Somehow or other, Punch came out of this meeting. Lemon became involved through his connection with Mayhew. Lemon's mother kept an inn where Lemon and other young journalists met and shared their talents and energies. Last and Landells held one third share each while the joint editors, Stirling Coyne, Mark Lemon and Henry Mayhew held the remaining third. The first issue reached the public on July 17, 1841.

There were, however, financial difficulties and by Christmas 1842, Punch had been turned over to Bradbury and Evans who became the proprietors as well as the printers. Under the new

management, Lemon became sole editor, Stirling Coyne was dismissed for plagiarism, and Mayhew gradually lost interest. The name Punch derived from a number of associations - the puppet character, Jerrold's Punch in London, and the beverage. One of Punch's earliest puns involved its editor - there can be no Punch without a Lemon in it. Much of Punch's success was due to Lemon's editorship. The prospectus for the magazine is written in Lemon's handwriting though both Joseph Hatton and Price suggest that the wording was Mayhew's. At any rate, Punch was to be "A new work of wit and whim embellished with cut and caricatures to be called Punch or The London Charivari...This Guffawgraph is intended to form a refuge for destitute wit - an asylum for the thousands of orphan jokes."¹ This was Lemon's vision of Punch, and the early issues are full of rather tortuous puns.

Though Lemon did not write a great deal for Punch, he was very well-known as a dramatist; he wrote in the region of sixty plays, some of which were performed by the Dickens circle as an outlet for high spirits and sometimes to raise money for charitable purposes. He published several novels, joke books, and books of fairy tales as well as contributing to Dickens' two journals, Household Words and Once a Week, the

¹Joseph P. Hatton, "The True Story of Punch", London Society, XLVIII (July-December, 1875), p. 53

Illustrated London News, and the London Journal, which he also edited for a short while. As the chairman of the Punch table he had a reputation for conviviality and good humor, though he could also be a sharp and ruthless businessman. He was generally respected, though sometimes slighted for his Jewish publican background by the "social climbers" of Punch--Jerrold, Thackeray and Tom Taylor. Of his editorship, the Athenaeum said he had created something new in journalism² and during his editorship, (1841-70), Punch became a "social power" and established a reputation for being clean, good-natured and honest.

The star of the Punch table, however, was Douglas Jerrold. Like Lemon and Dickens, he was devoted to theatre but his commercial success as a professional dramatist far exceeded that of Lemon. Indeed, according to his grandson, Jerrold was more popular, generally speaking, in 1851 than Dickens. He came of a theatrical family and as a baby was carried on stage by Edmund Kean. As a midshipman, he served under Jane Austen's brother. He was a prolific journalist, possessed a great gift for satire, and, the pre-requisite for Punch men, was extremely sociable. It was Jerrold who was responsible for the early political satire in Punch, and he, with Thackeray, aimed to raise Punch from the level of frivolous puns and ordinary comic magazines

²Lemon's obituary, Athenaeum (May 28, 1870) pp. 708-9

to that of a periodical with some dignity and status. As Price points out there is a Churchillian quality in Jerrold's writing - "The wounds of the dead are the furrows in which living heroes grow their laurels" or "Earth is so kindly in Australia that, tickle her with a hoe and she laughs with a harvest."³

Probably Jerrold's most famous contribution to Punch was his series entitled "Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures" which appeared in 1845. This series of satirical sketches centres round a typical ignorant woman who tries to show off to her friends and get the best she can for her children. As well as being funny, the series points up the need for education for women as well as the universal follies of vanity or pride. Along with Thackeray's "The Snobs of England: by one of themselves" in 1846, the series greatly increased Punch's circulation.

Thackeray was of course the other great literary figure whose efforts on Punch's behalf raised the status and circulation of the magazine. Joseph Hatton, talking about the mission of Punch, quotes Thackeray :

May Punch laugh honestly, hit no foul blow, and tell the truth when at his very broadest grin - never forgetting that if Fun is good, Truth is still better, and Love best of all.⁴

³R.G.G. Price, A History of Punch, (London: Collins, 1957) p. 36

⁴Joseph Hatton, "The True Story of Punch", London Society XXX (1875) p. 562

Thackeray's first contribution to Punch appeared on June 18, 1842. It is called "The Legend of Jawbrahim-Heraudee" and is interesting for two main reasons. First of all it is literary satire of the sort that lifts Punch far above the level of comic journals and makes Punch unique among other "quality" periodicals in its range of forms and subjects. Secondly, the article exemplifies some of Thackeray's favorite techniques in writing for Punch. He uses an oriental setting and exploits the comicality of foreign names and expressions in a way similar to his articles on the Great Exhibition - namely "M. Gobemouche's Authentic Account of the Grand Exhibition" and "An Ingleez Family" - and his series on "Punch in the East". The literary satire of course looks forward to "Punch's Prize Novelists". For satirical purposes, the technique of the foreigner objectively taking account of English society is most useful and again is open to humorous treatment. This article is also typical not only of Punch's, but of England's attitude to Prince Albert in his first few years as consort, and the general lack of taste and cultivation of mediocrity at the Court. In the satire, Prince Albert Becomes Poof-Allee, Bulwer-Lytton becomes Bulwer-Khan and Wordsworth "The famous old dervish Wordsworth-el-Muddee (or of the lake)". Thackeray praises the Prince for his love of literature but satirises his pedantry and lack of originality. Poof Allee founded:

his greatest glory, like...Moncktoon-Milnes-Sahib, Rogers-Sam-Bahawder and other lords of the English Court, not so much on his possessions, his ancient race, or his personal beauty...as upon his talent for poetry.

But, Thackeray continues,

all great men have their weaknesses; and ...Poof-Allee had his. He wished to pass for a poet, and not having a spark of originality...nor able to string two verses together, would...repeat [only that which he already knew].

But, though laughed at, Albert was already recognized as "the Good" by his love of peace--a love which Punch shared.

He was not, like other sovereigns, proud of his powers in arms, fond of invading hostile countries, or, at any rate, of reviewing his troops when no hostile country was at hand.

But Thackeray's best and most famous contributions to Punch were "Miss Tickletoy's Lectures on English History" in 1842, the articles by "Our Fat Contributor" in 1844, "Punch in the East" in 1845, "The Snobs of England" in 1846-7, and his "Punch's Prize Novelists" in 1847.

Thackeray began his series on the "Snobs" with a short preamble on the relativity of snobbishness. An English social equal who, while eating, allows his knife to approach his mouth, is to be despised. But:

It is not snobbish of persons of rank of any other nation to employ their knife in the manner alluded to. I have seen Monte Piasco clean his trenches with his knife, and every Principe in company doing like-wise...I have seen...the Hereditary Princess Potztausend-Donnerwetter (that serenely beautiful woman!) use her knife in lieu of fork or spoon;

I have seen her almost swallow it, by Jove! ...And did I blench?...No! ... one of the truest passions that ever was inspired by woman was raised in this bosom by that lady...long may the knife carry food to those lips! the reddest and loveliest in the world!⁵

It is difficult not to give the impression that Punch was only Jerrold and Thackeray. There were of course a whole group of regular contributors to Punch, but what is important here is that it was those two who did most to make Punch the magazine of the intellectual middle-classes. Writers like Stirling Coyne, who was fired for plagiarism, and Albert Smith, whose humour tended towards vulgarity, found no place at the Punch table, while Lemon encouraged men of some social standing such as Percival Leigh, Tom Taylor and Shirley Brooks, who could work towards and sustain a high level of journalistic writing. In fact, Tom Taylor was a friend of Tennyson's at Cambridge and Professor of English Literature at the University of London before he joined the Punch staff. Shirley Brooks and Francis Burnand, later editors, were lawyers: Leech and Thackeray were contemporaries at the Charterhouse.

Although Lemon was sole editor, decisions such as the above, and general policies, were not his sole responsibility. Right from the founding of Punch it became general practice for the Punch staff to meet for dinner once a week to decide

⁵"Snobs of England", Punch X, (1846), p. 111

on and discuss the next week's issue. These dinners formed the central focus of the Punch "club" and were often the scenes of heated arguments. Henry Silver, one of the lesser-known writers, kept a diary in which he recorded discussion of general editorial policy as it was thrashed out. Apart from Lemon's and Mayhew's prospectus which aimed to make Punch honest and good-hearted, there was no fixed policy - it was worked out as problems arose.

Punch tended to be generally radical but was not consistently or rigidly so. Lemon argued that the system or the organization should be criticised rather than the individual and Punch nearly always took a firm stand on behalf of the under-dog against any kind of authoritarianism. Thus, Thackeray, in a supposed letter to O'Connell, the Irish demagogue, supports the need for the law and order that put O'Connell in prison and, at the same time, the justice of O'Connell's aims.

If you did not organise a conspiracy, and meditate a separation of this fair empire - if you did not create rage and hatred in the bosoms of your countrymen against us English - if you did not do.... all that the Jury found you guilty of doing - I am a Dutchman!

But if ever a man had an excuse for saying hard things, you had it: if ever a people had a cause to be angry, it is yours: if ever the winning party could afford to be generous, I think we might now.⁶

The week after this letter appeared, Leech's cartoon repre-

⁶"To Daniel O'Connell, Esq.", Punch VI, (1844), p. 248

sented Queen Victoria and the Russian Emperor conferring. Behind the head of the Tsar is a map of Poland; behind the Queen's, that of Ireland. The caption reads "Brother, brother, we're both in the wrong." Thackeray closes his letter with the kind of ambivalence that was so much a part of Punch, and with Punch's characteristic pride in being outspoken in defence of Truth.

Such are the words that I wish to whisper to you in your captivity, - words of reproof, and yet of consolation: of hope, and wisdom, and truth!

But it was Thomas Hood who made a much more eloquent plea for the common people and earned for Punch the reputation of champion of the oppressed. Hood's poem, "The Song of the Shirt" was published in the Christmas number of 1843. Hood had tried unsuccessfully to have the poem published elsewhere and in desperation sent it to Lemon with a note to the effect that if it was not printed, it should be dumped in the waste-paper basket. According to Price (p. 47), the staff unanimously advised Lemon against printing it "on the grounds that it was out of tune with the rest of the paper. He overruled them, and its appearance... gave a lift to Punch's circulation and repute that are (sic) still legendary."

The "Song" was that of a shirtmaker sitting in poverty and working herself to death.

With her fingers weary and worn,
 With her eyelids heavy and red,
 A woman sat in unwomanly rags
 Flying her needle and thread.
 Stitch, Stitch, Stitch!
 In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
 And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,
 She sang this song of a shirt.

Some members of the Punch staff were much more right-wing however. Leech, probably the most famous of Punch's illustrators, had a much more conventional outlook:-

Leech thinks the petty British shopkeeper the meanest creature in creation. Advantage of high birth is that a man has no need to cringe - can look men in the face, and has no fawning.⁷

But Horace Mayhew, the Diary confirms,

walks into the Aristocracy. Says reform is wanted. Percival Leigh says doubtful - no need to excite the country - wait till they ask for it. Shirley Brooks says, But Government right to legislate in advance, and not wait till Acts are clamoured for. ...Tom Taylor comes merely "to hear what you fellows say about the Reform Bill." Thinks people look to Punch and that Punch should take a decided course. Leigh and Lemon think we should stand by and see how the stream runs first...Splendid mill [fierce argument] between Ponny [Horace Mayhew] and Pater Evans [of Bradbury and Evans] and Leech. Ponny lets fly by saying Punch is standing still - used to take the lead but now it fears to do so. "Advancers!" Evans returns that times are altered, my dear Ponny; and Punch alters with the times... Nobody talks now [1859] about the trampled working man and the dignity of labour. Poor not crushed now as they were 15 years ago. Says Leech, I'm a man of extremely simple tastes - Give me my claret and my hunter and I ask not for more.⁸

⁷Henry Silver's Diary - 1859 - quoted by Price, p. 100
 Silver's Diary is in the office of Bradbury and Agnew, the present proprietors of Punch.

⁸Price, pp. 100-1

In spite of their diverse personalities, the Punch staff were able to maintain very happy relations as a group, and were unanimous about the need for Punch to keep a high standard of writing, to be humanitarian above all, and always to speak out for what it believed to be right.

Naturally the Punch staff and Punch itself were very happy with their own view of themselves; but contemporary periodicals and the general opinion of literary people reinforces this view. Amy Cruse substantiates this point in The Victorians and Their Books, where she attempts to give some account of how Punch was received. She tells the story of Frith, the painter, who was delighted with the first issue. When he returned to the bookseller's the next week he was told "Oh, I haven't taken it again, I don't believe there'll be no more numbers out." But he found another bookseller and by the time he himself was established, Punch had become "a part of the household" and "a joy to all its members."⁹

The magazine was read by Gladstone, Charlotte Bronte, Cannon Ainger and Coventry Patmore, though he disapproved of it. Politicians of course found themselves caricatured and ridiculed; but it became a matter of some prestige to be satirised in Punch. High Churchmen however were often savagely criticised and Punch was notoriously anti-Catholic. But even

⁹Amy Cruse, The Victorians and Their Books, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1935) p. 391

this was part of Punch's success. It was always confidently English. The character of Mr. Punch was that of a middle-class Englishman - ipso facto a gentleman - and in the early years of the magazine Jerrold had encouraged the use of the personal technique of having Mr. Punch do a good deal of the reporting and letter-writing. In this way, a kind of 'club' was created whereby the readers came to know Mr. Punch. Jerrold also used the technique of allusions to previous issues which meant that readers were "in" and non-readers "left out".

Amy Cruse gives a good account of how Punch was received by writers and included as part of the lives of the characters in their novels. Punch's attitude to the novelists, however, was varied. Naturally Punch was kind to Dickens, who was such a close friend of the staff, and to Thackeray. Of George Eliot's Mill on the Floes, Henry Silver says it is "dreary and immoral."¹⁰ He quotes Thackeray as saying that Tennyson is the greatest man of the age. Punch was not as kind however to Bulwer-Lytton and frequently made fun of him - as Thackeray did in his "Jawbrahim-Heraudee." Nonetheless, Punch's close association with Thackeray, Dickens and Bulwer-Lytton gave the magazine a certain authority and an air of familiarity with greatness that not only gave it added prestige but allowed Punch to take the tone of affable equality.

¹⁰Price, p. 101

In an article on the art of England,¹¹ Ruskin praises the satire of Punch as "well-intended and just." But though he speaks lightly of the magazine, in general, he is naturally more concerned with its artists and illustrations. The greatest artists were of course Leech and Tenniel by virtue of their "force of art and range of thought." Thus Ruskin does not separate the graphic art from the literary art, but saw that both combined to produce a unified effect. Lemon, initially, had not fully realised the importance of Punch's artists and in his relations with them tended to be rather off-hand. Later however, in the days of Leech, Tenniel and du Maurier, whom Ruskin thought greater than the two giants in "precision and boldness," Lemon could not fail to appreciate his artists or the high quality of their art. Ruskin sums it up:

The kind and vivid genius of John Leech, capable in its brightness of finding pretty jest in everything, but capable in its tenderness also of rejoicing in the beauty of everything, softened and illumined with its loving wit the entire scope of the English social scene; the graver power of Tenniel brought a steady tone and law of morality into the license of political contention; and finally the acute, highly trained, and accurately physiological observation of du Maurier, traced for us, to its true origin in vice or virtue, every order of expression in the mixed circle of metropolitan rank and wealth.¹²

¹¹John Ruskin, The Complete Works XIV (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1894) pp. 321 ff.

¹²Ruskin, p. 329

Punch's achievements or general status were not only appreciated by the public, or by an art critic like Ruskin. Both in England and America, Punch's influence and position were recognised and assured. As early as 1842, the Westminster Review began a series on comic weeklies, with a lengthy and detailed discussion of the serious value of Punch.¹³ The article is itself satirical but is heavier in tone than Punch itself. Large portions from the first two volumes of Punch are quoted to illustrate the wide range of Punch's interests. The Westminster concludes by citing four points to account for Punch's supremacy and excellence :

One, its moral superiority to the publications with a similar aim by which it was preceded. The "Satirist", "The Age", "The John Bull", have endeavoured to avail themselves of the weapons of wit and humour, but their best puns rarely rise above the level of obscene jests, and none such disgrace the columns of Punch. This is a favourable sign of the progress of opinion, and another is the decaying taste for blood and horror, and the desire for somewhat more healthful and intellectual means of pleasurable excitements than police reports, to which the popularity of Punch may be greatly attributed. We have noticed also with much satisfaction, the spirited execution of many of the wood-cuts; and perhaps the improvement in the art of wood-engraving...¹⁴

The North American tribute to Punch appeared in the Atlantic Monthly in 1858. The writer here enjoys imitating the rather

¹³"The Philosophy of Punch," Westminster Review XXXVIII (Oct., 1842) pp. 141-160

¹⁴Ibid, p. 160

facile humor of the early Punch - "To take Punch only for a clown is to mistake him egregiously"¹⁵ Broadly, however, what the article seeks to impress the reader with is the serious aim of the magazine :

Punch is a teacher and philanthropist, a lover of truth, a despiser of cant, an advocate of right, a hater of shows, - a hale, hearty, old gentleman whose notions are not dyspeptic croaking, but healthful opinions of good digestion, and who, though he wear motley and indulge in drolleries without measure, is full of sense and sensibility.

The article continues with a general tribute to the Punch staff and singles out Mark Lemon's capable editorship while referring to Leech as "the very Dickens of the Pencil." The writer is firmly convinced that "As an element in effective literature, a force in the cause of reform, the qualities Punch personifies have been and are of no slight service."¹⁶

So, at home and abroad, Punch was respected for its sincerity, its moral purpose, the high quality of its writing and illustrations, and its warm, good-natured humor. The ambition and determination of the Punch staff had brought the magazine the status of a national institution.

¹⁵"Punch" Atlantic Monthly XXI (Dec. 1858) p. 840

¹⁶Ibid, p. 849

CHAPTER 2

It has been observed that from 1841-51 Punch grew in status from being just another comic magazine, to a widely read and more widely known weekly institution. The hard work particularly of Jerrold and Thackeray in the early years had paid off and Punch had achieved a unique status and character. As early as 1847, Emerson could say :

Punch is equally an expression of English good-sense as the London Times. It is the comic version of the same sense. Many of its caricatures are equal to the best pamphlets, and will convey to the eye in an instant the popular view which was taken of each turn of public affairs. Its sketches are usually made by masterly hands, and sometimes with genius; the delight of every class becomes uniformly guided by that taste which is tyrannical in England. It is a new trait of the 19th century, that the wit and humour of England, as in Punch, so in the humourists, Jerrold, Dickens, Thackeray, Hood, have taken the direction of humanity and freedom.¹

Emerson is no doubt thinking of triumphs such as Hood's "Song of the Shirt" in the Christmas number of 1843, which is said to have trebled the circulation of Punch.²

But as the conveyor of the popular view and the self-appointed institution, Mr. Punch had a great deal to comment upon in his first ten years. The word "Victorian" with all its suggestions of earnestness, stability, boundless optimism and prosperity, cannot be applied to the first fourteen years

¹Amy Cruse, The Victorians and Their Books, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1935) p. 408

²Ibid, p. 137

of Victoria's reign - 1837-51. Although it may be said of almost all periods to some degree, the early Victorian period was one of acute transition; and consequently people looked backwards nostalgically perhaps more than they looked forward enthusiastically. Nearly all the major novelists, at some point, lamented the passage of the old England while the Gothic novel still enjoyed great popularity. John W. Dodds writes of the period 1841-51:

It was a decade, too, from which enthusiasm and colour had not yet disappeared. It was romantic - romantic in religion, whether medievalism or muscular Christianity; romantic in architecture, in literature, in art, in love of household ornament, in dress. Drab uniformity had not yet taken hold of men's fashions... The age of Victorian dandies was not past... The young Disraeli had risen to deliver his maiden address in the Commons with hair carefully curled, wearing a bottle-green coat and a white waistcoat covered with gold chains... even young Matthew Arnold, nineteen years of age in 1841, put on French airs and dressed grandly.³

Great Victorians like Carlyle and Macaulay were comparatively young men while Tennyson, Browning, George Eliot, Dickens, John S. Mill, Charles Darwin, Gladstone, Ruskin and Kingsley were all under thirty-five. Victoria and Albert were twenty-two.

Again, though it can also be said of the later Victorian period, coupled with the "safety" of the past, is the fear of

³John W. Dodds, The Age of Paradox, (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1953) p. 7

the future. Bertrand Russell said that his grandfather, on his deathbed in 1869, "heard a loud noise in the street and thought it was the revolution breaking out."⁴ This fear was much more immediate in the 1840's with Chartist's demonstrations and riots at home, disturbances in Ireland and the wave of revolutions across Europe in 1848. Although the Reform Bill was passed in 1832, there was little connection between legislation and the actual condition of the poor. The potato famine of 1845 which reached its peak in 1846-7 helped to force the repeal of the Corn Laws in February of 1849, but hunger and death from starvation were just another fact of life.

The political anxiety and social deprivation of the 1840's has been well studied and documented - by contemporaries like Dickens, and by Mayhew, whose London Labour and the London Poor was published in 1851 - and by later historians and sociologists. But it would be inaccurate to suggest that all was nostalgia and anxiety. The pitch of railway fever came around 1845 when Hudson, the Railway King, was lionised and speculation reached its highest point. Industrial output was slowly increasing and men, while obviously hopeful and enthusiastic about the material benefits of industry and the new machinery, were also

⁴Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame Of Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) p. 54

impressed spiritually. Carlyle found something transcendental in the machine, as a microcosm of the universe, while even Dickens wondered at its beauty and power. But, according to Sussman. "For literature...the decade of the Great Exhibition marks the end of hope in the blessings of the machine."⁵ From 1851 it seems, at least to Sussman, that the artist saw mainly the dehumanisation and mechanisation of humanity that derive from an industrial society.

But several factors combine to make the year 1851 a significant point of division between the early Victorian period of hesitant growth and anxiety, and the mid-Victorian, more optimistic and prosperous period. John W. Dodds quotes the Illustrated London News, reviewing 1850 :-

Calm in the midst of turmoil - at peace when her neighbours are either in actual warfare...or engaged in preparations for it - Great Britain has offered to the perplexed nations of the world an example worthy of their imitation. Her old civilisation... has bequeathed her many evils to endure or remove - an immense debt, a fearful pauperism, and an uneducated multitude, a divided church, and an impatient public spirit...But British people are unsurpassed by those of any people in the world...While taxes have been diminished and expenses increased the national revenue, under the operation of the wise principles of Free Trade, has presented a surplus scarcely expected...Pauperism and crime have alike diminished; and every able and willing hand has found remunerative employment.⁶

⁵H.L. Sussman, Victorians and the Machine (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968) p. 91

⁶Dodds, p. 442

This picture is perhaps a little too rosy but it does represent a body of opinion. While there was some decrease in poverty and crime, these were still high. The national income and employment was increasing. Nevertheless, the "impatient public spirit" is an apparent understatement and belies the rather Chauvinistic optimism.

But it is the Great Exhibition, more than anything else that makes 1851 an important new beginning. Edwin P. Hood, writing in 1851, said that:

within the last half-century, there have been performed upon our island, unquestionably, the most prodigious feats of human industry and skill witnessed in any age or time or in any nation of the earth⁷

Philip James Bailey, *The "Victorian Goethe"*, author of Festus and most well-known of the Spasmodic School wrote:-

Then came that great event, the Exhibition,
When England dared the world to competition...
But still, I hold, we were triumphant seen
In war, coal, and many a huge machine...
Peace-men had their beatific vision;
And art-schools were to render earth Elysian⁸

Of the importance of the Great Exhibition, Christopher Hobhouse says:-

it had none. It did not bring international

⁷E.P. Hood, The Age and its Architects (London, 1852) p. 38

⁸J.H. Buckley, The Victorian Temper (New York: Vintage Books, 1951) p. 124

peace: it did not improve taste. Imperceptibly it may have promoted Free Trade: a few manufacturers may have learnt a few lessons from their foreign rivals. The Russell Government and the Prince both gleaned a little popularity from it. But first and foremost it was just a glorious show. An enormous number of objects was gathered together in a singularly beautiful building, and six millions of people came to look at them.⁹

Certainly the show is what was important; but on another level, of much more importance is what contemporaries thought the importance of the Great Exhibition was, and what they hoped it would achieve. Ultimately, of course, the Great Exhibition was a symbol - "It was more of a symbolic vision than a Utopian dream."¹⁰ Because of this symbolic vision, because the Great Exhibition represents in its "Glorious show" a real expression of the most hopeful mid-Victorian ideals as well as being by far the most significant cultural and social domestic event of the year, Punch's coverage of the Exhibition can reveal the extent to which Punch dictates and echoes the views and feelings of the period. Punch's coverage of the Exhibition, from its earliest stages, right through to the final removal of the Crystal Palace to the site at Sydenham, is remarkably comprehensive; and when this comprehensiveness is added to the unique character of Punch, there emerges an

⁹Christopher Hobhouse, 1851 and the Crystal Palace (London: Murray, 1950) pp. 149-50

¹⁰Yvonne ffrench, The Great Exhibition: 1851 (Harvil Press: London, 1950) p. 51

authentic experience of what it was like to be alive and well in 1851.

Exhibitions of Industry were by no means a new idea: in fact, one of the key figures behind that of 1851, Henry Cole, was well-known for his efforts on behalf of Industry and Design before he joined the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in 1845. Indeed, the Society of Arts had been in existence, though not always active, since half-way through the eighteenth century. In 1845, Prince Albert became President of the Society and in the same year, obtained for it a Royal Charter from the Queen.

The first exhibition of the society in 1847, and indeed, those of 1848 and 1849 shared the aims of the Great Exhibition of 1851. In the 1847 Catalogue, some of these aims were set out. The Society was sure of its purpose :

We have no doubt that after the eyes of the Public are familiarised with specimens of the best decorative art, they will prefer them to subjects which are vulgar and gaudy: and that after a series of such annual exhibitions no manufacturer will have to complain that his best productions are left on his hands, and his worst preferred.¹¹

The success of these English exhibitions and also that of the French exhibition at Paris in 1849, coupled with the enthusiastic idealism of Prince Albert, the increasing industrial and technological growth in England, and the practical ability of

¹¹ French, p. 17

Cole and Fuller led to plans and ideas for a Great Exhibition of Industry of All Nations in 1851.

The general coolness of the English people towards their Prince Consort in the early years of his marriage to Victoria is well-known; and Punch was no exception. The magazine had been from its inception, and would always be, very English in that it always assumed anything of foreign origin to be inferior. Mr. Punch called himself patriotic but nationalistic or Chauvinistic would be a more accurate description of this attitude. Consequently, Punch was often very unfair to Prince Albert. By the later part of the 1840's however, people were beginning to appreciate the usefulness of the Queen's husband. Albert was extremely hard-working and conscientious in his duties and undertook seriously and earnestly the various projects which came his way. He was closely involved with the re-building of the Houses of Parliament, he was interested in art and architecture and in fact built a model lodging house described as a "group of dwellings for the poor."¹² In 1850, the Spectator described him as :

not only a gentleman who adorns his station with singular propriety and good taste, but also one who lends to royalty the most tangible functions of utility. In

¹²Hodds, p. 473, and Illustration p. 474

Prince Albert the public recognises not only a decorous but a useful servant.¹³

As preparations for the Exhibition went ahead and it became increasingly clear that the project lay very close to Albert's heart, the general theoretical aims of the Exhibition achieved the status of truism. Punch was critical of many of the practical arrangements, but nevertheless printed, early in 1850, a kind of moral manifesto which could have been written by the Prince himself :

Peace waves her olive-branch, and summons round her,
 Array of heads unhelmed, unweaponed hands;
 Commerce, late lightened of the chains that bound her,
 Speeds hitherwards the gifts of many lands
 Now for the first time since the world was parted
 By differing tongues, round Shinar's tower of old,
 One nation, horny-handed, and strong hearted,
 The grasp of friendship out to all doth hold.¹⁴

The poem continues by hymning the new era of "peaceful battle" where "mind wars with matter...and conquers it", but hastens to point out that in our contemplation of this greatness, we should let the thought pass from the labour to the labourer pale :

From out of gorgeous hues and fabrics rare
 Let the gaunt weaver's face its lesson look

"look" rhymes with a "book" in which "red and rugged lettering...are sweetly-sounding ancient words that breathe of brotherhood and peace, of joy and love."¹⁵

¹³Dodds, p. 434

¹⁴"The Exhibition of Industry--A Hint", Punch XVIII (1850) p. 141

¹⁵Ibid.

To the twentieth century, such faith is embarrassing and naive. But the Exhibition cannot be dismissed as a "Morrison's Pill".

But if Prince Albert was a lofty idealist, he had in his Royal Commission some hard practical people like Cole and Fuller, as well as Sir Robert Peel whose experience was invaluable. In fact, on the death of Peel on July 2, 1850, Albert lost one of the few friends he had found in the English government and feared that Peel's death might affect Parliamentary support for the Exhibition.

The proposed site of the Exhibition was Hyde Park. The Commissioners agreed to erect a temporary building. But the site and the building were the two most controversial aspects of the entire project. Much of the opposition to the site came from the aristocratic residents of the Park neighbourhood. Punch had numerous comments to make on the subject; but though it tended to sneer a little at the fashionables it was also concerned that the beautiful parks of London should not be spoiled.

"Down with your dust"...will be echoed by the London public, resorting for air and exercise to Hyde Park, when the multitude with which it will be crowded shall have worn its turf away and pulverised its soil.¹⁶

The same note continues by suggesting that instead of wasting the turf in this way, it should be cut and sold - the proceeds

¹⁶"The Alarming Sacrifice of Hyde Park", Punch, XLII, (1850) p. 34

going towards the Exhibition :

"which...is not supported with the liberality a project so laudable in itself deserves, - owing, no doubt, to the obstinate disregard of public opinion shown by its promoters in their determination to inflict this preposterous building on the Park."

Punch talked of the parks as the "lungs of London" and said it was not surprising that the public were unwilling to surrender one of their lungs. The Londoners "require all their lungs for their very little breathing time." Punch the humanitarian saw the irony in the situation. The slum-dwellers needed parks and fresh air but it was the rich and fashionable, who used Hyde Park, who opposed its pollution by the Exhibition.

Lord Brougham objects to Hyde Park as the site for the proposed Exhibition...It is but fair however, that Industry should compete with its opposite on the latter's own ground. For a long series of years...there has been held in the Ring of Hyde Park a daily Exhibition of Idleness...It must not be supposed however, that our lounging fashionables and lazy footmen furnish the sole criterion of our national Idleness. To form an adequate idea of that quality, it is necessary to take into account our defective drainage, putrescent Thames, thirty thousand starving needlewomen, and multitudinous rogues; the stupendous result of inattention, indifference, and indolence.¹⁷

But Mr. Punch could be sensible and practical too, in his support of the Exhibition generally; and in an imaginary dialogue between Boswell and Dr. Johnson, the note of compromise was

¹⁷"Exhibition of Idleness", Punch XVIII, (1850), p. 137

sounded :

Boswell: But where would you have the Exhibition, Sir?

Johnson: Sir, in some place where the neighbours would be glad to have it, and not in one where they will consider it a nuisance.¹⁸

But the opposition to the site had a great deal to do with the building which the Commissioners proposed to erect. In the same dialogue referred to, Dr. Johnson described it as "an unsightly edifice of brick and mortar." This had been designed by Brunel and was indeed a huge solid conventional and ugly building. Brunel, a brilliant engineer, prided himself on a great dome which it would require all his engineering skill to construct. The main objections were the time it would take to build, the cost of the building and its obvious permanence. The Commissioners were legally bound to remove the building after the Exhibition but Brunel's design was simply impracticable. Punch said of the plans submitted "There is the long design - of the early English shed character extremely plain - ugly in the highest degree. There is ditto with domes, looking like a system of gigantic rat traps." To the domes, the article continues, the first objection is that "it is very doubtful whether it can be erected at all, and the second,

¹⁸"An Imaginary Dialogue on the Exhibition", Punch XIX, (1850), p. 43

that it will be of no possible use if erected".¹⁹ And specifically of Brunel's dome :

"A huge dome, 200 feet in diameter - which in point of size, is to make the domes of St. Paul's and St. Peter's and the Pantheon, look like very small dish covers - is run up, or rather is intended to be run up, as the great feature of the proposed building."

The article concludes that "if the opening is made dependent on the completion of this ... Dome, the ... Exhibition will most decidedly never be opened till Doom's Day".²⁰

But the Saviour of the Exhibition and the man who designed the Crystal Palace was Joseph Paxton. Brunel's design was officially accepted but when Henry Cole learned that Paxton had some ideas for the building, the regulations regarding deadlines for tenders were stretched and in only a week, Paxton conceived the plan and executed all the details. More than anything inside the building it was the Crystal Palace itself, that seemed to capture and symbolise all that the Exhibition represented. It was daring and imaginative, beautiful and functional. Punch was not alone in singing its praises; the building was the star of the Exhibition and the one thing that

¹⁹"Designs for the Pavilion of 1851", Punch XIX, (1850) p. 2

²⁰"Building Glass Castles in the Air", Punch XIX, (1850) p. 13

was always mentioned with praise and awe in any of the commentaries, programs and articles written on the Exhibition.

Joseph Paxton, until his triumph in 1851, was the Head Gardener of the Duke of Devonshire and his plan for the Crystal Palace derived from the glass house he had built for a giant lily that had been recently discovered. But his profession of gardener does not give the right impression of Paxton's talents. At Chatsworth his gardens and his artistic talents were widely known and acclaimed. In 1843, the Duke of Devonshire had invited the Queen to Chatsworth and on that occasion Paxton had put on a magnificent display of waterfalls, fountains and coloured lights to blend with the Great Conservatory which housed the new lily - Victoria Regia.

Once his plans were made known to the Commissioners it became simply a matter of overcoming technicalities of regulations and tenders for the construction of the building. The Illustrated London News which had previously printed the official Brunel design also published, on July 6, 1850, Paxton's design and the public immediately recognised the great advantages of the Palace of Glass. Paxton also talked with Lord Brougham, one of the opponents of the Exhibition and actually won him over along with the support of the Times which had

also been rather sceptical of the project. Paxton had friends in high places, but added to these, this popular support made his victory certain. To cap it all, he was an adopted member of the Punch table and Jerrold and Lemon were both excited by his design; in fact, it was Jerrold, in Punch, who named the building the Crystal Palace and secured for it a lasting place in the public imagination.

Fox and Henderson, a firm of contractors from Smethwick, agreed to erect the building for £150,000 but the salvage value of the building was such that they agreed to do the job for £79,300 if they could take possession of the building afterwards. Chance Brothers of Birmingham were to supply the glass in larger panes than had ever been made. The structure was to be 1,851 feet long, 456 feet wide, with a huge vaulted transept - 108 feet. Total area of the ground floor, 772,824 square feet; of the galleries, 217,100 square feet. Total cubic contents 33,000,000 feet. Material used: 900,000 square feet of glass weighing 400 tons in panes four feet long and one foot wide. Paxton and his contractors were permitted to go ahead in July 1850 and they were asked to have the building ready by January 1st, 1851.

Punch championed Paxton and the Crystal Palace as early as

July 1850. In a "letter" to Paxton, Mr. Punch suggested that he also build glass Houses of Parliament, praising the efficiency, economy and beauty of Paxton's work against the costly, Gothic efforts of Barry who had been struggling for years to finish the new Parliament Buildings. The "letter" exploits the transparency of glass and considers how wonderful it would be to watch the Members in their great hive of glass, to see the Great Queen Bee Victoria come and open Parliament. But apart from the irony and fun of the "letter", there is a genuine tribute to Paxton and his vision, couched though it is in the general extravagant tone of the "letter" as a whole.

We all know the hubbub that you, Mr. Paxton, have so magically hushed. Our park was to be desecrated - torn from us. The turf - every root of grass intertwined with the very strings of the high-beating cockney heart was to be destroyed for ever and ever. The number of bricks had been calculated - the tons of mortar - even the million tinklings of the future trowels had been nicely numbered - in a word, the Great Lung of London was to be choked with a hideous, huge, mountainous heap of burnt clay... and then - Joseph Paxton came! With all the quietude of an assumed power, with the serenity of practical genius, Paxton unrolled his plan before the Commission. There should be no brick - no mortar. As for the projected dome, let the abomination pass away, the fading fragment of an architectural nightmare. No: the structure that should cover the samples of the world's industry should have the lightness of crystal, with the abiding strength of iron. And, as the projector told over his plan, the Commission, with much-relieved heads and sparkling eyes - beheld a fairy Palace of Glass, the whole structure fitted, with the fitness of geometry on paper, and calculated with the minute conviction of arithmetic. And the

Prince clapped his hands and said - "Paxton, go forth into Hyde Park: take glass and iron, and - beauty wedding strength - produce the industrial Hall of Nations!"

And is there an ardent Londoner who ... looks not to the coming spring for something brilliant and beautiful?²¹

The grandiloquence of the language and the Biblical parody convey just how very impressed Punch was with this new creation. People felt that a new time was coming and that great things would be accomplished, they were fascinated that out of glass, iron, arithmetic and geometry should come this wonderful, useful thing. This same wonder was felt by the writer of an article in Household Words: he is fascinated by Paxton's technical virtuosity and gives in painful detail, all the dimensions and calculations of the building together with an account of the organisation and workmanship involved in the construction. He concludes his article :

we may congratulate ourselves, that in the nineteenth century, the progress of science, the spirit of manufacturers, have placed at our disposal the application of materials which were unknown to the ancients, and hereby enabled us to erect such structures as would have been deemed impossible, even in the early part of the present century.²²

The gasp of wonder which greeted the Crystal Palace was accom-

²¹"Glass Houses of Parliament", Punch XIX, (1850) p. 81

²²"The Great Exhibition", Household Words II (Jan. 18, 1851) p. 385

panied by the general feeling of pride that this after all is only what England expects of herself in this new age of 1851. But while there was general enthusiasm for the building there were also fears and criticisms. People wondered how it would withstand wind and weather. Colonel Sibthorpe, the Member of Parliament for Lincoln, notoriously right-wing, was quoted as saying that:

they might call it success, but he called it failure. He did not wish to see that building destroyed by any acts of violence, but would to God that some hailstorm, or visitation of lightning, might descend to defeat the ill-advised project.²³

But the article which introduces the quotation, also introduces Sibthorpe as "The great political Tom of Lincoln" - "we are told that the old bell, called the Tom of Lincoln, became cracked in 1827." Punch, however, compares Sibthorpe to Samson and insists that the Colonel be shaved. Later, when the Exhibition opened "the Colonel said in (or rather out of) his place in Parliament: - 'He was not present at the Crystal Palace. He felt that his duty to God and his Country demanded of him that he should not go there!'"²⁴

And in a "Lament" Sibthorpe was made to exclaim:

The First of May has come - and gone -

²³"Sibthorpe in the Crystal Palace", Punch XX, (1851) p. 70

²⁴"Bulletin", Punch XX (1851), p. 196

And I am doomed to rave alone,
 And tear my frantic locks...
 Yes: that confounded shop of glass,
 Made, British hands to undersell!
 Those foreign vagabonds, alas!
 Perceive it serves their ends too well.
 The earth to gulp it will not ope!
 The bolt to crush it will not fall!
 That Exhibition - and the Pope -
 Will be the ruin of us all!²⁵

Sibthorpe was also in the forefront of the movement against the pollution of Hyde Park, and bitterly opposed the cutting down of trees to accommodate the Exhibition. He appears in a cartoon with uplifted arm forbidding Albert who is about to cut down a tree - below the cartoon is a poem which continues:

Albert! Spare those trees
 Kind where you fix your show,
 For Mercy's sake don't please,
 Go spoiling Rotten Row.

Paxton effectively squashed these objections firstly by providing a building which could be easily removed and secondly by adjusting his plans to include the trees inside the building.

By July of 1850, when Paxton's plans were accepted and building began, Punch was firmly in favour of the Exhibition. Any objections and fears were sure to be quickly ridiculed. In the early stages of planning, however, Punch had been as wary as anyone over Prince Albert's project. Though the magazine was in accord with the general theory it was sceptical of

²⁵"Lament of the Member for Lincoln", Punch XX, (1851) p. 188

the practicality of the scheme. Support for the project was very slow in coming, and in a short comment, Punch suggests that though the project is "very laudable" the reason given by the public is "let us have the Income-tax fairly adjusted and the window-tax taken off, and then we'll talk about it

The Exhibition "²⁶ And in a cartoon, Albert - "The Industrious Boy" - is presented, hat extended for pennies, saying "Please to remember the Exposition" while superimposed is the scowling shadow of an industrialist.²⁷ A poem to accompany the cartoon, printed on page 224, also cites the Income Tax and the Window Tax as obstacles to public support :

Pity the troubles of a poor young Prince
Whose costly scheme has born him to your door;
Who's in a fix, the matter not to mince -
Oh, help him out, and commerce swell your store.

Although the Window Tax later became something of a joke in view of Paxton's design - Punch suggested houses of glass as a way of avoiding the tax because technically they had no windows - there was strong feeling about the tax since it did present hardships to the underprivileged.

Though the financing of the Exhibition later became a government responsibility, there was some initial anxiety which

²⁶"The Tax-bound Pocket", Punch XVIII, (1850), p. 220

²⁷"The Industrious Boy", Punch XVIII, (1850), p. 227

Punch sums up :

"The Exhibition of Industry...shows the following results: - The Industry of complaining, and the Industry of finding fault, and the Industry of making mistakes, but with very little Industry to repair them. There has also been a wonderful Industry in collecting money, but a shameful lack of Industry on the part of these who have the money to pay, and ought to pay but somehow will not pay."28

But here there is an unmistakable note of indignation as Punch becomes more committed to the venture. Early in 1851, the magazine is confident enough to laugh at the established success of the project :

Many Exhibitors begin to fear that ... it will be a great difficulty to induce the Public to visit any other Exhibition. We can perfectly understand this fear. For as the Great Exhibition is to contain no less than 20 miles of counters it is sure to defy all counter-attraction.

Punch was always ready to squash some of the popular objection to problems of accommodating visitors to the Exhibition and particularly nationalistic and hostile to foreigners. The wealthy residents of Belgraveia and Pimlico who objected to mobs of people flocking into and around Hyde Park, were laughed at when spurious advertisements appeared in Punch offering exchange

28 "Exhibition of Industry", Punch, XIX (1850), p. 42

accommodation. These were placed by Messrs. W. Quitts & Co., and Messrs. Swopp & Co., as well as the Blue Pig Hotel (The BPH) at Smithfield, which offered "to board families in the most comfortable and fashionable manner, including Tea for Ladies eight times a day."²⁹

The Lodging-house business was expecting a magnificent season and of course anyone who could was preparing rooms to let, including one Mrs. Baker, who, in a letter to Punch advertised her second floor:

To the Stranger in a Strange Land. - A sister of the Great Human Family (about to visit London) proffers the Palm Branch of Hospitality! Her tent is pitched within a pleasing pilgrimage of the Crystal Palace; the oasis of Regent's Park stirring in its emerald green betwixt her and the World's Fair.

Her apartments are described by her husband as garrets and her "mansion" by the same gentleman as a "bird-cage" but her enthusiasm - and greed - know no bounds. Punch is as ready to laugh at her absurdity as it is quick to censure her - "more than a twelvemonth's rent is to be made out of one's foreign relations." Her foolishness is exposed as she exclaims of the Glass Palace at the beginning of her letter - it "wants nothing but to be lined outside with quicksilver to make it all that a woman could wish"³⁰

²⁹"To Families Quitting Pimlico", Punch XX, (1851), p. 157

³⁰"Mrs. Baker's Second Floor", Punch XX, (1851), p. 183

While Punch reports on a factual level what is happening, as in the case of Mrs. Baker, it also never misses the opportunity of hitting out at what it believes is wrong :-

Everyone is expecting to make a fortune in the Great Exhibition season of 1851. Beds are...going up in the environs of London, and a large broker... is selling so many bed-steads that he is making a fortune...Somebody has even proposed to make the bed of the Serpentine available and perhaps it would not be a bad idea to throw a mackintosh cover across the whole surface and, thus turn it into one of those water beds....the plan would have the double effect of hiding an offensive object and promoting the convenience of the public: while the Serpentine itself is well adapted, for the purpose of repose, as when anything is said about cleansing the river, the authorities seem determined to go to sleep upon it.³¹

On a similar theme, an article entitled "London with a Clean Front On"³² deals with the superficial cleaning up that is going on and hopes that no "extortions or dirty impositions will be practised upon the poor foreigners inside, so as to soil the purity" of the clean outside. Beside the article is a cartoon with children living and playing beside a sewer from which emerges a vaporous skeleton, while inset is a gentleman with a clean front enjoying a glass of port. The article catalogues the government's neglect of public buildings

³¹"The Great (Expected) Season of 1851", Punch XX, (1851), p.30

³²"London with a Clean Front on", Punch XX, (1851), p. 83



PERFIDIOUS ALBION LETS HIS DRAWING-ROOM FLOOR TO A DISTINGUISHED FOREIGNER—
THE RESULT!!

**"THOSE WHO LIVE IN GLASS-HOUSES SHOULDN'T
THROW STONES!"**

THE Executive Council of the Great Exhibition have just done a very snobbish thing, and they had better undo it as fast as possible. They have also been guilty of a little bit of downright dishonesty. We must and will call things by their right names—in selling their Season Tickets on the condition that the holders should be admitted on the 1st of May, and now, at the eleventh hour, advertising that the tickets, paid for on that understanding, are not to be admitted until the best part of the 1st of May is over. The cause of this arrangement is a clumsy piece of fencing, intended to please the QUEEN; but calculated, we should think, to disgust HER MAJESTY most exceedingly. We will be bound that no small portion of the royal pleasure, in opening the Exhibition, would consist of the opportunity it would afford her of sharing her enjoyment with a large number of her subjects; but the idea of leaving her to ramble about the vast building in gloomy state, with a few gingerbread functionaries at her heels, is worthy the imagination of the most sycophantic of snobs.

We protest, on behalf of HER MAJESTY, against her being placed in the very invidious position into which the Executive Committee would thrust her. Only fancy an impatient crowd being taught, for hours, a practical lesson of stupid, unmeaning exclusiveness, by being compelled to kick their own and tread on their neighbours' heels all the morning outside the doors, while the QUEEN, with a set of gold and other sticks, may be taking a dismal tour over the unpeopled avenues of the Crystal Palace. Those flunkies of the Executive Committee have no right to give a false and unfavourable impression of the feelings of their Royal Mistress, by making it appear that it is her wish to have the vast building all to herself during the best portion of the first day of the Exhibition. In fact, the proceeding is a direct robbery of one half of the only special privilege which the season-ticket holders pay for—namely, the right of admission on the day of opening. It is disrespectful towards the QUEEN to arrange matters so that the visitors to the Exhibition, instead of being glad to see her come, will be eagerly impatient for her to go away, as the impediment placed between themselves and the enjoyment they have bargained for.

We can undertake to say, that if HER MAJESTY's personal wishes were to be consulted, she would at once express her wish not to dis-appoint the public; and while every one would cheerfully submit to all the arrangements necessary for the perfect comfort and convenience of the Sovereign, scarcely any will believe that such arrangements are incompatible with the presence of a few thousands of well-behaved ladies and gentlemen simultaneously with HER MAJESTY in the Crystal Palace.

Pedestrianism in Park Lane.

"EXPERIENCE," in a letter to the *Times*, complains, "that there is a leading thoroughfare in the very heart of the West End, within a stone's throw of the Crystal Palace, which is not paved on either side of the way, the footway of which is so neglected as to be a perfect disgrace to the parish." The thoroughfare alluded to is Park Lane. "OBSERVATION" presents his compliments to "EXPERIENCE," and begs to suggest to him that the inhabitants of Park Lane do not belong to the walking classes; hence, perhaps, the disregard exhibited in the state of that thoroughfare for the convenience of the pedestrian public.

Sir Harry Smith's "Brass Nob."

THE Cape of Good Hope—or rather Forlorn Hope—with such a governor as SIR HARRY SMITH, is not yet ruled by the Kaffirs; though what may happen, who shall say, with a governor who, to awe the savages, carries in his hand a magic wand, surmounted with a brass nob? This brass nob has special sorcery in it. And armed with it, SIR HARRY desires the Kaffirs "not to believe in witchcraft." When we consider the behest in association with the charmed weapon, SIR HARRY must surely possess more than one "brass nob" so to appeal even to Kaffirs.

HOW TO FIND THE LEVEL OF LONDON.—Ride on a spirited horse on the wood-pavement.

and asks whether St. Paul's and Westminster will be open to visitors without the twopenny or fourpenny fees. But while Punch champions foreigners on one hand, Leech's cartoon is curiously reminiscent of the modern charges of over-crowding, dirt and un-English eccentricity levelled against Pakistanis in Birmingham.

One of the many popular objections to the Exhibition was that foreigners would bring disease or plagues. But while Punch can assume quite happily that Frenchmen will not recognise a jug and wash-basins :

"Bon Dieu, Alphonse! Regardez-donc. Comment appele-t-on cette machine la?"

"Tiens, c'est Drole - mais je ne sais pas."³³

The magazine nevertheless bitterly ridicules the notion that foreigners will bring plagues. A letter from "An Anxious Wife and Mother" begins with almost Gampian circumambulation:

I write without my husband's knowledge, who - except that he will have his own way, which was never meant for men, whatever they may say to the contrary - is as good a creature for a man as ever broke bread.³⁴

Among the plagues that she expects are:

Black Jaundice from America
Palsy from Russia
Convulsion fits from France
Mumps from Greece

³³"A Pint to the Commissioners", Punch XX, (1851), p. 185

³⁴"An Anxious Wife and Mother", Punch XIX, (1850), p. 191

King's Evil from Naples
Scarlet Fever from Rome.

And among the measures suggested to prevent these calamities were :

that every Frenchman is to be washed from head to foot before entering London

That no German is to be allowed admission... unless he can prove possession of at least 6 shirts, as many stockings and two clean collars.³⁵

But again, while Punch despised the extremists who feared such nonsense, it also took great sport in laughing at the linguistic confusion it imagined would occur during the Exhibition. One of the best efforts is curiously ambivalent in that it almost sanctions the rudeness and exploitation of London waiters and cabmen by laughing at the foreigner's confusion; yet the rudeness and inhospitality is exposed. The article suggests the inadequacy of phrase books :

To Converse with a Cabman

What The Book Said

Do you wish, sir, to ride
in my cabriolet

What The Man Said

C'b? (from every driver on the rank, and as many fingers held up as there are cabmen - F.B. No provision made for conversation during the struggle for the wretched fare)

³⁵"Rules for the Prevention of the Promised Plague", Punch XIX, (1850) p. 191

Where do you wish, sir, that
I should drive you?
I wish to go to the Exposition

Vere to? (and a look)

Thank you, sir. I will drive
you thither without delay.

Vere? (not understanding
the foreigner's English)

What is your fare?

Two bob and a tanner.

I have driven you 2 miles.
My legal fare for driving you
that distance is one shilling
and fourpence. As I have driven
fast, there is one shilling and
sixpence.

Thank you, sir, I am much
obliged to you.

Vot's this? (and a look of
contemptuous curiosity at
the coin presented).

I shall be happy to drive
you in future.

Vel, if hever I drives a
scaly furriner again, I'm
blessed! Ollo! You ain't
agoin' hoff in this 'ere
way.

Good Morning to you, sir.

You have paid me handsomely.

Oh, you calls yourself a
gentleman!³⁶

But in the months leading up to the opening of the Exhibition while Punch continues to express its hopes and aspirations, there is an increasing amount of space given to factual details of exhibits to be shown. At various times Punch suggests columns of objects which ought to be shown--such as a man born with a silver spoon in his mouth, or a man with good intentions. These columns of sometimes silly, sometimes facetious

³⁶"Conversation Books for 1851", Punch, XX, (1851) p. 32

objects are easily outweighed by the genuine admiration and pride in the fact that England can exhibit the electric telegraph or the Koh-I-Noor Diamond or, the "Real Mountain of Light" which is coal--the Black Diamond. Ingenuity and beauty are celebrated as Punch announces that from Sheffield will come a file "adorned with designs as numerous as those on the original shield of Achilles all cut and beaten out with hammer and chisel". Punch cannot resist the comment "How much more sensible and friendly to show...foreigners files of this sort than ...files of soldiers".³⁷

There is a tongue-in-cheek admiration, however, for such dubious wonders as the musical bed or the tipping bed. Punch wonders just how useful such things are. But Punch's attitude to these is characteristic of the views expressed by other periodicals and by chroniclers of the Exhibition. There was considerable general feeling that, particularly in furnishing, ornamentation and over-ingeniousness led to an almost total extinction of the functional properties of the articles in question. Thus, Punch suggests an ironical use of the bed for Ministers of the Government who might sleep until it was time for the Opposition to turn-in. There is a kind of ambivalence

³⁷"A File To Smooth Asperities", Punch XX, (1851), p. 82

too in the attitude expressed towards a waiter who spent a
~~great deal of time and effort carving a ham into 5,000 slices.~~

But as well as being satirical, Punch could be serious to the point of righteous indignation. When the "Morning Post" under the heading "Solitary Punishment" published an account of a case in Gainsborough where a number of boys were sentenced to the stocks for having broken the Sunday gaming laws, Punch commented with bitter-irony that here was a mechanical instrument performing a spiritual function and proposed that the Gainsborough authorities send this wonderful "contrivance for the conversion of juvenile sinners" to the Exhibition.³⁸

And Mr. Punch whipped himself into a real fury when the Executive Council decided to exclude season ticket holders from the opening ceremonies on May 1st. This action appears to have been motivated by the desire to guard the Queen and to allow her to view the Exhibition unhindered and in peace. Punch called the action snobbish and dishonest - season-ticket holders were originally going to be admitted - and more calculated to disgust than please her Majesty.

The idea of leaving her to ramble about the vast building in gloomy state, with a few gingerbread functionaries at her heels, is worthy the imagina-

³⁸"The Stocks in Aid of the Pulpit", Punch XIX, (1850), p. 132



HER MAJESTY, as She Appeared on the **FIRST** of **MAY**,
Surrounded by "Horrible Conspirators and Assassins."

tion of the most sycophantic of snobs.³⁹

The Executive were dismissed as Flunkies.

There was some feeling, however, that the Queen was taking unnecessary risks in mingling with the crowds on Opening Day. There had been attempts on her life before by native Englishmen, how much greater then was the risk when foreigners were present! Punch was not impressed by these arguments however, and confidently spoke up for the Queen's courage and her wishes:

We will be bound that no small portion of the royal pleasure, in opening the Exhibition, would consist of the opportunity it would afford her of sharing her enjoyment with a large number of her subjects.⁴⁰

When the Exhibition was opened Punch gloated in Tenniel's cartoon.

But with characteristic moderation, Punch nonetheless, heartily approved of police protection - though it sought to give the impression of surprise and amusement that such people were necessary :

There is to be an additional force of 900 policemen, in order to keep 1800 police eyes upon the Crystal Palace.⁴¹

Punch's own report of the opening of the Great Exhibition is a hymn of praise to Victoria and Albert, the police and the

³⁹"Those who live in Glass Houses", Punch XL, (1851), p. 174

⁴⁰Ibid

⁴¹"Crystal Palace Police", Punch XL, (1851), p. 54

entire nation. Of Paxton's building, Punch says nothing because it "disdains to echo the general voice; which...is the echo of the approval Punch himself was pleased to bestow on the first design." Of Prince Albert, whose position too often vibrated "between the mischievous and insignificant" Punch said "he has done a grand service to humanity".

And in a burst of nationalism, the opening is described as :

a magnificent lesson for foreigners, ... to see how securely and confidently a young female Sovereign and her family could walk in the closest possible contact ... with five-and-twenty thousand people, selected from no class and requiring only the sum of forty-two shillings as a qualification for the nearest proximity with royalty. Here was a splendid example of that real freedom on the one hand, and perfect security on the other, which are the result of our constitutional monarchy and which all the despotism and republicanism of the world cannot obtain elsewhere, let them go on as long as they may, executing each other in the name of order, or cutting each other's throats in the name of Liberty.⁴²

So Punch assessed England's greatness on the most important social occasion of 1851.

⁴²"Punch's own Report of the Opening", Punch, XX, (1851), p. 190

CHAPTER 3

Several points emerge from the last chapter which require further examination. It has been observed that Punch's attitude to the Exhibition changed from initial scepticism to firm support; it is necessary now to account for this change. This chapter will both suggest why for what cause Punch grew more enthusiastic about the Exhibition and why for what purpose Punch continued, for the duration of the Exhibition, to comment favourably upon it.

As the last chapter pointed out, the two most controversial issues surrounding the Exhibition were the proposed site and the proposed building. Paxton, as a frequent and welcome guest at the Punch table, provided a solution to each of these controversies. His building was beautiful and exciting and it would include Sibthorpe's trees as part of its interior decoration; furthermore, it could easily be removed when the Exhibition closed. Paxton's famous efforts at Charsworth when he created fountains, landscaped streams and gardens and entertained the Queen and hundreds of guests on his magnificently kept lawns, have already been referred to. But what was of equal importance was his ability to undo what had been created for a special occasion and return the lawns and gardens to their original state. The Duke of Wellington who had been present, was impressed

by the spectacle but rose the next morning to have a look at Paxton's work in daylight. He was amazed to find that the litter of fireworks had been removed, worn turf had been replaced, and the lawns and fountains were as magnificent as ever! Wellington is said to have wished he had had Paxton as one of his generals at Waterloo.

Punch might be excused if it had come to support Paxton from motives of personal friendship, but in the light of public knowledge of Paxton's achievements and ability, it becomes quite clear that Punch, seeing the tremendous asset that the Commissioners had acquired in Paxton, had found a very good reason for supporting the Exhibition. The fact that Paxton himself persuaded Lord Brougham and the Times to support the Exhibition has been referred to, and substantiates the picture of circular reasoning producing public support.

With Paxton then, the plans of the Commissioners at least began to look as if they could be put into effect. But if Punch found in Paxton a cause for supporting the Exhibition, it had also found, by the opening on May 1st. a purpose for its support. Punch evaluated the Exhibition and believed that it could make certain ideals which were close to Mr. Punch's heart, become realities. And so, in Punch's coverage of the

Great Exhibition, it is possible to see certain themes emerging where Punch sees itself and the Exhibition uniting to represent a body of belief and hope.¹

While it was generally hoped that the Exhibition might bring about understanding between the nations involved, Punch, as we have seen, managed to avoid excesses such as the opinion that foreigners meant plagues, but could not give up the idea of national characteristics - French superficiality or Teutonic thoroughness for example. Nevertheless, Punch can also express the ideal of international understanding and laugh at its own prejudice with superb and unconscious irony. In an article entitled "A Cosmopolite Motto for the Exhibition of 1851" Punch quotes Paxton as having said "He believed it was a good thing to have the conceit taken out of us. He had often had it taken out of him, but, the next morning, he started with new vigor, and a greater determination to reach success." The article suggests this as a motto for the Exhibition and translates it for the edification of foreign visitors.

Here they are ... for the eyes and heart of John Bull.
"It is a good thing to have the conceit taken out of us"

¹Hobhouse, p. 25

Now, when John beholds any manufacture soever, in which he, John, has heretofore considered himself as eminent over all, and in which, to his astonishment, he confesses himself outdone, ... let him follow out the Paxton regimen, "starting with new vigour, and a greater determination to reach success."

.....

"Il est bon que la presumption nous soit extirpée"

The Frenchman ... may ... acknowledge the beauty of this when he finds that he does not as yet make quite as good knives and forks as John at Sheffield.

.....

"Het is eene goede zaak als ouze inbeelding wat gefnuikt word"

And the Dutchman reads and ponders this, and allows that butter churns may be made in England, that would not be despicable at Amsterdam.

.....

"Esta bien que se nos quite el alto concepto que tenemos de nosotros mismos"

And the Spaniard, with the words in his memory, returns to his hotel, and calling for a glass of his native sherry, may haply declare with a sigh, that the English wine-merchant has taken all the conceit out of it.

Can there be any doubt that the Paxton axiom, ... will do a world of service, proving to all nations of the world that "it is a good thing to have the conceit taken out of us"?²

Here Punch is nationalistic: but the most important point to notice in this article is that Punch presents its case for being, as it generally is, nationalistic: Namely that John Bull is, after all, the host of the Exhibition, and can meet other nations, regardless of their specialties such as dairy products or sherry, on an equal footing and can compete with them for a world market.

So Punch draws a line between the justified pride of a nation in its own achievements, and empty nationalism. Proof of this is easy to find. While Punch may laugh at European nations, it is adamantly anti-American in relation to the Exhibition, and a large part of the reason is that the Americans had asked for 40,000 feet in which to arrange their exhibits, but had been unable to use the space. Punch felt that this was empty boasting.

The Americans say, that the reason they have sent nothing to the Exhibition is that the productions of their industry are, in the first place, too gigantic to be brought over; and in the next place,

²"Hotto for the Exhibition", Punch XIX, (1850), p. 183

the reality is so impossible to be understood or described, that the only way to give us any idea of it was to leave it all to our imagination.³

It is interesting to find Punch's allegation supported: Yvonne French quotes from "American Supremacy at the World's Fair" by Charles T. Rodgers :

...Reflecting men will not fail to note the gigantic proportions of American productions...Our instruments are made to act where wider elbow room and less labour are afforded: our steamships and pleasure yachts tell of longer stretches to be spanned...For the magnitude of our enterprises John Bull has more wonder than sympathy.⁴

A more balanced American account is given by Horace Greely of the New York Tribune :

Our share in the Exhibition was creditable to us as a nation not yet a century old, situated three to five thousand miles from London: it embraced many articles of great practical value, though uncouth in form and utterly unattractive to the mere sightseer: other nations will profit by it and we shall lose no credit; but it fell far short of what it might have been.⁵

But Punch would not forgive what it thought of as American arrogance - "America continues to represent itself...as a large place...very sparsely occupied" - and suggested that - "By packing up the American articles a little closer, by displaying Colt's revolvers over the soap and piling up the Cincinatti pickles on the top of the Virginian honey - much space could be saved and used to accommodate visitors."⁶

³"Tis not Fancy's Sketch", Punch XX, (1851), p. 243

⁴French, p. 242

⁵French, p. 243

⁶"Hint for the American Non-Exhibitors", Punch XX, (1851), p. 246

This oddly enough is what the Americans did - at least they used some of the space as a rest area and supplied benches. Punch also suggested a list of possible exhibits that might be en route :

A Tooth-brush for the Mouth of the Thames
 A Tumbler for the Jug of the Nightingale
 The Whip with which America flogs all creation - especially the coloured portion of it. And lastly,
 The Tremendous Wooden Style that separates the American from the English Fields of Literature.⁷

But this reference to the slavery question is another reason for Punch's anti-Americanism. In a very bitter article referring to the Exhibition and Lady Emmeline Wortley's Travels in America, Punch asks why have the Americans not sent some specimens of slaves? - "We have the Greek Captive in dead stone - why not the Virginian slave in living ebony?"⁸ - and concludes "let America hire a black or two to stand in manacles, as American manufacture, protected by the American Eagle."⁹

Punch then is nationalistic, but only to the point where it believes itself justified, and is very quick to censure those whom it believes to have over-reached this point. While it exploits the comic possibilities of foreigners and foreign languages, and tends to be condescending rather than truly

⁷"American Contributions", Punch XX, (1851), p. 218

⁸The "Greek Slave" was one of the attractions of the Exhibition. The statue was the work of a little-known American sculptor, Hiram Powers.

⁹"America in Crystal", Punch XX, (1851) p. 209

sympathetic or understanding towards other nations, it is ruthlessly critical of the American nation for proclaiming liberty on the one hand and upholding slavery on the other - a point which Dickens makes strongly and repeatedly in both Martin Chuzzlewit and the American Notes.

One of the major themes that runs through the four volumes covering the period of the Exhibition is the assurance that through commerce and industry, peace will come. In a short article just before the opening in May, 1851, Punch sets forth its "Visions in the Crystal" :

He [Mr. Punch] beheld the whole of Adam's race collected together for the first time since they were scattered on the plain of Shinar--shaking hands together, with John Bull in their midst, instructing them in that only genuine mode of fraternising....But the nations were not satisfied with teaching each other the art of common good living...The Pope...abolished the Inquisition...The Czar granted a general amnesty to the political prisoners in Siberia...The Emperor of Austria made it up with the exiled Hungarians...The scene again changed to a vast iron-foundry, where millions of swords and pieces of ordnance were in course of being melted up in order to be turned into ploughshares and locomotives. The whole concluded with a grand display of fireworks, the materials of which consisted of all the cartridges in the world.¹⁰

The tone is extravagant and plainly comic but the hope of peace is as assured as it is in "Victoria Felix", a poem printed just

¹⁰"Visions in the Crystal", Punch XX, (1851), p. 188

after the opening, which celebrates the happiness of the Queen at the Exhibition, seeing all the wonders of industry, rejoicing in the communication of all nations, and proud that Albert has accomplished it all :

All this, she feels, is due, in no small measure,
To him whose place is now on her right hand -
Her husband; - and what wonder, if for pleasure
Her eyes are full, and her heart hath small leisure
To think of aught but him that there doth stand.

Pale, but with thoughtful triumph in him stirring,
That the great work with due success is crowned;
Guiding to harmony man's efforts erring,
Pointing the world to peace, from war erring,
That love and joy may more and more abound.¹¹

The solemnity and choking sentimentality of the poem mark Punch's feelings on the great occasion.

From the earliest stages of planning however, Punch sees in the Exhibition a splendid opportunity for peaceful co-operation between the nations of the world. In two articles, Punch is indignant that at meetings of the Commissioners and in Parliament, Lord Brougham harks back to the political violence of 1848 and suggests that England had better prepare itself to counter violence with more violence.¹² From time to time, articles and notes appear such as -

¹¹"Victoria Felix", Punch XX, (1851), p. 195

¹²"Lord Brougham's Exhibition", Punch XVIII, (1850), p. 90
and "Self-Exhibition of Lord Brougham", Punch, XVIII, (1850), p. 129

A French chemist has invented a new shell that, it is said, "in a few minutes will send to the bottom a ship of 120 guns." Will the shell be exhibited in 1851? We hope so. It is from such a shell that time may hope to hatch the dove of peace - perpetual peace.¹³

On a similar note, there is a whole series of articles following the theme of the beautifully executed file from Sheffield which is so much better than a file of soldiers. The theme is expressed more strongly on the subject of military reviews as standard entertainment for royal visitors and dignitaries from abroad :

The absurdity of treating our illustrious visitors to a game of soldiers ... has been recognised. The perception has been arrived at, that to show a King ... a sham fight ... implies the assumption that combativeness and destructiveness must be the biggest bumps on his head; that he must go about in a state of pugnacious irritability, of sanguinary prurience itching to instigate charges of bayonets. Longing to fling shrapnell shells and grape-shot, burning to cannonade and bombard, and to lead on mankind to hack, hew, cut, thrust, slash, stab and assassinate...In future therefore all the Reviews held in Hyde Park...will be Reviews of Industry, in expression of the principle that the welfare of nations is the chief consideration of rulers.¹⁴

Another such article is prefaced "As the Great exhibition is intended to be a sort of Peace Congress, whereat the principles of brotherly love are to be taught to all nations..."¹⁵

¹³"Shell of Peace", Punch, XIX, (1850), p. 155

¹⁴"New Style of Review", Punch XIX, (1850), p. 239

¹⁵"The Army and the Great Exhibition", Punch XX, (1851), p. 64

An article entitled "The Greatest Sceptre in the World" concludes that there is nothing so fine as the English policeman's baton which will "figure at the World's Fair - how much more potent are such simple truncheons to maintain tranquillity amongst us, than bayonets and artillery are to keep the peace in foreign lands."¹⁶

One of the most interesting features, however, combines peace and progress. A whole page is given over to "The Exhibition as it might have been in the days of yore", by a "Disciple of Retrogress". The idea is that violence is a thing of the distant past. A poem in pseudo-archaic English is surrounded by a series of illustrations by Tenniel pointing out the barbarity of medieval times. Knights inspect devices of torture; the gallows, the stocks, and the executioners are all ready and waiting; tournaments are fought and the wounded carried off. The poem laments these "bad new times" and the speaker insists that he "had liefer travaille back" than go forward in this new era. He says that the World's Fair is a fine thing but how much better it would have been "four hundred years agoe!" :

Instead of goodes and handiwork, sent here from foreign parts
Thereat wolde have been bowes, and bills, and pykes
and speeres and darts;

¹⁶"The Greatest Sceptre in the World", Punch XL, (1851), p. 207

And divers welthe, no doubte, as well, fetched hither
from afar:
But marrye! all the spoyle of foes that we had slain
in war.

There wolde have been, for steam-engens, that run
upon the rayle
Good effigies of gallant steedes, and worthy knightes
in mayle,
For carved ymages and suche, the work of cunning hande,
Some sundry helmes and corselets, cleft and brast
with axe or brand.

Instedd of wycked clod-crushers the erth to wring and
taxe,
Ye wolde have had a senely shewe of thumscrewes and
of racks,
Of pillories for rogues and theeves that plonder their
neighbour
And stakes and chaines and chopping-blocks for witches
and traitours

The crowde, too, being grete and foule belike there
had been brewed
A good old Ynglish pestilence among the multitude;
So wolde the people have been thinned, which mote be
no bad thing,
And thus the Exhibicyon wolde have hadd a good ending.¹⁷

So, Punch is anxious, in its commentary on the Exhibition
to sing the peaceful product of commerce; and the theme is the
biblical one of beating swords into ploughshares. With charac-
teristic ingenuity, Punch noticed that one half of Paxton's

¹⁷"The Exhibition as it might have been in Days of Yore",
Punch XX, (1851), p. 209

name signified Peace, and concluded that since "The Crystal Palace may be looked upon as a Noble Temple of Peace" it was appropriate to erect in gold letters over the main entrance, the words :

PAX(ton) VOBISCU¹⁸

But as well as being concerned about international issues and the cause of peace, Punch had certain domestic ideals which it wished to see accomplished and to which, it believed, the Exhibition contained the cure. The main point here is Punch's championship of the common, working man, and the feeling that the social revolution--so bloody on the continent--could be safely and satisfactorily assisted if the Exhibition could tactfully include the working man and somehow promote his interests without endangering the status quo. Punch sincerely believed and kept stating publicly, that the working man was tremendously important, that without him there could be no Exhibition. In this respect Punch was more liberal in its opinions than the Press generally. During March 1850, the Lord Mayor entertained the Commissioners of the Exhibition and a representative of the working classes. Punch, reporting the occasion, wondered why the working man's speech on the occasion was not reported in the newspaper and proceeded to

¹⁸"England's Peace-Offering", Punch XIX, (1850), p. 265

give the speech verbatim. Prince Albert congratulated him on his speech and Punch interpreted this as "acknowledging the ... obligations of himself [the Prince] and all his class to the Fustian jacket - to labour."¹⁹

But though Punch is liberal in seeing the importance of the workers, the magazine seems uncertain of how to establish this importance and link the social classes. In "State Catechism - for the use of the English People", Punch asks :-

Q. What is "State"?

A. State is a gold stick. State is also a stick of silver.

Q. What else?

A. State is also a painted carriage, with crystal panels. State is ... eight cream-coloured horses ... State is in scarlet ... silver trumpets ... the House-Guards ...

Q. What relation have the "people" towards the State?

A. The relation of poor relations: always to be looked down upon - snubbed, set aside, and - especially on the opening of Crystal Palaces - to be put in a corner.²⁰

On the issue of admitting the people to the Exhibition, Punch exercised some of its keenest satire. In a letter from "the mob" to Paxton, Punch speaks up for the people but reveals at

¹⁹"Knife and Fork Exhibition", Punch XVIII, (1850), p. 123

²⁰"State Catechism", Punch XI, (1851), p. 168

the same time a conservative caution :

"Sir, my name is Mob, that is Young Mob - a son of Old Mob - and, as the better-behaved son of a wild and ignorant father, I beg leave to thank you, Mr. Paxton, for asking Lord John Russell to throw open the Crystal Palace to be seen by me for nothing; for I do assure you I am very much reformed, and altogether better-behaved than my relations of the good old times, who used to kick up a rumpus, going about like a Swinish multitude that wanted rings in their noses, and wooden collars about their necks."

Here Punch is indulging in some Mid-Victorian optimism. The people are to have rights - if only they behave themselves - and of course they will because this is a new age and people of all classes are "progressing" not just industrially and materially but are maturing politically and morally. The letter goes on to say that if Mob is allowed to visit Lew Gardens, the British Museum and the National Gallery, and if his record is good, why should he not visit the Crystal Palace - "shall I become a brute and a savage when under your [Paxton's] roof?" But again at the close of the letter, the curious ambivalence appears, when Mob himself apologises for and discriminates against these common people who, sadly, do not have middle-class manners :

"Of course, there are of my family ... thousands not admissable ... there are who belong to me, the idle, the foul-mouthed, the dirty and ragged. Let

these be driven from the Crystal Gates"²¹

The suggestion that they be driven also from the Pearly Gates of Heaven is unmistakable.

Nevertheless, by stating the problem and by asking questions about the role of the working classes, Punch was taking a stand. Sometimes, too, the questions asked revealed the same practical common-sense attitude that had led Punch earlier to forget the airy-fairy ideals of the Exhibition and concentrate on the site, the building and what was to go in it. A poem, put into the mouth of a solid, west country farmer raises a very real issue: namely that while so much is being done for industry and commerce, what is being done for agriculture and the ordinary farmer?

There's minerals and phisic chymical drugs,
There's tapestry and floorcloth and carpets, and rugs,
And there's porcelain and crockery, so fine and so grand:
But all that won't afford no relief to the land.²²

The farmer complains of the price of wheat and laments these new times when free trade ruins his business and the old England of country fairs and coach-inns gives way to the slick, urban World's Fair.

²¹"Open House at the Crystal Palace", Punch XX, (1851) p. 43

²²"Ballad for Cld-Fashioned Farmers", Punch XX, (1851) p. 54

Mr. Punch's natural conviviality, possibly coupled with his hearty support of the honest British workman, led him to wage a fierce campaign against the prohibition of alcoholic beverages in the Crystal Palace. Again and again Punch expressed its disgust and lamented that such a large glass should be forced to remain empty. Part of the protest was to preserve the name of the magazine and the reputation for jollification that went with it; but Punch became a little more serious on the idea that a body of teetotallers could impose their narrow views on all of the visitors to the Crystal Palace :-

Temperance is an excellent virtue; but even temperance may be conceited. Now, Narcissus was undoubtedly the first teetotaller. And like that simple, modest swain, too many of the teetotallers of our day see nothing in the world like themselves in water.²³

The main argument in the campaign however, was that the working-man needed his glass of beer. Although not really important, Punch's stand on this issue is Pickwickian in its championship of freedom, against societies formed to take care of other people's moral welfare, and of honest traditions like roast-beef and ale.

²³"Teetotal 'Hopes'", Punch XX, (1851), p. 54

But in its support of the poor, Punch is often mawkishly sentimental. In a long poem entitled "The Cinderella of 1851" which takes up, including an engraving by Tenniel, almost two full pages, Punch tells the pathetic story of two workhouse girls in the school-room and the sleeping-room and then, one morning, their waking, their journey and their vision of the Crystal Palace. The poem is interesting however because far from questioning the pauper state of girls, it celebrates the sweetness and light that the Crystal Palace brings to their lives and the public benevolence that gave them the opportunity to see the vision.

The opening stanzas describe the fact-ridden school-room where the girls are shirking work to escape into the forbidden fantasy of a story-book. They are Sissy Jupe characters in a world of Gradgrinds, reading about Cinderella to ease the pain of their daily existence. The poet exclaims :

O blessed Fancy, that chases the gloom
Even of that blank workhouse room!
Their little heads and hearts are working,
And wond'ring if fairy god-mothers now
In chimney corners may be lurking -
"Drat you! take that, your tasks for shirking!"
Alas, the chiding and cane so ready
Are Facts stern warning to fancies heady
That back to the workhouse jog-trot steady
The World's poor paupers is quick to cow.

In the sleeping room they are three and four to a bed; they

are wakened at five in the morning by "careless hands of pauper nurses" and pushed half-asleep into vans that bump and rumble to Hyde Park. The children have no idea where they are going but are accustomed to being pushed and shoved around for no apparent reason. The fountains, green grass, trees and flowers of the park are fairyland to them.

Wonder on wonder--more and more
 Gems, and jewels, and sparkling ore--
 Is it real, or is it seeming,
 This world of marvels they wander through?
 "Oh yes! I know we are not dreaming:--
 The book we yesterday read is true:
 'Tis Fairyland, so bright and beaming:
 The fairy godmother of the story
 Because we are friendless, and sad, and sorry,
 Has changed the workhouse into a glory,
 For pauper children like me and you²⁴

And there the poem ends. The misery of the pauper children is not glossed over--worse possibly--it is accepted. The children are clearly expected to bless those who gave them the vision and be driven back to the workhouse happier and wiser.

In a clever parody of Tennyson's Locksley Hall, the same note is sounded. The lines quoted here parody the section of Tennyson's poem where the speaker "dip[t] into the future" and "saw the wonder that would be" :-

²⁴"Cinderella of 1851", Punch XXI, (1851) pp. 130-3

Every class and every station, young and old and rich
and poor
Privileged alike to enter Industry's inviting door.
Great, indeed, the Exhibition: great in more respects
than one!

Not to Art can be conceded all the good that it has
done:
Much that's good in human nature it has also served
to show:
Witness vans of pauper children in a long continuous
row:
Witness wagons filled with workmen, in a liberal employ:
Going the Exhibition wonders gaily gratis to enjoy:
School-boys, school-girls, homely tenants, labourers
upon the farm,
By the bounty of the richer, to the Crystal Palace
swarm

.....

Though 'twill all be shortly over, the impression
will remain
Of how one has helped the other - and can do the
same again²⁵

This poem appears at the end of September, just before the
Exhibition closed, and, taken with the Cinderella poem which
appeared in August, suggests that Punch, however vaguely, was
satisfied that the Exhibition had brought the kind of social
unity it had hoped for. Indeed, what Punch seemed to consi-
der the real triumph of the Exhibition was the social unity
made possible by the "shilling days" - that is, the days on
which admission to the Crystal Palace was one shilling. One

²⁵"The Road to the Crystal Palace", Punch XXI, (1851), p. 155

of the most ecstatic articles on the "shilling days" talks of four types of people. Sixty Shillings (cost of a season ticket for a man), Forty Shillings (ditto for female), Five Shillings (usual cost except on shilling days) and One Shilling. Sixty Shillings considered One Shilling to be equal to One Mob, "insolent, noisy, swaggering Twelve Pence" and so on down the social scale; but One Shilling :

knew its proper value ... not Sixty Shillings, transmuted and enshrined in three golden pieces, with all the breeding, all the education, that is a condition of each transmutation, could behave with better courtesy, with more gentleness and good humour towards one another, than One Shilling towards One Shilling.

But while Punch supported the Exhibition for what it might accomplish in bringing about better relations between social classes - and lived to see what it believed was the realisation of this hope - there were those who prophesied social and political violence. Among the latter were, of course, Sibthorpe, Lord Brougham and "Americans". To say the least, popular opinion was anxious and in fact, one could suggest that Punch's insistent optimism that the Exhibition would herald a new age of brotherhood, betrayed a similar uneasiness. But after the opening and the first of the "shilling days", Punch enjoyed to the full its opportunity to say "I told you so" to the fearful.

With great jubilation Punch printed, in the same issue as its own official account of the opening, a fictitious account written by Jonathan Bowie²⁷ for the New York Herald. The article tells the story of the fall of the monarchy, the annihilation of property and the triumph of the new socialist society. The Queen returned to Buckingham Palace in an omnibus and the Koh-I-Noor - the Mountain of Light - was broken up into little "holehills of lustre".²⁸

In the same issue appears a letter from Titus Oates, warning Punch of the social revolution:

Sir, I have great pleasure in being resuscitated for the purpose of informing the public and the Government ...of a horrible plot and conspiracy.²⁹

But as the buoyant optimism betrayed uneasiness, the jubilation indicated relief. Like most crusaders or reformers, Punch was at its best when campaigning for an individual. Consequently, when Ann Hicks, an old woman who lived in Hyde Park and earned her living selling oranges and cakes, was threatened with forcible removal, Punch retaliated with a parody of its own "Pity the troubles of a poor young Prince".³⁰

²⁷Punch's name for the American "everyman", usually armed with several Colt revolvers, three or four Bowie knives and anything else that comes to hand.

²⁸"May-Day in London", Punch XX, (1851), pp. 192-5

²⁹"The Catastrophe of 1851", Punch XX, (1851), p. 198

³⁰"The Prince's Petition", Punch XVIII, (1850), p. 224

called "Pity the sorrows of a poor old soul."³¹ Mrs. Hicks was considered a squatter and the Duke of Wellington, as Keeper of the Park, took it upon himself to have her removed. In a letter to the Marquess of Salisbury, he wrote :

I have the pleasure of informing you we have got rid of the Squatter in the Park. She has quitted her Residence, which has been pulled down and the ground on which it stood or rather fell has been levelled.³²

Punch, however, upheld Mr. Hicks against the Duke although, so revered was Wellington, that such action must have been as unheard of as it was futile.

So far, these patterns, which emerge in Punch's coverage of the Exhibition, reveal a systematic and purposeful editorial policy. In treating foreigners Punch is liberal and progressive though it cannot quite give up the idea that England is top nation. The obvious exception to this of course is Punch's treatment of the Americans which can only be described as bigotted. However much one tries to explain this attitude - by supposing that American boastfulness simply rubbed English complacency the wrong way, or that the middle-class English

³¹"Mrs. Hick's Petition", Punch XXI, (1851), p. 52

³²Hobhouse, p. 179

social conscience was still rather tender on the subject of slavery - Punch remains narrow-minded. In relation to the peaceful outcome of Free Trade, foreign co-operation and industry, Punch shares much of the optimism and belief in progress that was common though, as we shall see later, this optimism was by no means unanimous. On the subject of the working man, Punch is again liberal and remarkably independent in its views though, like Dickens, it falls back on the rather woolly hope that the workers will miraculously inherit middle-class values and turn out to be gentlemen at heart.

It would be wrong however to give the impression that Punch solemnly mapped out its policy and campaigned vigorously on three fronts. Close examination has merely revealed that certain issues were important and that Punch had a generally consistent opinion on these issues. There is, however, among Punch's comments on the Exhibition a tremendous variety -- poems, sketches, letters, humorous essays as well as some factual reporting. Also, these vary in tone from rather silly puns to righteous indignation, to choking sentiment, to brilliant satire.

In "What I Remarked at the Exhibition", the speaker, Thackeray, noticed three Roman Catholic clergymen "amusing themselves with an opera glass". While the Archbishop of

Canterbury was saying opening prayers, he noticed that the priests "looked, stared, peered over people's shoulders, and used the opera-glass". Then the speaker "remarked that I couldn't be paying much attention myself". His final remark is "God Save the Queen". The whimsicality of this article³³ contrasts with mere solemn, official account of the opening. Punch printed a number of different "impressions" of the Exhibition - some, like the above, others like that of M. Gobe-mouche of Paris or "M. Vatout's Day at the Derby", mingle the themes already examined. But a few deserve more attention. "The Paradise in Hyde Park" shrewdly points out the political advantages of the Exhibition in that its success has blinded the country to other issues, as the Poor-house girls are blinded. The writer says that France or the Pope could easily take over England, since John Bull is complacently basking in his triumph; the government can pass any new bills or taxes and people will not even notice, because :

John lies a heedless victim,
Like a full boa - disinclined
To stir, although you kicked him.

The poet concluded :

I'm glad to see you, good John Bull
Grown so enthusiastic -
A lover of the Beautiful

³³"What I Remarkd at the Exhibition", Punch XX, (1851), p. 189



THE SHIPWRECKED MINISTERS SAVED BY THE GREAT EXHIBITION STEAMER.

And Art and Genius plastic:
 Yet admiration, gentle John,
 Should not transcend all measure
 Just mind how politics go on,
 Whilst you indulge in pleasure³⁴

The same idea is expressed by Leech's drawing of the "Shipwrecked Ministers saved by the Great Exhibition Steamer."³⁵

Punch conveys some of the enthusiasm and excitement it found in the Crystal Palace, in an article and series of cartoons called "The Front Row of the Shilling Gallery". The dazzling effect of the crowds and the exhibits is compared "to a series of Turner's pictures being viewed, on a summer's day, through the windows of an express train going at the rate of sixty miles an hour."³⁶ The comparison captures Punch's sheer joy at living in the age of Turner, Paxton, summer's days and express trains.

But most people still wondered "why" the Exhibition and wanted to draw some kind of moral from it. Punch collected some of these morals and presented its own with existentialist freedom :

The Protectionist's Moral - Oh! a pretty benefit to the foreign goods, ruin the home-market

³⁴"The Paradise in Hyde Park", Punch XX, (1851), p. 225

³⁵"Shipwrecked Ministers", Punch XX, (1851), p. 237

³⁶"The Front Row of the Shilling Gallery", Punch XXI, (1851), p. 10

and take all the gold out of the country!
 However it will open people's eyes to the
 humbug of Free Trade.
 The Free-Trader's Moral - A wonderful sight!
 Illustrates admirably the inter-dependence
 of nation and nation, and proves, to demon-
 stration, that the principles of Free Trade
 are those of nature and common sense.

.....

Shilling Morals

The Artisan's - I wonder how they'd get on
 without us? Or we without them, for that mat-
 ter.
 The Democrat's - Well there's something in
 that chap, Prince Albert, after all!
 The Communist's - What a grab, if it wasn't
 for the Policemen!
 The Red Republican's - Confound these English!
 They don't seem at all ripe for revolt!

.....

Mr. Punch's Moral

That the different nations of the world, and
 the different classes of society might meet
 oftener with much advantage to each other.³⁷

But Punch delights, too, in being obtuse, or in his own words,
 it "disdains to echo the general voice." By the end of the
 summer when all proclaimed the success of the Exhibition and
 people were already asking that the Crystal Palace remain in
 Hyde Park, Punch printed some "meditations" by "Fr. Doldrums"

³⁷"Morals of the Great Exhibition", Punch, XX, (1851),
 p. 233

who abhorred the crowds in the Park and wondered where the Crystal Palace and its contents would be in two or three years. He objected to the time and money it cost just to see a great show and felt that this encouragement of art and industry would lead to luxury and imported foreign vice. He grudgingly admits that something may be learned but his hopes, like his bunion, are squashed.

It may be that fraternisation
With those from whom we stood aloof
Before, will foster peace and union;
But - here a clown with hobnailed hoof
Trod right upon my favorite bunion.³⁸

"Mr. Doldrums" was none other than Thackeray, who signed his poem when it reappeared in Harrison Ainsworth's New Monthly Magazine.³⁹ But Thackeray was, on the whole enthusiastic about the Exhibition - unlike Dickens who confessed to being bored with the whole thing, or Charlotte Bronte who, at first, refused to set foot in it. Thackeray's "serious" comment appeared, in the form of a "Hay-Day Ode", in the Times of April 30th. The poem is "official" in the sense that the poet obviously feels he is making a serious, public comment. Had Tennyson, the Poet Laureate, written something for the Exhibition it might have been comparable.⁴⁰ The tone is bombastic as Thackeray raves about the opening ceremonies -

³⁸"Peditations", Punch, XII, (1851), p. 9

³⁹"Peditations", New Monthly Magazine, XLIII, (1851), p. 364

⁴⁰J.W. Dodds is mistaken in claiming that Tennyson's "Ode on the Opening of the Great Exhibition" was written in 1851. The poem was written for the Exhibition of 1862 as the reference in it to the death of Prince Albert makes quite clear.

Swell, organ, swell your trumpet blast,
 March, Queen and Royal Pageant, march
 By splendid aisle and springing arch
 Of this fair Hall:
 And see! above the fabric vast,
 God's boundless Heaven is bending blue,
 God's peaceful sunlight's beaming through,
 And shine's o'er all.⁴¹

Thackeray's "comic" feelings about the Exhibition were expressed however, in both Punch and the Times, in the form of an Irishman's wide-eyed wonder at the splendour of it all. "Mr. Molony's Account of the Crystal Palace" is really nothing more than a brief catalogue of the Exhibition, but as a poem it is neat and amusing, mainly because Thackeray has caught the character and enthusiasm of the speaker.

With genial foyre
 Thransfuse me loyre
 Ye sacred nymphths of Pindus
 The whoile I sing
 That wondthrous thing,
 The Palace made o' windows!

There's staye Ingynes
 That stands in lines,
 Enormous and amazing
 That squeal and snort
 Like whales in sport,
 Or elephants a-grazing

There's granite flints
 That's quite imminse
 There's sacks of coals and fuels,

⁴¹Times, April 30th, 1851. Both Hobhouse and ffrench have gone astray here. Hobhouse dates the poem - "May 1851" - while ffrench states (p. 185) that the poem appeared "on the great morning" - i.e. May 1st.

There's swords and guns,
And soap in tuns,
And ginger-bread and jewels

Contrast "Molony's" conclusion with that of the "May-Day Ode" :-

So let us raise
Victoria's praise,
And Albert's proud condition
That takes his ayse
As he surveys
This Cristial Exhibition.⁴²

Undoubtedly one of the finest of these set-pieces on the Exhibition, was "The May Queen", a parody of Tennyson's "The May Queen" first published in "Poems Chiefly Lyrical" in 1830. This was Tennyson's first volume of poetry, with the exception of "Poems by Two Brothers" which was published anonymously. Apart from Hallam's famous review of the volume, Tennyson was greeted with little enthusiasm and a great deal of abuse from Croker in the Quarterly Review. For some reason however, "The May Queen", a hysterical and sentimental poem about a girl who is convinced she is going to die before she becomes Queen of the May, was well-liked. Tennyson revised it in 1842 and added a conclusion where the girl begins "I thought to pass away before, and yet alive I am" and apologises almost for not having died.

⁴²"Mr. Molony's Account of the Crystal Palace", Punch XX, (1851), p. 171

Far from being hysterical, the Punch parody is warm and extremely funny. Victoria addresses Albert :

You must see they call me early - call me early, that's a dear!
 Tomorrow will be the least of a joke of all the days in the year.
 No doubt 'twill go off well, love - but still 'tis a trying day;
 For I am the Queen, and it's May, my dear; I am the Queen and
 it's May.

I'll go through it without a sigh, love, for your sake and for mine:

But, oh how happy I shall be when we get home to dine!
 I hope they'll have it over soon, and let us get away:
 For I am the Queen and it's May, my dear; I am the Queen and
 it's May.

.....
 I haven't the least doubt, love, there'll be no behaving ill;
 That they'll cheer us, as usual, down Constitution Hill;
 That for rich and poor alike 'twill be a merry-making day;
 For I am the Queen, and it's May, my dear; I am the Queen and
 it's May.

So you'll see they call me early - call me early, that's a dear!
 Tomorrow will be a triumph for you, love, never fear;
 But still you know it's sure to be a very fatiguing day;
 For I am the Queen, and it's May, my dear; I am the Queen and
 it's May.⁴³

The poem says nearly everything that has ever been said about the relationship of the Victorians to their queen - the sweet, kind feminine figurehead with a strong sense of duty and royal occasion deeply in love with a deserving but not well-received husband. Above all, it is a picture of domesticity.

⁴³"The May Queen", Punch XX, (1851), p. 183

The Exhibition was due to close on October 11th, and as the date drew near, Punch indulged in a good deal of summing-up and assessing of the project. Several practical issues had to be solved as well, such as how to dispose of the Crystal Palace if indeed it were to be disposed of - and, of considerable interest to everyone - how the huge and unexpected financial profit of the Exhibition was to be spent.

In "The Grand Hatching Year"⁴⁴ Punch extravagantly expands and mixes metaphors of eggs, baskets and expectations and contemplates the failure of some good eggs and some bad eggs. Some of the good eggs that did not hatch in 1851 were the addled hopes of theatre managers, landladies and showmen who hoped, in all fairness and honesty of course, to make huge profits at the expense of foreigners. Some of the bad eggs were the pessimistic prophecies of plagues and so on which were current in the early part of the year. Others of the bad eggs that fortunately did not hatch, involved the schemes of Red Republicans, Red Socialists and generally nasty political disturbers of the peace. Punch says of these bad eggs, that they were intended to turn the Crystal Palace from a temple of Universal Peace into a "tomb - amidst the ruins of which, Prince

⁴⁴"The Grand Hatching Year", Punch XXI, (1851) p. 14

Albert ... would be heard mourning in six different languages". The failure of these eggs to hatch Punch attributes to "something in the atmosphere of England, let it be heated at times as much as it will, that is not favorable to the growth of such doctrines and that there is no chance of their being propagated to any extent in a free country".

The same self-congratulation appears in a poem on the closing of the Exhibition :

'Twas order everywhere, and quiet all;
There ne'er were better manners at a ball.⁴⁵

But while the poem assumes a general improvement in the quality of manufactured goods, it also observes rather coolly - in a couplet that even Pope would have been pleased with - that :

Still London stands, her thousand sewers amid,
And Liverpool - exactly where she did.

There is more than coolness however, in the letter of Mrs. Sarah Veal to Punch on the before and after effects of the Exhibition on her husband.

I like the Exhibition very much; there are some THINGS in it that are really BEAUTIFUL; and if you would confine your remarks to them I wouldn't mind. But I wish you ... would not go on about its leading to universal brotherhood ... it is ... particularly you that have put such stupid ideas into Mr. Veal's head.⁴⁶

⁴⁵"Lines to be Recited on the Closing of the Great Exhibition", Punch XXI, (1851), p. 163

The poor woman goes on to complain that her husband now smokes cigars and drinks wine, has changed to a more Continental style of dress, dislikes British - and his wife's - cooking, and eats in "restarongs". He brings his foreign friends to visit and so his wife must "sprinkle the floors with vinegar"; but fortunately, she sighs, "we have caught nothing yet, and they have not taken anything".

Many ideas were put forward for the disposal of the Crystal Palace. Originally, the Commissioners had agreed to remove it but now that the time had come for doing so, there was considerable public support for keeping it in Hyde Park. Mostly Punch favoured the idea of keeping it as a winter garden, though it also entertained the idea of turning it into a Museum if the various contributors would agree to leave their exhibits in the Palace as a gift. Finally, however, Cole and Paxton, together with Fox and Henderson, the contractors, bought a piece of land at Sydenham and removed the Crystal Palace to that place where it became a kind of Arts or Cultural Centre containing a Museum and Art Gallery and where concerts could be performed. The Crystal Palace remained there until 1836 when it was destroyed by fire.

After the Exhibition closed, prizes and awards were made by the Royal Commissioners. Punch says little about these

though, as might be expected, there was the usual amount of disappointment and dissatisfaction. A cartoon depicting a distraught gentleman, who is horrified to discover that Prince Albert has given him only an "Honourable Mention", laughs at those who are petty enough to be disturbed by such things. To reinforce this attitude, Punch printed a special feature "Lives and Portraits of the Exhibitors who have not gained Prizes" which protested the honour and claims to greatness of Samuel Rodgers, Exhibitor of an Improved Spud, and Mrs. Frederica Glinders, Author of a Counterpane.

"Mr. Rodgers received his...education...at Harrow where he would have been a contemporary of ... Lord Byron, and Sir Robert Peel, had he been placed at this famous school while those eminent individuals were ... there. He is a magistrate and a married man: the father (by Emily, daughter of the Rev. Felix Rabbits) of thirteen children.⁴⁷

When the Commissioners announced that they had a surplus of £186,000 left over from the Exhibition, once again Punch had little to say. But apart from recommending that Paxton be rewarded, Punch returned to the case of Ann Hicks and suggested that she be given some of the money as compensation for losing her house and living. In fact, the money was used to found a number of national educational institutions including the Victoria and Albert Museum, a Science Museum and Geological Museum.

⁴⁷"Lives and Portraits", Punch XXI, (1851), p. 190

HEADS OF THE PEOPLE ON THE REMOVAL OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE.



"WELL, I DON'T SEE ANY EARTHLY USE IN IT REMAINING. WHY, THERE'S THAT BACK ROOM I HAVE NEVER LET SINCE IT HAS BEEN OPEN!"



"IT'S VERY INSTRUCTIVE, I CONFESS; BUT IT LOWERS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEUCELY: IT HAD BETTER COME DOWN!"



"LOR!—EX'IBITION CLOSED; AND I WITHIN THREE-HALF-PENCE OF THE SHILLING!—BLOW IT!"



"LOR, JOHN, WHAT A PITY!"
"MY DEAR GIRL, THE ANNOYANCE IS REALLY DREADFUL!"



"LOR!—I WONDER WHERE THEY'LL PUT THE HUGE LOOKING GLASS?"



"THE CRYSTAL PALACE COMING DOWN!—LOR BLESS ME!—WHAT A PITY!—GREAT SHAME!"—&c., &c.



"COME DOWN?—TO BE SURE, MY BOY—WITHOUT, INDEED, THEY TURN IT INTO A CASINO. THEN!—AH, THEN!"



"COME DOWN?—OF COURSE!—SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN RAISED!—RUINATION TO BUSINESS!"—&c., &c.

THE CONSTITUTION DEAD AGAIN.

THE eels at Billingsgate are accustomed to the inconvenience of being skinned; they merely twist and wriggle a little more or less, and there an end. The British Constitution is used to death—at the hands of Whigs or Radicals. It has been murdered outright twenty times within our memory; and is about to be killed again. England, instead of having the Lion and Unicorn for her arms, should bear Three Cats; this would give her seven-and-twenty accredited lives, so that, after the next life taken by LORD JOHN RUSSELL, England, with the twenty already lost, might have six more to spare; which, with moderation, might last our time. The *Quarterly* again weeps drops of ink over the threatened death of the Constitution, a death menaced by the RUSSELL Reform Bill of next session:

"And it is at this moment—this awful moment of doubt—while not monarchy only, but even republics, are trembling before an invading democracy, that LORD JOHN RUSSELL has had the weakness, or the rashness, to announce—"

"In his own words, says the *Quarterly*, 'a new revolution!' And—"

"This fatal menace—fatal to the ministry if not executed—fatal to the monarchy if it is—was thrown out, as it is said, without the sanction of the Sovereign or the concert of his colleagues, for no better reason, and with no higher motive, than to help him through a paltry party scrape; to rally, on a pinching vote, a few Radicals back to his standard."

Poor monarchy! Dead again! What then? When duly killed, and lying in its blood, will it not, like *Bombastes Furioso*, rise again upon its legs, and blithely sing (for the especial comfort of the *Quarterly*)—

"For 'twas better far
Thus to end our sorrow;
But, if some folks please,
We'll die again to-morrow?"

As, no doubt, the English Constitution will die again and again, and again and again sing its own epitaph (though we may not be here to listen to it) and its own resurrection.

LORD LENNOX'S LAST.—"It's a clever book that knows the Author of its existence."

OUR REJECTED CORNER.

AS MAD AS A MARCH HARE.—Cutting your hair off with a shilling!

ADVICE.—Advice is like a policeman; often to be met with when not wanted; but, when really wanted, never to be found.

THE TEETOTALLER'S BEST FRIEND.—The best friend of Temperance, —and one who doesn't injure the cause by talking—is the quart bottle; for, as it gradually gets less and less every year, the time must come, when Man will be compelled to renounce the Bottle; from the very simple fact that he will have no bottle left to fly to!

METAPHYSICS.—Metaphysics is like riding in a circus. You keep going round and round, and jumping, and plunging; and taking high flights in the air; and after all, you only come back to the point which you started from.—*Widdicom!*

GREEN TEA.—An injurious beverage, since proved to be a rank poison. This may account for the number of characters that have been poisoned by old maids, whilst they have been drinking it.

HOW TO FLY A KITE.—Those kites fly the best which have a five-shilling stamp upon them.

DEATH'S DOOR.—It generally has "Railway Station" written over it.

IL FAUT, QU'UNE PORTE SOIT OUVERTE, OU FERMÉE.

THE above proverb of ALFRED MUSSET has been verified recently by the movements of KOSSUTH. The *Porte Fermée*, which refused him permission to travel through it, was France; but the *Porte ouverte*, which allowed him, in spite of menaces, to escape from it, was Turkey; and, if we will say it, a very sublime *Porte* too!

The Flower of Yankee Land.

IT is natural to inquire what sort of flower is the BLOOMER? An American Aloe, probably, as it is of Transatlantic origin, and is hardly likely to come out in bloom oftener than once in a century.

Funds were also established to promote scientific and technological research. There is still a Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 which awards scholarships in the sciences, to the value of £1,000, tenable in foreign and Commonwealth Universities.⁴⁸

On the removal of the Crystal Palace, emotions were mixed, as Punch admirably expressed in "Heads of the People". And the "Last Night in the Crystal Palace" - a long and heavy poem - provides a solemn and official farewell to an event which Punch felt, marked the beginning of a new era. The spirit of England - "a spirit of peace and power" - addressed the poet :

"Son, but now I heard a murmur in that shallow heart of
thine,
That this gathering of wonders must henceforth no more
be mine;

.....

Know, vain heart, it is not only what they brought unto
my shore
That my guests will take back with them - poorer were
they than before;

No, a store of mighty import will with each and all return,
Till the world shall by the scattering - more than by
the gathering - earn.

As the seeds of costly spice - trees by the Indian are
spread,
So, by all my guests returning, precious seeds will wide
be shed;
Seeds of peace, goodwill to nations - seeds of useful
arts untried,
With whose growth the world hereafter will be from tide
to tide"⁴⁹

⁴⁸McMaster University Calendar, Faculty of Graduate Studies,
p. 24

⁴⁹"Last Night in the Crystal Palace", Punch XXI, (1851), p. 175

CHAPTER 4

Chapters two and three have looked very closely at Punch and its coverage of the Great Exhibition. Before going on, however, it is important to keep several main points in mind. After its initial hesitation, Punch enthusiastically supported the Exhibition; it had unshakable faith in Paxton, the Crystal Palace and the universal benefits that the Exhibition would bring. Certain ideas were seen to lie close to Mr. Punch's heart, but we have noticed too, that Punch never rode its hobby horses too hard. Generally, in the realm of ideas, Punch avoided extremes. Though nationalistic, Punch ridiculed those who thought that what was foreign was ipso facto bad; in the Free Trade versus Protectionist controversy, Punch chose to talk vaguely of the benefits of international co-operation, in terms of mutual knowledge and understanding, as well as the practical needs of the farmer: while Punch supported the cause of labour, it also found a conservative middle way of doing so. Punch always objected strongly to violence and insisted that authority be challenged--it supported police supervision of the Crystal Palace, but was always ready to champion individual freedom. Basically, rather like Dickens, Punch believed in a kind of natural goodness theory to the general effect that people are good and well-behaved unless they are badly treated by inexplicably wicked people. Punch hated narrow-mindedness, whether it was that of Sibthorpe or

of a Society of Tectotallers.

In Punch's coverage, the positive values of honesty, integrity, hearty laughter, the enormous power of practical common-sense, healthy self-respect and pride in one's achievements, are all apparent. In short, if people can talk and laugh together, respect each other as individuals, then the world will be a better place.

The articles that Punch devoted to the Great Exhibition are, above all, a personal response--or rather a number of personal responses--to what was happening in Hyde Park in 1851. More than any other newspaper or periodical of the time, Punch conveys the impression of what it was really like to attend the Exhibition, and, perhaps more important, can tell the modern reader all the many things that were being said about it. To put it another way, if we were to attend a party where some of the construction workers, Ann Hicks, Colonel Sibthorpe, a meat-carrier from Smithfield, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, Paxton, John Ruskin and a Paisley yarn-spinner, were all present, we would know what to say to each and every one.

Punch obtains this comprehensiveness mainly by a selective and imaginative treatment of aspects of the Exhibition. Though Punch cannot be called literature, its approach to

journalism is more literary than journalistic, in the sense that it uses various literary forms--the essay, short dramatic pieces, parodies, and a great deal of metaphorical playing with language. Contemporary journalism, though it was of high quality in magazines like the Westminster Review, tended to report factually, or argue seriously, logically and scientifically. The periodicals, mainly, used the essay, and tried to retain a kind of uniformity. The quality newspapers aimed at truthful reporting.

Punch cannot really be compared with these other newspapers and journals, since, as the Athenaeum pointed out in Lemon's obituary, he was a man "Under whose benignant eyes, something new and valuable in journalism was produced".¹ Nevertheless, in order to appreciate the unique quality and congeniality of Punch, it is important to look at a sample of contemporary journals, and newspapers again on the subject of the Great Exhibition.

Many of the periodicals that favoured the Exhibition, did so in very general terms. Household Words, in the article already referred to, was wildly enthusiastic about the Crystal Palace itself. But though the whimsical tone of this article comes close to the kind of writing sometimes found in Punch, the magazine as a whole is very different in character. Chamber's Journal joined in the praise of Paxton's

¹Athenaeum, (May 26, 1870), pp. 708-9

work, but, apart from a few deprecatory comments on the overwhelming number of counterpanes submitted as exhibits, the article rather artificially rambles on in terms of extravagant praise. On the 'peace' theme, it proclaims - "there will be no 10th of April Chartism here--our Exhibition of 1851 will be better than a revolution".²

Even more piously ecstatic is a piece in the North British Review³ which emotes over the "productions of a planet" and dreams of love and peace. It presents a potted history of the Exhibition--as does Household Words--and talks of the "sunrise of British Science". But while Punch is comprehensive, the North British is exhaustive in its painstaking detail, and is clearly in the category of pedestrian journalism.

The best of these rather woolly but enthusiastic articles, appears in Harrison Ainsworth's New Monthly Magazine. It appeared on Opening Day, and is designed to tell the reader what to look for in the Crystal Palace. Though tedious in the detailed description of the uses of raw materials, in its history of various industries, its statistics and its homespun philosophy, the article manages to place the right empha-

²Chamber's Journal, XV, (March 1st, 1851), pp. 129-30

³North British Review, XV, (May, 1851), pp. 273

sis on the main points. Of the Koh-I-Noor, its market value, and of jewels in general, the writer states :

Gems are thus of great value to the possessor, although that value like that of a work of art, is dormant or unproductive. Gems are indeed of little real use to the human species: and the term "precious stones" is...far more correctly applicable to coal, to salt, and to building stones...Yet coals were not in common use till the reign of Charles I, in 1652! As late as in 1273, sea-coal...was prohibited...in and near London, as being prejudicial to human health.⁴

The modern reader might be amused that it has taken man 700 years to re-discover the harmful effects of burning coal; but unless he is a descendant of Harrison Ainsworth, he will be bored by the statistical description of Britain's consumption of mineral resources.

The article praises London's buildings, not for their beauty, which is questionable, but for their morality -

The number, extent, and magnificence of our charitable institutions counterbalance many defects, and show that want of taste is, at least, made up for by many practical virtues.⁵

But it is important, too, to look at some of the different treatments of the themes that emerged in Punch's coverage of the Exhibition. Almost directly opposed to Punch on every issue,

⁴New Monthly Magazine, XCII, (May-Aug. 1851), p. 110

⁵Ibid., p. 111

is an article in Blackwood's Magazine. This article is strongly and consistently opposed to the Exhibition. Blackwood's assumes the tone and position of a superior intellectual shaking his head sadly over the visionary follies of the enthusiasts. Since support for the Exhibition was slow, initially, in coming, Blackwood's doubts that it can be "as meritorious as its supporters invariably assumed"⁶ After calling the project "an expensive toy", the writer continues :

We say this in no narrow or illiberal spirit. Were it for the credit, or, what is more, for the good of the nation and the millions of industrious workmen which it contains, that this Exhibition should go forward, it ought to have been made essentially a national show.⁷

Like Blackwood's the North American Review⁸ argues that the Exhibition will be a failure as a place of learning or as a Museum, because it does not contain all the works and arts of all nations - "It should, and must, in order to be perfect, omit nothing." And of course it must be perfect if the nation and its "millions of workmen" are to benefit.

Although Blackwood's talks of workmen, it does so in terms of millions or as a unified mass - "The working population" or "the working classes." Though Punch's "Cinderella" can hardly

⁶Blackwood's Magazine, LXXIII, (Sept., 1850), p. 278

⁷Ibid, p. 281

⁸North American Review, LXXV, (Oct., 1852), pp. 357ff

be described as pure liberalism, it at least tries to say something about a particular situation: and in the case of Ann Hicks, Punch does champion an individual. But it is by unifying the working classes as a general body that Blackwood's manages to make their participation in the Great Exhibition seem ridiculous.

Talking of the "Great body of the British artisans" Blackwood's asks how are they going to find their way to London from Glasgow, Paisley, Bristol, Dundee or Leeds? They can't afford transportation: further, they cannot desert their homes and occupations. The article continues :

we have no hesitation in saying, that any such general migration of the working classes to London would be a most serious evil to themselves and to all concerned. This seems to be admitted, for we are told that the police force...is to be augmented...Strange preparations these for a grand Industrial Exhibition!⁹

So Blackwood's challenges the theory that the Exhibition will make for greater social unity, and crushingly concludes the argument by adopting the "older brother" attitude that Punch hated so much, and deciding that the workers' curiosity to see the Exhibition cannot "be gratified without much injury to themselves" through the loss of their jobs, expenses incurred in London and through their subjection to "unnecessary

⁹Blackwood's Magazine LXVIII, (Sept., 1850), p. 222

temptation." Rather predictably, Blackwood's defines democracy as "massacre, murder, rape, pillage, barricades and incendarism".

Though Punch was occasionally rather too patronising in its attitude to foreigners, Blackwood's was patently hostile. Its main argument centred round Free Trade, which it opposed; and the idea that since Britain was superior, industrially, to the rest of the world, Britain could only lose the lead she held in a public exhibition of her industrial products. To Blackwood's the idea of learning from foreign nations was simply pure cant.

And on the subject of peace, Blackwood's insists :

that difference of blood and difference of tongue will keep the nations separate...and that the primary duty of every government...is to look closely to the interests of the people committed to their charge. To act otherwise is to commit a grievous wrong - to sacrifice the children for the stranger.¹⁰

So the Exhibition was a battle where Britain was matched against the nations of the world, and Blackwood's felt it was "an uncalled-for and dangerous scheme, not brilliant in its general conception, and objectionable in most of its details."

But Chamber's Journal shared the more general view of Punch and others that the Exhibition could only improve foreign

¹⁰Ibid, p. 283

relations: it commented favourably on the dress and manners of the ordinary people who visited the Crystal Palace and talked of "an era of peace and goodwill, of progress and melioration."¹¹ Specifically about the colonial exhibits, the article, rather condescendingly remarks that "we are pleased with our colonial brethren, and give them great credit for their industry and enterprise." Nova Scotia was felt to be as good as Sheffield.

The Eclectic Review, in an article reprinted from the Westminster, agreed that peace was not far off and deprecated the display of weapons in the Crystal Palace, though the article is openly anti-French and anti-American.¹² But both Chamber's and the Eclectic incline to Punch's views and taste in furniture, which they felt ought to be functional as well as decorative. Chamber's complains that "a good carpet, free of vulgarities, is still a desideratum." The Eclectic, in rich, rhetorical style, praises the railways, without which there could have been no Exhibition, and, taking the exact opposite view from Blackwood's, makes a spirited plea for international co-operation and Free Trade.

¹¹Chamber's Journal, XV, (May 31st, 1851), pp. 337ff.

¹²Eclectic Review, XXIII, (Aug. 1851), pp. 513-31

At least some idea of how the foreigner viewed the Exhibition is given in the North American Review which sings the praises of "Yankee ingenuity" and looks down its nose at science and scientists. The lack of new inventions at the Exhibition is attributed, as Blackwood's prophesied, to the fear of sharing industrial secrets. And, again like Blackwood's the North American complains because the Exhibition is not "perfect." Nevertheless, the Americans at least felt that the Exhibition laid the foundations of a new era of peace and co-operation.

While the point has been made that most of the English periodicals, with the possible exception of Punch attempted to be "encyclopedic" in their comments on the Exhibition, The American Journal of Science capped them all by printing lectures given by scientists to the Royal Society of Arts. That of Dr. William Whewell¹³ dealt with the problems involved in classifying a nation's industrial output, while that of Dr. Lyon Playfair¹⁴ was even more specialised, and discussed new processes and discoveries in chemistry.

But the most complete, detailed and technical commentary on the Great Exhibition, was undoubtedly given by the Illus-

¹³American Journal of Science, Ser. 2, XIII, (1852) pp. 352-70

¹⁴American Journal of Science, Ser. 2, XIV, (1852) pp. 19-36

trated London News. For historians, it is the main source of material on the Exhibition and its great value lies in two main characteristics of the periodical. First, it is concerned with factual reporting; there is very little opinion or argument in its pages, and when these do appear, the magazine either presents both sides of a case, or presents the watered-down view of the Establishment. Most often, issues which are open to discussion, are left alone. Secondly, the magazine is scarcely at all selective; there is no detail so minor that it may not be examined, explained and illustrated. A whole series of illustrations¹⁵ on the progress of the building of the Crystal Palace, including the gutters, bears witness to this.

While Punch exercised its wit and satire in discussing the site of the Exhibition and the objections of the fashionables, the News prints "a full copy of the statement made by the Attorney-General in justification of his refusal to sanction the information proposed to be filed in the courts of law against the proposed structure in Hyde Park".¹⁶ Punch complained of Brunel's "abomination in bricks and mortar" but the News simply printed the design and gave information on the specifications. When Paxton was campaigning to have his

¹⁵The November issues for 1850

¹⁶Illustrated London News, (July 27th, 1850)

plan accepted, he approached the News because it could be relied upon to do as much for him. Once Paxton's plan was officially accepted, the News allowed itself to favour it - not with the general enthusiasm, but simply and consistently with a nod in Paxton's direction against those who thought it might fall down or be blown away.

The News followed closely all the preparations for May 1st, including the plans of Owen Jones for the interior decoration, the customs regulations which were to be repealed and those which were not, and even printed a full list of exhibits. A history of the building by Paxton himself contrasts strikingly with the Punch-like whimsicality of the one that appeared in Household Words. On May 3rd, 1851, the News, very grandly, permitted itself a few remarks on the significance of the Exhibition. It was :

The fit inauguration of a half-century which we fervently hope will be...of the grand and peaceful character of its commencement.

The News continued with a "history of progress" and described the "ball" of improvement rolling through the nineteenth century.

Properly speaking, this chapter deals with periodicals that are contemporary with Punch; but the Times, though a

daily newspaper, has always held a very high place in English journalism, and its commentary on the Exhibition deserves mention. Initially, as we have noticed, the Times was sceptical of the Exhibition but, like Punch, was impressed by Paxton and the new building as well as, presumably, the growing enthusiasm of the Establishment and many influential figures in the Government - such as Peel.

In its coverage of the Exhibition, however, the Times had much in common with the Illustrated London News. Though distinctly conservative, the Times nevertheless felt obliged to report factual details at some length in the interests of an educated public. For almost all of May 1851, there were special supplements on the Exhibition which, in turn, reported and explained the entire contents of the Crystal Palace. The first of these, on May 1st, introduces their purpose:

Deeply impressed with the importance of that event
the opening of the Crystal Palace we are anxious
that the public should have as clear a conception
as possible of the spectacle to which they are
invited.

From here, the Times goes on, by means of a floor-plan, to explain the building, its contents and the general scheme behind the Exhibition. Like the News, the Times is concerned with customs regulations, the police traffic regulations, and

of course, just who, of note, will be present at the opening.

While Punch ridiculed the Americans for asking for too much space, and facetiously suggested how the excess space might be used, the Times simply printed a letter from a "mechanist" who requested that the space might be used for new inventions which had been discovered after December 1850, the deadline for applications. Nor does the Times indulge in subjective outbursts on the sorrows or privileges of the working man. Indeed, the Times is somewhere between Blackwood's and Punch: it concedes the rights of labour to be present, but is hopelessly condescendingly :

Those honest English workmen, in their round fustian jackets and glazed caps, felt they had a right to take part in the honours of the day, and to have an honest pride in the result of their own and their brethren's labours, and they walked contentedly and happily, amid prancing horses and gaudy liveries.

But at least the Times, also, saw Hyde Park as a meeting-place for social classes.

This short survey then, gives some idea of what the major journals had to say about the Great Exhibition. What we have to notice is that though many of them - most obviously the Illustrated London News - had much more to say than Punch, they fall short of Punch's coverage on two main points. First of all, Punch's articles and notes on the Exhibition are much more entertaining on the whole; and Punch's ideas are expressed

with greater selectivity and variety of form. Secondly, Punch is more imaginative both in its expression, and the way in which it tries to see the broader issues surrounding the Exhibition by trying to present a fair case for the ordinary worker, the foreign visitor, or the work-house girls. Above all, through the personal character of Mr. Punch, we get some idea of how an honest, practical Englishman who thinks about what is happening in England, sees the big event of 1851.

From what has been said about the Great Exhibition of 1851, it should be clear that what happened in the Crystal Palace, though it was, on one level, a show, was, on another, a major turning-point in the Victorian period. The condition of England was improving and the Exhibition was both an expression of that improvement and a public promise of greater progress and improvements ahead.

This study of Punch reveals the complexity of attitudes and feelings that marked this turning-point. Punch's opposition to violence and support of the working man looks back on the hungry forties and social evils. At the same time Punch makes the Exhibition the symbol of a new understanding and co-operation between the social classes. As England grew in economic strength, Punch sees John Bull entering a new era in world politics where England will play the role

of benevolent leader and teacher to foreign nations. So Punch is optimistic; but realistic, too, in that the magazine deals with practical issues - Paxton's building, the pollution of London's parks and rivers, the problems of being a host to foreign visitors.

The Exhibition is a useful illustration of just how closely Punch was in touch with the events, the general trends and opinions of the times. Punch is not only well-written, well-illustrated and a well-turned-out periodical, it is also thoughtful and influential, in the sense that it both records a large section of opinion, and imposes, as far as is humanly possible, a truthful and humanitarian philosophy of daily life. Because of this it is particularly valuable to the literary and the social historian.

Many scholars are aware of Punch's value as a useful source of material. Both Yvonne ffrench and Christopher Hobhouse in their studies of the Great Exhibition, are heavily indebted to Punch, not only for ideas and clues to public opinion, but for illustrations. In his excellent account of the ten-year period 1841-51, Dodds makes considerably reference to Punch. Amy Cruse, in her study of the reading habits of Victorians, devotes an entire chapter to Punch. Walter Houghton and J.H. Buckley, who have attempted to give a wide picture of the age, use Punch as an authority on middle-class, intellectual opinion.

There have been those who have studied Punch for itself, such as Spielmann and Price in their histories of the magazine, but their efforts, useful though they are, are limited to factual accounts of the founders, various editors and editorial policies. Much work might still profitably be done however, on Punch's illustrations or on the relationship of Punch to its literary, social and political background.

There are many ways in which Punch is limited by its social and historical background, but there are also times when Punch creates part of that background. There is still plenty of scope for more detailed literary study of Punch. But above all, as this investigation has shown, Punch is invaluable to those who wish to know and understand a part of an Englishman's life.

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