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Tulrumble and Oliver Twise: Review of The Public Life of Mr. Tulrumble and Oliver Twist

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TULRUMBLE AND OLIVER TWIST.


A writer, who chooses to be known to the literary world by the name of "Boz," has, for some time past, been exhibiting his antics before the public. We have never sought his acquaintance, for the same reason that we should avoid a fellow who might thrust himself into an assembly room, and invite the notice of the company by the dress and grimaces of a Merry-Andrew. We would ask ourselves, in such a case, what man, capable of refinement, would choose to be a buffoon?—What man, possessing a particle of self-respect, would descend to an exhibition so degrading and disgusting? We should certainly suspect the intruder to be some clown of a circus, or bear-garden, escaped from his employer, and hold ourselves in readiness, at the first hint from the managers, to put him out.

Can we be blamed for coming to a somewhat similar conclusion in the case of a writer who thinks proper to announce himself by such a mountebank designation as that of "Boz"? What right has he that we should suppose him anything better than the Jack-Pudding of a drunken club?

The reader may ask, "How then it comes that we take any notice of the volumes before us?" We answer as follows: They were laid upon our table, and, on taking up one of them, we found, on what should have been a blank page at the end, a publisher's notice of "The posthumous papers of the PICKWICK CLUB, containing a faithful record of the perambulations, perils, adventures, and sporting transactions of the corresponding members. Edited by Boz. The very great demand for this humorous work," &c. Also, "A new edition of the TWINS AT RAMSGATE, embracing the last sketches of every day life, and every day people. By Boz. The first edition being entirely exhausted."
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makes. But these do but come on the stage and go off again like a servant or messenger in a play, without attracting the notice of the author or the audience.

We would not willingly have our veracity suspected, and we cannot venture to vindicate it by giving extracts, at once extravagant and dull, preposterous, yet not ludicrous. We feel, therefore, that it becomes us to account for that sort of popularity which encourages such writers to put forth their trash upon the public, and secures them such a sale as makes their works more profitable to the bookseller than others of greater merit.

We take it, that there is nothing that tradesmen like so well as quick returns. This is true of booksellers as well as others, and therefore nothing suits the bookseller better than a work for which a ready market is afforded by the city where he publishes. On such sales he saves all discounts and commissions, and thus secures to himself not only a quick return, but a larger profit, than on books which must be sent abroad in quest of purchasers.

We have said that, with a single exception, none of these tales is much better than those which we have abridged, though none of them is, perhaps, so excellently bad as those two. The exception is called Edward Saville, and is by Charles Whitehead. We have never met with Mr. Whitehead before, and should be happy to cultivate his acquaintance, had we not found him in such company. We hope he was lugged into it against his will, or at least blundered into it by mistake. His little tale really surprised us as much as would the appearance of a genuine diamond among the glass beads and tinsel trumpery of a woman of the town.

We have a double purpose in mentioning it. It is short, and might be read, while standing on one foot, at a bookseller's counter, and might be the means of cheating some man of taste into the purchase of the work. We hope that all such among our readers may escape that imposition by means of this notice. We are moreover bound to return our acknowledgments to Mr. Whitehead for the pleasure we experienced in reading this little production; and we would requite it by a word of advice. He has heard the sage nescitur a socio. They, whose names are connected with his, will not be judged of by him. Mr. Boz is obviously the criterion writer by whom the rest would like to be estimated. We can hardly think that Mr. Whitehead would choose to be valued by the name standard. We therefore warn him against his associates, and call upon him to "come out from among them, for he is not of them."

This advice will probably never reach him, but it may be of service to our readers hereafter to recognize the name of Mr. Charles Whitehead as that of one who can write and does write interestingly, and in good taste. It may serve an opposite and more important purpose to know, that the gentlemen who have chosen Mr. Boz as their exemplar, as far as their names are given, are Samuel Lover, T. Haynes Beauly, Douglas Jerrold, T. S. Coyn, Alexander Campbell, J. A. Wade, and Hamilton Reynolds. We hope that our readers will remember and shun them as we shall do. They are bad company and dull company; such as we may suppose assembled at the Bon's head in East-cheap when the Prince and old Jack were both absent, and with them all the spirit and all the wit of the club. Bardolph's red nose and the "Humors" of Corporal Nym make the whole entertainment.